Chapter 7
Reforming risk governance

View over South Mumbai from the World Trade Centre showing the slum housing of Koli fishermen, the original inhabitants of the seven islands that became Mumbai. *Photo:* Mark Henley/Panos Pictures

Chapter 7 Reforming risk governance

As highlighted by the HFA Progress Review (Chapter 4), the institutional arrangements, legislation and policy for disaster risk management (DRM) focus on disaster management, preparedness and response. Even where multi-sector institutional systems have been created for DRM, responsibility and policy are still usually anchored in disaster management organizations, which often lack the political authority or technical capacities to influence important decisions related to national and sector planning and investment. Responsibility for DRM may also be mandated to local governments that often lack the necessary resources and capacities. Such conditions create barriers to civil society participation and result in weak accountability.

As the previous chapter highlighted, there are major opportunities to reduce disaster risk by adapting development instruments, such as national public investment planning systems, social protection mechanisms, and national and local infrastructure investments. In most countries, however, existing risk governance arrangements are inappropriate, and reforming them is therefore fundamental to reducing disaster risk.

In central government, this means anchoring overall responsibility for DRM in a ministry or office with adequate political authority to ensure policy coherence across development sectors. Incremental decentralization accompanied by clear mandates, budgets and systems of subsidiarity, promotes ownership and improved risk governance capacities at all levels. Scaling up community initiatives can be enabled by local planning, financing and investment that build on civil society partnerships. Improved accountability mechanisms enshrined in legislation and work processes, social audit processes, and a free press and active media, all contribute to improving the awareness of rights and obligations on all sides.

7.1 Problems with risk governance

The development instruments and mechanisms for successful DRM need to be facilitated by appropriate risk governance arrangements. This requires political commitment and policy coherence in central government, competent and accountable local governments, and an openness to work in partnership with civil society, in particular with low-income households and communities. As highlighted by the HFA Progress Review, existing arrangements are generally not appropriate.

Over the past two decades, many countries have invested in developing national policy, and strengthening and reforming institutional and legislative systems for DRM. Civil protection and civil defence agencies, often in the defence sector, have progressively been replaced by a new generation of multi-sector and multi-layered DRM systems, where responsibility is placed in each sector and decentralized to local governments. However, it has been repeatedly highlighted (Hewitt, 1983; Stallings, 1995; Lavell and Franco, 1996; Wisner et al., 2004) that both national policy and the institutional and supporting legislative systems remain fundamentally skewed to supporting disaster management, in particular preparedness and response, rather than risk reduction. At the national level, responsibility is still usually anchored in disaster management organizations, which often lack the political authority or technical capacities to influence important decisions related to national and local sector planning and investment. Whereas such systems often mandate responsibility for DRM to local governments, they may lack the necessary resources and capacities. Such conditions create major barriers to civil society participation and result in weak accountability.

In some countries, developments outside the realm of DRM have also influenced these arrangements. In the United States of America, for example, the events of 11 September 2001 shifted attention away from a broader focus on DRM, which had evolved through the 1990s, to an emphasis on crisis management and emergency preparedness and response under a newly created Department of Homeland Security (Gerber, 2007).

7.2 Locating responsibility for DRM at the centre of power

Coherent national policy for disaster risk reduction and DRM needs to be driven from the centre. This means that responsibility for national oversight and coordination needs to be located in a central ministry, and that financial planning for DRM is included in the national accounting system.

The role of a national disaster risk reduction policy cannot be overestimated. It must be clear and comprehensive, yet detailed enough to define the roles and responsibilities of different actors in development sectors as well as local governments. The HFA Progress Review highlights that about one third of the 82 countries and territories who reported have a national disaster risk reduction policy in place, and another third are currently developing one or are in the process of having it reviewed.

Where responsibility for DRM is located within central government it has an enormous positive influence on the effectiveness of policy and accompanying legislation and investment. In principle, ultimate responsibility should be vested at the highest possible political level (UNISDR, 2009). However, where DRM has been located in the Office of the President or Prime Minister, it has often been rendered politically weak, poorly resourced and, moreover, far removed from central development and planning processes (UNESCAP and UNISDR, 2010). Also, when responsibility lies within an environment ministry or an emergency management organization, as is more common, impact and influence on national or local sector development planning and investment decisions may be minimal (Box 7.1). In South Africa, the National Disaster Management Center (NDMC) is part of the Department for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs which is perceived as having a low profile (Williams, 2011), and limited links between the NDMC and local governments mean that this positioning has not been very successful. Where responsibilities have been vested in interior or defence ministries, the predominance of disaster management functions, such as preparedness and response, has generally been reinforced.

Where multi-sector, decentralized systems have been created, often with names that allude to risk reduction and management, this has tended to introduce disaster management into sectors and local governments, rather than focusing attention on using development planning and investment as opportunities for DRM (UNISDR, 2007). 'DRM focal points' within ministries and technical agencies can increase awareness of such issues within sectors but, unless they have the resources and the authority to call the sector to account for risk reduction, their impact is limited and depends on individual performance and relationships (Williams, 2011). A good example of successful leadership and mainstreaming is in Mozambique, where the Coordinating Council of Disaster Management is chaired by the Prime Minister and attended at the ministerial level (Williams, 2011).

Box 7.1 National responsibility for DRM in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the Ministries of Food and of Disaster Management and Relief were merged in 2003 to create a new Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM). This has significantly improved coordination of effective disaster management, but still with a focus on disaster relief, as the MoFDM is not represented on key central government planning boards, such as the National Economic Council and the Economic Affairs Committee. It therefore does not have the necessary political influence required to drive disaster risk reduction across government departments.

(Source: Williams, 2011)

In some countries, a national disaster risk reduction policy framework has been developed that defines an overall strategic vision for disaster risk reduction that allows for specific policies to be developed in each sector. The HFA Progress Review, however, shows that without political authority it is difficult to ensure coherence between national and sector policies, or to influence sector priorities. For example, Algeria's disaster management law of 2004 requires coordination of all relevant sectors, but it has been implemented with limited success. In contrast, in the Gambia, the National Disaster Management Council is chaired by the Vice President with several cabinet ministers as regular members, resulting in strong leadership and commitment to DRM and its successful integration into the country's national development policy, the National Vision 2020 (Lisk, 2010).

Mauritius, the Republic of Moldova, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam all reported on the challenge of implementing well-developed national policy due to the lack of corresponding legislation to enable adequate enforcement and coordination. However, specific DRM legislation is rarely the only legislation related to reducing risks. Even countries that have adopted comprehensive legislation regulate risks through myriad sector laws and orders with respect to land use, building and water management. This may lead to multiple and competing institutional responsibilities to address underlying risk drivers and contradictory policy objectives.

The incipient incorporation of DRM into national planning and public investment systems highlights an opportunity to explicitly locate political authority and policy responsibility for DRM, and for climate change adaptation, in a central planning body such as national planning departments or ministries for economy and finance. Given their role in deciding the allocation of the national budget, these ministries could have greater political leverage over planning and investment in each sector if they had policy responsibility for DRM.

There may be political resistance to moving such responsibility to a central planning or finance ministry, particularly where the existing structure is in the defence sector. However, as the focus of DRM shifts from managing disasters to reducing risks, the political incentives for strengthening the role of finance and planning ministries are likely to become more explicit.

7.3 Decentralization of DRM functions

Effective local action requires human capacity, financial resources and political authority. Central policy responsibility for disaster risk reduction must be complemented by adequately decentralized and layered risk management functions, capacities and corresponding budgets.

Across the world, central governments are quietly sharing more power with sub-national actors (O'Neill, 2005). In theory, decentralization facilitates citizen participation, more engaged decision makers, more local knowledge, more resources and more accountability, but in reality, that potential may not be always realized (Scott and Tarazona, 2011).

Over the past 20 years, many countries have adopted a decentralized approach to DRM. Most DRM functions require local-level planning and implementation, and the HFA itself calls for the decentralization of authority and resources to promote community-level disaster risk reduction. Honduras's 2010 Law on the National Disaster Management System, for example, establishes decentralization as a guiding principle, and the 2010 Philippines Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act makes capacity strengthening of its most decentralized administrative units a state policy (IFRC, 2011). However, not all new legislation takes this approach, such as the centralized plan in Thailand's 2007 Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act. Of the 82 countries and territories that reported progress implementing the HFA in 2010, as of February 2011 only 48 confirmed that local governments have legal responsibility and budgets for DRM.

Decentralizing responsibilities can also have negative results if local governments are unable to assign resources or dedicated staff with adequate technical expertise (Pelling, 2007; ECHO, 2008; Salazar, 2010; Scott and Tarazona, 2011). In Latin America, several countries that have invested in decentralized national systems of DRM for more than a decade, such as Colombia and Nicaragua, still struggle with inadequate local government capacity and resources (von Hesse et al., 2008; Hardoy, 2010). Some 900 of Colombia's 1,098 municipalities have mandated local committees for disaster risk reduction, but only 14 percent implemented emergency and contingency plans. A similar story is seen with South Africa's 2002 Disaster Management Act. Although DRM is supposed to be integrated into development planning in most municipalities (Botha et al., 2010), poor local government capacity has severely limited integration (IFRC, 2011; Johnson, 2011; Scott and Tarazona, 2011; Wisner et al., 2011).

Decentralization without supporting legislation has also proven very challenging in countries that have attempted it, such as Timor-Leste (IFRC, 2011). In traditionally centralized states, decentralized systems have experienced difficulties even after the enactment of new laws. For example, Indonesia's 2007 Disaster Management Act provided for the decentralization of certain powers and responsibilities for disaster risk reduction and response, and each region and city was required to create its own disaster management agencies and committees. However, as of 2009, only

18 of the 32 provinces had established such bodies, and local government resources had not yet been allocated (Kuntjoro and Jamil, 2010). In its self-assessment, India also reported that the devolution of power and financial resources to local authorities has been a major challenge, often hampered by state governments' retention of control.

More attention, therefore, needs to be paid to how DRM functions are layered and tailored to local contexts. DRM activities need to be locally grounded, and responsibilities should be devolved to the local level as much as capacities allow. Not all functions need to be fully decentralized, however, and some may be more appropriately located at higher levels, with greater capacity, political weight and decision-making power. For example, central governments should provide technical, financial and policy support, and take over responsibility for DRM when local capacities are exceeded (Scott and Tarazona, 2011). Another approach is to build up horizontal cooperation, where strong local governments support weaker ones, particularly in countries which have a number of well-resourced and relatively independent local authorities (Box 7.2).

Complete decentralization of budgeting and reporting can also generate problems. Although it may ensure that spending is in line with local priorities, it almost inevitably leads to divisions with national and sector policies and programmes (Benson, 2011).

An incremental approach to decentralization (Box 7.3) may be the best alternative. Where local government capacity and resources are particularly weak, 'deconcentration' may be a good interim step towards the full devolution of responsibilities and functions. In Mozambique, for example, responsibility for DRM is highly centralized in the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC). Its functions, however, are implemented through deconcentrated regional offices and local committees, separate from and in parallel to the decentralized system of local administration. As disaster risk reduction has a high profile in Mozambique, these deconcentrated mechanisms are well resourced, and staff can relocate freely between central and local levels depending on needs. Given that local government capacity is weak, most risk reduction functions are undertaken by INGC staff (Scott and Tarazona, 2011). However, while improving effective delivery,

Box 7.2 An alternative resource mechanism – cities in China sharing human resources, experiences and finances

China has a twinning programme that transfers financial and technical support from one province or municipality to a disaster-affected area with less human and financial resources. The twinning agreement diverts 1 percent of the annual income plus technical capacity from the richer province to fund recovery projects in the poorer province for three years.

After the 2008 earthquake in China, one such programme allowed funds from Shandong Province and Shanghai Municipality to rebuild schools and hospitals in Beichuan County and Dujiangyan City to higher standards. Shandong and Shanghai also deployed staff to the newly rebuilt institutes to provide on-the-job guidance, and they invited teachers, doctors and managers to the donor provinces to receive training.

Twinning provides benefits to both recipients and donors, building experience, capacities and government networks within the country or region. It provides a stable source of funding and critical capacity sharing for a number of years, and encourages longer-term partnerships and risk sharing. Twinning also helps with the increased demand for skills after a disaster, as well as building these capacities. It can be agreed on before a disaster, allowing for fast and predictable deployment during recovery.

(Source: Ievers and Bhatia, 2011)[1]

Box 7.3 Towards more responsible and responsive local risk reduction

An incremental approach to decentralizing disaster risk reduction can address limited local capacities, a primary barrier to effective local governance. Other options for addressing the problem of low capacity are:

1. *Not decentralizing down to the lowest possible level*. Instead, create centres of excellence at intermediate levels so that DRM technical resources and capacities can be pooled.
2. *Taking a 'layered' approach*. Different risk reduction functions are decentralized to different layers depending on capacity, rather than wholly devolving or retaining centrally. Layering would have to take place with a good understanding of the local context and the capacities for different functions at different levels.
3. *Using academic institutions and NGOs to support weak local governments*. In Colombia, academic institutions have successfully provided technical risk reduction services to local governments, raising standards and credibility. However, municipalities with the weakest capacities often lack the resources to contract such services unless there is central government support.

(Source: Scott and Tarazona, 2011)

such arrangements may in the long term undermine local government authority and capacities.

7.4 Strengthening accountability

Access to information on disaster risk, particularly for the most vulnerable, is the first step in reducing disaster losses. Good risk governance requires disaster-prone populations to know their risks as well as their rights, and a responsive and accountable civil society engaged in constructive dialogue with governments.

The quality of national and local governance in general, and factors such as voice and accountability in particular, influence why some countries have far higher disaster mortality and relative economic loss than others (Kahn, 2005; Stromberg, 2007; UNISDR, 2009). For example, the level of corruption has a direct and statistically significant impact on government efficiency and the rule of law, two key components of risk governance (Lavell et al., 2010). Corruption also affects the level of trust that citizens have in their government, administration and services (Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Morris and Klesner, 2010). In general, more democratic, accountable states with more effective institutions tend to suffer lower mortality (Anbarci et al., 2005; Escaleras et al., 2007).

If it is true that 'political survival lies at the heart of disaster politics' (Smith and Quiroz Flores, 2010), then accountability mechanisms are particularly important in generating political and economic incentives for disaster risk reduction. The risk of being held to account for decisions that result in avoidable disaster risk can be a powerful incentive to make DRM work.

In DRM, as in many development sectors, establishing accountability is not straightforward (Olson et al., 2011). Making direct attribution and tracking of responsibility is complicated by having multiple actors involved in the construction of any specific risk. Outcomes of any one actor's decisions and actions may not become visible until years or decades later, and inaction or symbolic actions may have greater effects than decisions and actions actually taken. Moreover, the dynamics of accountability in any single context are subject to the historical evolution of regulation and governance, of cultural values and social norms.

Nevertheless, there are examples where direct responsibility for action and inaction is monitored, and bearing personal responsibility for disaster losses can provide a powerful incentive for investing in DRM. Indonesia has enacted legislation that makes leaders directly responsible for disaster losses, and in Colombia the decentralization of DRM responsibilities has meant that mayors have been imprisoned when people were found to have died needlessly from a disaster (Scott and Tarazona, 2011).

Access to information is a key factor that drives accountability (World Bank, 2010b; Gupta, 2011). However, access to information is only effective when governments actively support the right to information, and when citizens are aware of their legal right and are willing to assert it. In addition, structural barriers, such as illiteracy, may impede access to and use of information (Gupta, 2011).

The 1883 explosion of Krakatoa, Indonesia, followed the introduction of the telegram, and so became the first globally reported disaster (Winchester, 2003). Today, most disasters are broadcast around the world in real time, through television, radio, print media, mobile social networking and the Internet. The media, therefore, plays an increasingly important role in holding governments, NGOs, international organizations and other stakeholders to account (Olson et al., 2011). This applies only when the media is free and, more importantly, responsive to disaster risk reduction perspectives, which means it looks beyond the images of catastrophe and body counts, and reports on of the causes and longer-term impacts of disasters (Radford and Wisner, 2011; Wisner et al., 2011).

The media play four different roles in the wake of disasters: observing and reporting facts such as mortality rates and the volume of assistance provided, holding governments and humanitarian actors to account, analysing the causes of the disaster and raising public awareness about potential improvements in DRM (Olson et al., 2011). Importantly, and given its global reach, the media can help create political incentives not just in the disaster-affected country, but in other countries with similar risks. As Box 7.4 shows, after the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, media outlets in Jamaica and Peru paid increased attention to their own risks, highlighting the concern that 'it could happen here' (Olson et al., 2011).

Evidence suggests that a culture of social accountability, and specific mechanisms to ensure it, can directly improve the effectiveness of governance and service delivery (Acharya, 2010; Daikoku, 2010). Algeria's 2004 Law on the Prevention of Major Risks and on Disaster Management in the Framework of Sustainable Development now guarantees citizens a right to information about the risks and vulnerabilities of their places of residence and work, and whether there are measures in place to reduce risks and manage disasters (IFRC, 2011). Likewise, Serbia's 2009 Law on Emergency Situations and El Salvador's 2005 Law on Civil Protection, Prevention and Mitigation of Disasters, acknowledge citizens' right to be informed on disaster risks and oblige authorities to provide this information. However, in other countries information on disaster losses and impacts is not always made public.

Whereas such laws are important, they do not necessarily strengthen actual accountability unless they are supported by penalties and/or effective performance-based rewards. For example, provisions in legislation and the regulation of public office can specify the liabilities of politicians and government leaders, becoming more effective when linked to expenditure and budgets. Transparent contractual arrangements between government departments and between government and private service providers also contribute to increased accountability. Where rights and obligations are clearly articulated and tied to concrete performance measures, service delivery can improve dramatically (Box 7.5).

Box 7.4 The role of the media following the 2010 Haiti and Chile earthquakes

(Source: El Comercio*, 18 February 2010)*

Figure 7.1
Excerpt from *El Comercio*: hypothetical tsunami striking a beach community south of Lima

Following the 2010 Chile earthquake, the media identified gaps and overlaps between government agencies, central and local government, and the need to improve seismic monitoring. Following the Haiti and Chile earthquakes, the media in neighbouring countries increased their disaster reporting. Nearly 20 percent of the media reports in Jamaica and 13 percent in Peru focused on the need to identify risks and vulnerabilities in their own countries, and another 15 percent and 34 percent respectively on risk reduction measures. In Peru, for example, the press ran articles on the potential risks tsunamis posed to coastal communities (see Figure 7.1). In Haiti, Chile and neighbouring countries, the media showed that it was capable of holding governments and the international community to account. This capacity is limited however, by the media's short attention span and rapid drop-off in coverage after disasters.

(Source: Olson et al., 2011)

Box 7.5 Social audits to ensure accountability in rural employment in India

India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) facilitates accountability by both governments and civil society. It includes decentralized planning and implementation, proactive disclosures and mandatory social audits of all projects. The impetus was provided by strong political will and a committed high-level bureaucracy. In 2006, the Strategy and Performance Innovation Unit (SPIU) of the Department of Rural Development, collaborated with MKSS, a civil society organization in Rajasthan that pioneered social auditing in India, to train officials and civil society activists and to design and conduct pilot social audits. This process trained 25 civil society resource persons at the state level, complemented by 660 more at the district level, with audits conducted by educated youth volunteers identified and trained by this pool of expertise.

Since the first social audit was conducted in July 2006, an average of 54 social audits have been conducted every month across all 13 NREGA districts. Whether audits have resulted in improved accountability in service delivery needs to be researched, but significant and lasting impacts are already evident, including improvements in citizens' awareness levels, their confidence and self-respect, and importantly, their ability to engage with local officials.

(Source: Acharya, 2010)

7.5 Scaling up DRM

Where communities, civil society organizations and governments enter into partnership, the scale of DRM efforts can be increased considerably. However, this requires a change in the administrative culture of many public departments: to accept that working directly with low-income communities in risk-prone areas must become the norm rather than the exception.

A strong civil society can play a critical role in creating social demand for DRM, by ensuring political responsibility and increased accountability, mostly at local levels (UNISDR, 2010; Gupta, 2011; Satterthwaite, 2011). Civil society organizations, where they have the ability and opportunity to organize and voice their positions, can reduce local risks while building political and economic imperatives for DRM. Without innovative local partnerships between civil society, local and central government and other stakeholders, instruments such as public investment planning or conditional cash transfers are unlikely to be effective. Also, as highlighted in the previous chapter, without such partnerships, land use management policies and building regulations may actually construct risk rather than reduce it.

Community-based DRM (CBDRM) has moved to centre stage within many NGOs, international organizations and some governments. The concept was originally described as a cost-effective approach to ensure greater government responsiveness and accountability to local needs, particularly those of risk-prone, low-income households and communities (Maskrey, 1989). In practice, however, it has often been limited to improvements in community preparedness and response capacities through local projects, and there are clear limits as to what risk-prone households and their organizations can achieve on their own (Satterthwaite, 2011). They only rarely control resources or influence decision-making processes in a way that could unlock access to safe land, manage complex watersheds, or undertake large-scale public works often necessary to reduce risk.

Real CBDRM occurs when risk-prone communities have been able to progressively engage and involve government and other supra-local actors to support their activities and improve accountability (Maskrey, 2011) (Box 7.6.). This approach to scale up local action implies a very different kind of engagement

Box 7.6 Community-driven disaster risk reduction in Philippine cities

Organized urban communities and government-community networks are strong vehicles for social mobilization and disaster risk reduction in the Philippines. Communities are involved in the identification and prioritization of post-disaster assistance, and in the management and monitoring of materials delivered for housing and other uses.

The community associations also used their own savings as leverage to engage municipal government in obtaining additional resources to secure land for post-disaster housing. Municipalities can access national calamity funds, as well as their own calamity funds, which can be 5 percent of their total budget. The new Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law, passed in May 2010, now enables most such funds to be used for disaster risk reduction, with a need to reserve only 30 percent as a contingency for post-disaster interventions. Not all communities are aware of the new law and its implications, however, so funds have not yet been disbursed directly to the communities, but experience suggests that this will be the next step towards greater flexibility and community ownership.

(Source: Carcellar, 2011)

between civil society and governments than occurs in most CBDRM projects.

A number of characteristic local processes are evident where such a community-level engagement has occurred. These include risk-prone households and their organizations gaining a greater awareness of local disaster losses, impacts and risks. There is the building of partnerships with local governments and other stakeholders, which allows negotiation on priorities, public investment and support, and the implementation of measures that not only reduce disaster risk, but have other benefits such as improvements in local infrastructure and services. There is also evidence of greater cost-effectiveness and sustainability of investments (Maskrey, 1989, 2011; Satterthwaite, 2011).

Case studies from India (Livengood, 2011), the Philippines and the Caribbean (Pelling, 2010) show that local households have played an active role in increasing risk awareness in local governments, through exercises in risk mapping and vulnerability assessment. In Cuttack, India, for example, a joint government–community risk assessment process builds on more than two decades of community-led data collection and mapping. Today, the mapping includes GPS-marked boundaries and maps of informal settlements, producing digital maps at the city scale which can be presented to municipal authorities. This process of settlement identification, mapping and demarcation, encompassing all of Cuttack's informal settlements, has led to an accurate and disaggregated database on risk and vulnerability that is fed into a city-wide assessment (Livengood, 2011).

A community organization on its own rarely has the leverage to engage governments or hold them to account, but networks and consortia of expert institutions and civil society organizations can promote government support to local initiatives. This can increase their effectiveness and sustainability, improve implementation, ensure accountability, help scale up local initiatives and projects and, importantly, play a key role in strengthening local capacities (Satterthwaite, 2011; Scott and Tarazona, 2011; Venton 2011).

When communities have some ownership of contributions to risk reduction, their 'small pipes' can be combined with the 'large pipes' of public services and infrastructure, and the unit costs of both community and local government investment can be reduced significantly. Then, there is also a better chance that central resources meet local needs, and that other vulnerabilities are reduced over time (Hasan, 2010). Scaling up such experiences calls for innovative financing arrangements that merge public planning and investment with local priority-setting and decision-making, as for example, in post-disaster reconstruction (Box 7.7).

Box 7.7 Flexible financing for community-led 'building back better'

A community fund is a key tool that enables communities to participate in planning and implementing post-disaster reconstruction. This type of financing must be flexible enough to allow survivors to collectively assess their particular reconstruction and development needs. Ideally, this includes a revolving fund system that provides longer-term financial solutions, with different funds for different needs. This allows accounts to be managed by different groups and reduces the risk of creating power imbalances within the community. It also usually improves the transparency of contributions and expenditures.

In some cases, survivors are able to add their own contributions to community funds. The Homeless People's Federation in the Philippines builds on existing savings for post-disaster reconstruction planning and funding, so people's savings contribute, while giving community members a measure of independence. These savings can also provide a basis for much needed access to loans. After cyclone Nargis, for example, villages in Myanmar borrowed money to ensure that all affected households were able to rebuild.

(Source: Archer and Boonyabancha, 2010)

A culture of public administration that provides incentives for working in partnership with low-income groups, however, remains the exception rather than the rule and is a major obstacle to change in many countries. In some contexts, legal barriers may prohibit municipalities from working in informal settlements. Although legislation and regulation requiring the participation of multiple stakeholders in planning and development have become more common, such measures may unintentionally legitimize government actions rather than encourage communities to question or challenge unresponsive institutions (Gupta, 2011). In Turkey, multi-stakeholder forums for building and planning include representation from civil society, academic institutions, professional and private sector organizations. However, their recommendations are rarely implemented, the mechanisms are difficult to sustain (Johnson, 2011), and participation has been influenced by state patronage (Ganapati, 2009; Oezerdem and Jacoby, 2006; Johnson, 2011). A lack of clarity in the law on what is meant by participation or weak enforcement provisions result in ineffective consultation processes or those that exist on paper only.

Scaling up local initiatives, therefore, requires new capacities and skills in local and central government institutions. It also requires a cultural shift in the attitude of municipal governments, contractors and non-governmental organizations towards working in partnership with low-income households and their representative organizations. 'Volunteer technical communities' can also play an important role in this process, filling gaps in knowledge and technology (Blanchard, 2011). In many cases, such changes have been triggered by a new generation of elected mayors with a sincere commitment to improve conditions in informal settlements (Satterthwaite, 2011). Cities are also learning from one another about innovative approaches to planning, financing and development. In contrast to high-income countries where DRM is largely provided for by the government, risk-prone households and communities in low- and middle-income countries have always had to innovate creative solutions to manage their risks. As an increasing number of national and city governments start to put in place structures and resources to support and facilitate local efforts, a new perspective for risk governance is opening up.

Note

1 For more information, refer to www.sc.gov.cn/zt_sczt/zhcjmhxjy/cjjy/kjcj/200912/t20091217_871603.shtml and www.sc.gov.cn/zt_sczt/zhcjmhxjy/dkzy/sf/200912/t20091201_859811.shtml.