

# **Regional Workshop on Urban Risk Reduction**

**Damascus, Syria  
4 – 5 November 2009**

Joint effort by UNISDR, WB/GFDRR, UNDP Syria and the Syrian Ministry  
of Local Administration

# Key Issues Raised

- Global Approaches and Methodologies offer general guidance.
- Regionalization offer a general outlook of risk profile and analysis in the region.
- Nationalization offer valuable facts for decision and policy makers – MAKE the CASE
- Localization is the application on the ground to reduce risks/vulnerabilities

# Key Issues

- Linking scientific knowledge with applied action and plans ... lacking in the region.
- Risk identification (sectoral), hazard mapping... some progress!
- Vulnerability assessment by sector, by target group, by city, by.... Lots to be done.
- Disbursed knowledge and information... data accuracy and data accessibility = CHALLENGE
- Centralized planning... define “local action”

# Key Issues

- Good Governance is key
- Public Awareness and community ownership
- Legislations and role of parliamentarians
- Risk and Poverty Linkages
- Climate Change context... CC impact, multiplicity of actors, how to use DRR in CCA, resources for adaptation plans, etc...
- Assessment and safety of critical infrastructure “health facilities and schools” is key for urban risk reduction.

# Recommendations

- Regionalization, nationalization, localization
- Tools and methodologies are means but not goals by themselves.
- Risk Assessment Tools are for different purposes and analysis derived should be tailored for public awareness purposes and for decision making purposes.
- “Nutrition Guide” vs. “Cooking Book”

- Risk assessment exercises should be FULLY owned by national governments and local authorities ---- otherwise NO VALUE
- Risk assessment should be analyzed to serve different purposes (general profile, public awareness, engagement of stakeholders, policy development, investments in DRR, etc..)
- Data collection is key for comprehensive assessment.
- Data – Who? What? How?
- Macro level vs. Micro Level
- Disaggregate the data (gender, income, etc. )

- Advancing urban risk reduction in the region could start through a “Regional URR Task Force”.
  - Task Force need strong commitment/facilitation/coordination
  - Definition of status of the TF (informal, vibrant, knowledge sharing forum, actionable activities)
  - Definition of Tasks (developing tools & methodologies, advocacy for political awareness and commitment, capacity development and training)
  - Time frame for deliverables

- Empower HFA focal points in the countries to be the facilitator and entry point for national engagement.
- Need for national coordination mechanisms (platforms/committees, etc..) for DRR
- Build on exiting progress “undertake URR inventory of initiatives”
- Use currently tailored methodologies to advance URR such as Geocities, CDS, Urban Observatories, Extensive Risk Analysis, etc..
- Mainstream DRR in currently used tools
- Integrate the assessment and improvement of health facilities safety in urban risk reduction plans.



- Engage stakeholders from the region and (LAS, ECAT, AUDI, ATO, national academic institutions, researchers, NGOs, RC societies)
- 2010-2011 World Campaign “Safe Cities”
  - Regionalize/tailor the global criteria for safe and resilient cities (UNISDR will share the criteria)
  - ECAT has network of 420 cities and will reach-out to them to raise awareness on the campaign
  - Use of mass media “communication messages, communication means, etc..”
  - Know your risk... field visits, checking role models, checking infrastructure issues
  - Documenting good practices/examples from the region for global products and cross-regional sharing

- Take into consideration human dimensions, social and economic dimensions in addition to structural issues.
- Children “new generation” at the heart of the matter... not only as vulnerable group but also as key player in the future.
- Role of insurance schemes, building codes and regulations, laws, etc..
- Private sector, community-participation, volunteers, universities are the arms to implement in addition to Gov. and specialized technical organizations.

# FINAL NOTE

- We know the problems...
- We might also know the solutions already....
- We need to act now as a human obligation before it is even a government obligation
- Roles/Responsibilities ---- ACCOUNTABILITY
- Resources .... Human/technical, data, financial
- Address target groups based on their needs not our assumptions... make the case

**LOCALIZE OUR ACTIONS**