

The Secretary General

Ms Margareta Wahlström
Special Representative of the Secretary
General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Secretariat of the International Strategy
for Disaster Reduction
International Environment House II
7-9 Chemin de Balexert
CH-1219 Genève 10

Geneva, 13 October 2010

Dear Ms Wahlström,

Re: Mid-Term Review of the HFA

I thank you for the letter inviting the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to contribute inputs to the Mid-term Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

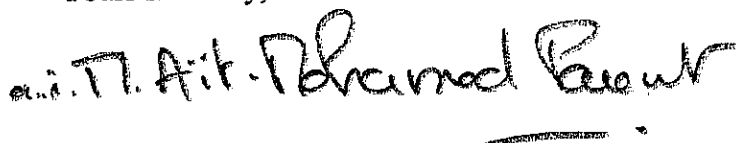
As you know, the IFRC is devoted in building resilience of local communities and its activities in disaster risk reduction represent an important component of its work in developmental area.

In this regard, we are fully conscious with our commitment made in Kobe in 2005 during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and I am pleased to inform you we are conducting internally a review on the progress made toward the implementation of the HFA and soon the outcome will be shared with UN-ISDR for your inclusion in the HFA's Mid-Term Review report.

I look forward to reading the final report of the Mid-Term Review from UN-ISDR.

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| ISDR | |
| 240/10 | 25 OCT 2010 |
| Action: | Ketizian Rossar |
| Information: | MW/HMV/Christel Rose |
| File: | IFRC |

Yours sincerely,


Bekele Geleta





International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

Hyogo Framework for Action Red Cross Red Crescent Mid-Term Review October, 2010

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Community Preparedness and Risk Reduction Department

P.O. Box 372

CH-1211 Geneva 19

Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 730 4222

www.ifrc.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Background | The ISDR is in 2010 performing a system-wide mid-term review of the <i>Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA): Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters 2005-2015</i> . Committed to the HFA, the Red Cross Red Crescent is contributing its substantial experience, as well as that of the vulnerable communities it serves, to the mid-term review. This document globally consolidates these perspectives based on the broad strategic questions developed by the UNISDR secretariat for the review. |
| Successes | The HFA has provided strong guidance at the global, regional and national levels for developing policies and strategies. The most important achievements have been the agreement of common policy frameworks, raised DRR profile, increased awareness and knowledge, and more effective disaster preparedness. In the Red Cross Red Crescent, the HFA has served as a reference for programme planning and review, staff development, and capacity building at the institutional and community levels. |
| Challenges | The HFA has been challenged by a lack of resources, constantly changing contexts and insufficient coordination. There has been limited integration of DRR into sustainable development. Structural limitations, inadequate legislation and policy, lack of leadership, weak participatory coordination, lack of clear guidance and limited reach have hampered the strengthening of resilience of the most vulnerable. DRR investments are challenged by a lack of prioritisation and tangible evidence of cost efficiency. |
| Local action | While in some countries community participation is consistently facilitated, in many there is a lack of initiative to engage with local actors. In some cases HFA dissemination to the local level has occurred in a very structured manner while in other countries there has been minimal cooperation between central government and local levels. The link is often not achieved when responsibilities are unclear or split between different agencies, also with limited coordination and leadership. Even where local government is legislatively empowered to lead on DRR, it often lacks the capacity and resources to do so. |
| Underlying risk | A culture of safety and resilience has to a limited degree been established, with greatest progress in communities targeted by local-level DRR. People often have more pressing needs even though they know actions to meet such needs may make them less safe in the future. If development policies and programmes are designed based on self-identified and prioritised needs of vulnerable communities, underlying risk will by necessity be addressed through a multi-sectoral integrated approach. In support, community participation and empowerment, education, awareness raising, institutionalised but flexible partnerships, leadership, ownership and political will are all needed. |
| Climate change | Climate change adaptation (CCA) must be treated as a multi-sectoral issue and be integrated into sustainable development focusing on those who face the brunt of the impacts of climate change, the most vulnerable. Development and DRR programmes must consider increased uncertainties and/or magnitudes and frequencies of climate-related disaster risk across all sectors. Early warning early action needs to be strengthened by better linking scientific studies and data with DRR practice across all time-scales, especially at the local level. Innovative partnerships with knowledge centres and meteorological services are needed, as is political will for supporting DRR as a major tool for CCA. |
| Next five years | International and national coordination must follow common priorities and targets through comprehensive planning, based on the needs of the most vulnerable. Better support for operational and community-centred DRR, particularly financing mechanisms that pool and guarantee long-term DRR and CCA resources, are needed to achieve scale. Governments should develop enabling environments for community-based DRR, also in terms of national budget allocation to the local level. Practitioners' culture should shift away from focusing on outputs to achieving demonstrable outcomes and impacts. A more proactive and participatory approach for sharing information, experiences and expertise, including across languages, should be supported. Finally, stronger professional skills development across the DRR and development spectra at all levels to expand the human resource pool is needed. |
| After HFA | The voluntary nature of the HFA has provided flexibility of engagement, with actors able to participate and contribute to the degree with which they are comfortable. However so far there has been little accountability despite important efforts both at national and international levels. More creativity is needed to improve this situation, for instance, through measures to connect development aid to DRR progress and the agreement on quantifiable and time-limited targets related to DRR similar to the MDGs. |

INTRODUCTION

The ISDR is in 2010 performing a system-wide mid-term review of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA): Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters 2005-2015¹. The objective is:

*"to provide a critical analysis of HFA implementation over the first five years of its existence with a view to inform its continued implementation through 2015 as well as to provide initial thinking about any future international framework on disaster risk reduction that would follow it beyond 2015."*²

As an active member of the ISDR system committed to the HFA, the Red Cross Red Crescent feels obligated to contribute its substantial experience to the mid-term review, ensuring that our institutional perceptions, as well as those of the vulnerable communities we serve, are captured and considered.

Much of the feedback consolidated in this document was provided by Red Cross Red Crescent colleagues working either in Asia Pacific or at the global level. Significant contributions were also made by Red Cross Red Crescent staff active in Africa and the Caribbean.

The mid-term review, coordinated by the UNISDR secretariat, is being informed through a number of different methods including review of existing reports and studies, structured workshops at regional and national levels, in-depth studies, one-on-one interviews with key informants and on-line debates. Many Red Cross Red Crescent staff has already and will continue to participate in these processes.

METHODOLOGY

The UNISDR secretariat has developed a set of broad strategic questions, with relevant sub-questions:

*"to provide information about the extent to which the HFA has progressed so far: what elements have been of obstacle and what of success to its implementation, how can countries and communities further their commitments and action to ensure "substantial reduction of losses" in the evolving global context for disaster risk reduction, and what elements emerge at this stage as relevant to ensure continued focus and action at the international and national level in DRR beyond 2015."*³

These questions were circulated among the IFRC's field delegations, sectoral departments and National Societies. This document represents a consolidated summary of the responses received.

It must be noted that due to the breadth of Red Cross Red Crescent experiences and the different regional and national contexts in which we work, while generally there was consensus in perceptions, opinions, and recommendations, in some cases there were disagreements. As such there may be some inconsistencies between responses. Examples where strong disagreement was found include:

- The utility of HFA: some Red Cross Red Crescent staff felt it had been of great use, while others felt more detached from the process and commitments, only using the HFA as a somewhat distant reference.
- The voluntary nature of the HFA: while some felt the voluntary nature enabled greater flexibility and encouraged involvement, others consider it a short-coming that has limited delivery on commitments, particularly by governments.
- HFA reporting mechanisms: some colleagues stressed their use to identify gaps, while others were not even aware that they existed.

Consolidated responses have been crafted with a global view; although specific points were raised by respondents on certain national and regional issues, these have not been included in this summary. Further, due to the nature of the questions from the UNISDR secretariat as well as heterogeneity in how Red Cross Red Crescent staff interpreted the questions, there is some repetition of messages between questions. This points however to some very clear key messages, lessons learned and recommendations for the HFA, as reviewed in the executive summary.

¹ <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/hfa.htm>

² <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/hfa-mtr/framework/?pid:221&pid:1>

³ <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/hfa-mtr/documents/MTR-Conceptual-FmWrk.pdf>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following IFRC offices and National Societies provided their experience and expertise to this review:

- Caribbean Regional Representation
- Community Preparedness and Risk Reduction Department, Geneva
- East Africa Regional Representation
- International Disaster Response Laws (IDRL) Programme, Geneva
- Myanmar Country Office
- Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre
- Sahel Regional Representation
- Southern Africa Regional Representation
- Sri Lanka Country Office
- Timor Leste Country Office
- British Red Cross
- Canadian Red Cross Society
- Finnish Red Cross
- Japanese Red Cross Society
- Maldivian Red Crescent
- Nepal Red Cross Society
- Norwegian Red Cross
- Spanish Red Cross
- Timor Leste Red Cross Society

RESULTS

Key Question

1. In your experience has the HFA been instrumental over the past five years in reducing disaster losses in communities and countries in country X/region Y?

The HFA has provided strong guidance at the global and national levels for developing policies and strategies, mostly for governments, international organisations and other agencies working multi-nationally. The Red Cross Red Crescent's own strategic framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR), the *Framework for Community Safety and Resilience*⁴, is linked with the HFA, ensuring harmonization of strategic and policy approaches.

"The HFA has been a fundamental tool for developing both domestic and international DRR policies and strategies."

Japanese Red Cross Society

For planning and implementation of community-based DRR in the Red Cross Red Crescent, the HFA has served as more of reference than a guide. Programme development is generally ensured to be in-line with HFA, indirectly referencing the HFA as a broad framework for design. Sometimes national and community planning processes have been performed independently of the HFA, yet the resultant strategic approaches were similar, highlighting to some degree the appropriateness of the HFA as an over-arching strategic framework.

At the same time, the HFA provides a solid reference for programme review and staff development, and has been used to support capacity building at the institutional and community levels. Many major post-disaster recovery operations of the Red Cross Red Crescent, for example after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and tropical storm Nargis in Myanmar in 2008, have used the HFA as a foundation for building back better. Still, while most Red Cross Red Crescent staff is aware of HFA, it is often not directly translated into practical action on the ground.

1.1 What are the three most important achievements that contributed to reducing disaster losses through the HFA implementation in country X/region Y?

Providing a common policy framework

The HFA has enabled the global DRR community to work under a harmonized framework, allowing for the strengthening of partnerships and multi-stakeholder alliances. With practitioners globally and nationally speaking the "same language" and working towards the same goals, practical experience sharing has become easier, also enabling peer-to-peer exchange for capacity building.

Raising profile, knowledge and awareness

This has occurred at different levels. At the global, regional and national levels, the HFA has contributed greatly to raising the political profile and prioritization of DRR with governments, international organisations and national

⁴ <http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/resources/reducing-risks/cs-framework-community-en.pdf>

supporting/implementing agencies. The development of national DRR coordination mechanisms (National Platforms) and in some cases national strategies for DRR has accomplished much to move the agenda forward. At the community level, participatory assessment, prioritisation and educational activities such as the Red Cross Red Crescent's vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA)⁵ have greatly contributed to the public's awareness of their local disaster risks and ways to reduce them.

"A better understanding of hazards, vulnerabilities, risks and capacities at the community level has been developed, particularly through such approaches as VCA."
IFRC Myanmar Country Office

Integrated preparedness

The HFA has supported both institutional and community preparedness to be strengthened in an integrated manner. Vertical integration between international, national and community actors has been improved, as has horizontal integration reflecting preparedness as part of sustainable development. Contingency plans and early warning systems tend to now incorporate links to community mechanisms and capacity, and recognising that DRR in terms of discrete activities is generally not a new concept for practitioners, integration into sustainable development has been fostered through better programme planning.

1.2 What are the three most important elements that prevented the HFA from achieving its intended outcome i.e. the reduction of disaster losses?

Lack of resources

The primary challenge preventing HFA implementation has been a lack of financial resources. This translates into insufficient human resources, capacities, infrastructure and even data, and ultimately makes the objective of scaling up DRR to all vulnerable communities extremely challenging. Despite some progress, for example on cost-benefit analysis, there is a lack of means to measure and communicate DRR impacts, which ultimately would help mobilise more resources.

Changing understanding and contexts

Despite some progress at the global level, there are still challenges to achieve a common understanding of DRR. Often the focus is too much on specific disasters as opposed to the concept of strengthening resilience. This is particularly difficult in light of emerging risks faced by practitioners on the ground, for example climate change, economic recessions, urbanisation, insecurity, etc. Nationally, although governments may at some point identify DRR as a priority, changing political and economic conditions often introduce new competing priorities.

Poor coordination

Despite many National Platforms or similar coordination mechanisms having been developed, many are ineffective. Coordination, particular between the national and local levels, is generally weak. National planning and decision-making often does not take into consideration the needs and capacities of the most vulnerable, so resources and support are not provided to enable and empower those who need it most. In many countries, existing legislation still does not go far enough to ensure prioritization and coordination of DRR activities (particularly with regard to the allocation of resources), and there is no standard model of implementation. Further, despite some progress, national development planning and programming by governments and organisations alike often still occur following sectoral "silos", without cross-sectoral coordination and integration.

"In some countries even when there is a strong national disaster response mechanism, a functional DRR platform is still missing. The idea of a comprehensive partnership among all DRR actors to coordinate and integrate is still relatively new, particularly in response-focused national disaster offices."

IFRC Caribbean Regional
Representation

⁵ <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/preparing/preparedness-tools/vca.asp>

Key Question

2. How has the HFA informed decision making or priority setting in country X/region Y?

Many of the Red Cross Red Crescent's strategic frameworks and policies have been developed with direct or indirect reference to the HFA, particularly the *Framework for Community Safety and Resilience, Strategy 2010: To improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity* and *Strategy 2020: Saving lives, changing minds*⁶. While decision-making and priority setting by National Societies is based on these strategic commitments, the Red Cross Red Crescent, particularly at the community level, follows the priorities identified by communities themselves.

At the same time, directly or indirectly the HFA has helped drive the setting of more integrated priorities, guide programme design and implementation, identify main actors, and strengthened engagement in national coordination mechanisms (National Platforms) to ensure coherence of Red Cross Red Crescent programming with government commitments.

The HFA has provided a strong reference point for national dialogues and planning, particularly regarding climate change adaptation. In the run-up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen, the HFA was a useful tool to highlight tangible and immediate opportunities for climate change adaptation, as well as existing capacities. Priority for Action 2 has played a key role, especially early warning and early action.

2.1 How are HFA reporting mechanisms supporting its implementation?

Red Cross Red Crescent experience with HFA reporting mechanisms has been mixed. In many countries, there is little or no engagement or even knowledge of any HFA reporting mechanisms. In other countries the National Society either receives information in a top-down manner or provides information upstream without receiving feedback. Generally HFA reporting mechanisms are considered weak and ineffective.

"The HFA reporting mechanism helps to translate HFA priorities to the local level, while also capturing local progress and contributions to inform the national level."

Nepal Red Cross Society

In some cases, however, National Societies report these mechanisms are being used to identify national gaps, and are even being translated into local languages and used at the local level. In other countries they are treated as "soft" reminders of Red Cross Red Crescent commitments. The monitoring of funding commitments by governments and donors alike are continuously highlighted, underscoring the insufficiency of available resources.

Key Question

3. What elements of the HFA have worked less well in reducing disaster risk in country X/region Y and why?

The primary challenge of achieving the HFA has been Priority for Action 4, reducing the underlying risk factors. There is still a lack of understanding and/or incapability to respond to underlying risk drivers, partly due to insufficient capacity, but also due to excessive focus on *what* as opposed to *how* risk needs to be reduced. Much of the thinking under HFA focuses on disasters only, whereas underlying risk factors are much broader, particular in terms of ensuring resilient livelihoods. Short-term and targeted sectoral funding is contributing to this challenge. Further to this, implementation under Priority for Action 3 (using knowledge, innovation and education to build a

⁶ http://www.ifrc.org/who/strategy2020.asp?navid=03_03

culture of safety and resilience at all levels) has tended to focus on preparedness for specific hazards, as opposed to overall resilience strengthening.

Inability to achieve the reduction of underlying risk factors is also linked to limited integration of DRR into sustainable development. Structural (institutional) limitations, inadequate legislation and policy, and a lack of clear guidance often hamper multi-sectoral integration and management of cross-cutting issues. Particularly government policies and actions in many countries continue to focus on disaster response, often with disaster management being handled by civil protection ministries. This further results in lack of achievement of HFA Priority for Action 1: ensuring that DRR is a national (and local) priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

"Project-driven funding approaches greatly affect the sustainability of DRR. While some activities can be built to stand the test of time, others tend to lapse some years after the end of the project and funding."

Finnish Red Cross

Priority for Action 1 also includes the decentralisation of responsibilities and resources, which has so far not been sufficient. National prioritisation and profiling is not translating into community level actions, with very limited community participation in national decision-making. The HFA is generally seen as a top-down model, despite community and volunteer participation highlighted as a cross-cutting issue. In many countries, the lack of a political and legislative enabling environment, in addition to insufficient local funding and capacities, is limiting the scaling up and sustainability of community-based DRR. While there may be many small local initiatives, full nationwide coverage continues to be a challenge.

3.1 What were the three most critical factors that prevented effectiveness in the areas identified in question 3 above?

Lack of government leadership

Many national governments are not fully committed and/or lack sufficient capacity to sufficiently lead and coordinate DRR, resulting in a lack of policies and strategic planning, particular in support of reducing underlying risk factors. If proper legislation does not exist, with each changing political administration national priorities and resources can easily be diverted. In some countries a fragile socio-political environment means government is always preoccupied with other priorities. Local authorities often are not empowered or mandated to lead local DRR, or not capable to do so.

Lack of inclusive coordination mechanisms

As mentioned national DRR coordination mechanisms are often ineffective. Common assessment and planning tools are either lacking or under-utilised, not providing the channels for which different actors can together identify priorities and develop partnerships to fill gaps. Generally participation or at least representation of the most vulnerable in national coordination mechanisms is insufficient.

Not reaching the most vulnerable

While many organisations including the Red Cross Red Crescent work with highly vulnerable communities, comprehensive coverage is still not possible due primarily to a lack of resources and capacities on the ground. With limited and generally short-term funding, community engagement is often not sustainable, and supporting organisations tend to be spread too thin. In some cases there is a lack of geographic access to remote locations and/or difficult urban settings.

3.2 What are the specific constraints to start or increase investments in disaster risk reduction in country X/region Y?

National governments need to actively prioritise DRR, including empowering of local authorities and communities through mandated and supported roles. By creating an enabling environment through policy development and joint planning, resources will more clearly target needs. Capacities are needed at all levels to manage and commit resources.

Joint planning should occur on the basis of a collaborative understanding of mechanisms for reducing underlying risks. National and local mainstreaming must be based on real and participatory risk assessments, with the aim to integrate supporting actions across sectors and programmes. Without the understanding that investment in all development and humanitarian sectors is needed to reduce risk, resources will not target a comprehensive or effective approach. Donors too need to link their humanitarian and development mechanisms and resources to better support integrated DRR.

"DRR investments have been challenged by the current financial crisis, a lack of evidence of the cost-efficiency of DRR, donors' budget structures not linking humanitarian and development support, and the inherent time-lag between DRR inputs and outcomes."

Norwegian Red Cross

There is a lack of evidence on the cost efficiency of DRR. Political leadership, finance managers and funders need evidence to show that investing in DRR pays off. Political and public perception is challenged by the time-lag and lack of clear evidence of inputs (funding) verses outcomes (reduced disaster impacts). Already limited resources are even more strained due to the current financial crisis.

Finally, clarity is needed regarding DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA). While present donor commitments and media attention on CCA presents a substantial opportunity for funding DRR, it must be clear that DRR is targeting long-term strengthening of resilience as opposed to potentially pre-defined and inappropriate solutions formed under a limited climate change context.

Key Question

4. In your experience, does the HFA sufficiently encourage community participation and the utilization of local knowledge to reduce disaster risk? I.e. in country X/region Y, have communities and local authorities been empowered and is local knowledge and community action being useful/tapped into to manage and reduce disaster risk? If so, how? If not, why not?

The HFA clearly mentions the need for community participation and beneficiary engagement, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships. Therefore it can be considered to "encourage" community participation. However no mechanisms are provided by the HFA to facilitate community and local authority participation, so generally local engagement has been limited.

While there are countries where community participation is consistently encouraged and facilitated, many governments have shown a lack of initiative and/or mechanisms to engage with local actors in DRR. Within DRR there are still many strong voices from a disaster management/response background, which generally utilises a top-down approach. At the same as more and more development actors in particular NGOs and CBOs have engaged in DRR, community participation has improved.

The Red Cross Red Crescent focuses on community-led DRR, using its own tools such as vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) to facilitate community and local authority engagement. While ultimately supporting HFA implementation at the local level, the mechanisms used are not directly related to HFA. Finally, practitioners often face the challenge of defining what a "community" is, particularly in urban and insecure settings.

4.1 How has the central government communicated HFA suggestions and commitments to local government? Are local governments empowered through ad hoc legislation and budget allocations to implement appropriate disaster risk reduction plans?

In some countries HFA dissemination to local authorities has occurred in a very structured manner, following for example a model of district disaster management committees down to sub-district committees and eventually to local committees. Other central governments have organised workshops and seminars to sensitive local staff and authorities, in some cases even providing good practice tools, manuals and educational materials. In other countries, however, there has been minimal communication between the central government and local authorities on HFA commitments.

Similarly, some central governments have or are in the process of enacting legislation to empower local government for DRR implementation, also including local aspects in national strategic plans. Other countries have done little in this direction, or decentralisation and specifically DRR decision-making power has only reached the provincial level. In almost all cases, even where local government is in theory empowered, little or no budget allocations have been made available by central government to support local implementation. Resources available at the local level tend to come from external sources.

"Legislation empowering local government exists, but resources are not reaching the local level."
IFRC Sahel Regional Representation

Where local government is legislatively empowered to lead on DRR, it often lacks capacity. Annual planning tends to be done sector by sector, each led by individual departments with little coordination.

4.2 Which institutional mechanisms at the national level are responsible for ensuring this link with local governments and community organizations?

Globally there are a range of different government structures and modalities tasked with pursuing HFA commitments. Often an apex coordination body sits within an executive office (Prime Minister, President, etc.), but traditionally these have tended to focus on top-down disaster management and response (also in terms of civil-military coordination). In some countries a specific ministry or a specialized agency within a ministry is tasked with DRR coordination.

In many cases responsibilities remain unclear or are split between different ministries, sometimes also with unclear coordination and leadership. A number of countries have adopted or are in the process of enacting legislation that aims at a more systematic and coordinated approach to DRR, and some (but not enough) have also included strong provisions for linking with local governments and community organisations.

District level DRR administration often copies the national set-up. To support linkages with local governments and particularly community organisations, some countries have developed National Platforms, with varying success. Many countries unfortunately have only ad hoc coordination bodies or activate pre-existing coordination cells during times of emergency.

Key Question

5. In your experience is there in country X/region Y a culture of safety and resilience at the level of the general public? For example, do people in country X/region Y seek information about land safety, building structures, etc. prior to building or purchasing properties? Do they expect politicians to have national and local disaster risk reduction plans in place? Do they acquire, or are required by law to acquire, insurance for their properties, crops and livelihoods if they live in disaster prone areas? Are they fully informed, trained if necessary, and equipped about what needs to be done in case of a disaster?

Broadly, the general public have to a very limited degree developed a culture of safety and resilience. Greatest progress has not surprisingly been achieved in communities targeted by local-level DRR, which for the Red Cross Red Crescent always involves components of community awareness building and education. Vulnerable people tend to follow indigenous practices developed over many years of dealing with disasters, which although not always fully effective or potentially even counter-productive, do reflect a culture of safety and resilience developed from past lessons learned.

There is still however a long way to go in terms of general public perceptions and for the most vulnerable this is often challenged by illiteracy and a lack of education. Cyclical hazards or the triggering of early warning messages often provides windows of awareness, but in between people continue to repeatedly expose themselves to high risk situations. Further the nature of risks, hazards and vulnerability are changing so rapidly that the public is finding it difficult to maintain sufficient coping capacities, also fuelled by a lack of information or even misperceptions.

Contextual issues such as poverty and basic needs must be factored into the understanding of a culture of prevention. People may want to lead lives and secure sustainable livelihoods which make them safer and more resilient, but they often have more pressing needs, even though they know actions to meet such daily needs may make them less safe in the medium to long term. Legislation prohibiting risky behaviour is often ignored due to more urgent needs, for example by subsistence farmers living in off-limits flood zones.

"The general public rarely has a culture of safety and resilience, except in areas experiencing cyclical events or where early warning or other key messages are regularly or have recently been provided."

Canadian Red Cross Society

It must also be considered that many people face social and political barriers to being safer and more resilient, for example through marginalisation, discrimination, insecure land holdings, landlord pressure, post conflict tensions, insecurity, etc.

5.1 If you answered YES to question 5 above: What do you think are the three main elements that contributed to creating such a culture at the level of the general public? How long did it take for such a culture to develop and for the related behaviours to be in place in the general public?

Community participation

When communities participate in DRR they develop a sense of ownership of challenges and solutions. As opposed to top-down approaches, participatory DRR empowers people to decide their own risk management solutions, leading to a culture of safety and resilience, opposite of a fatalistic attitude. Where there is already a certain degree of community cohesion and mobilisation, solidarity in support of a broader culture of prevention is easier to achieve. Indigenous practices should be supported; by helping communities to refine and make such approaches more effective and sustainable, a DRR approach can be engrained in daily life.

Education and raising awareness

Awareness and education on disaster risks and potential risk reduction approaches help to instil a culture of prevention. During and after disasters, there is a window of opportunity where public perception is already focused on disaster issues. DRR education in schools has been particularly successful in sustainably changing attitudes, not only with children themselves but also through the parents to the wider community.

Resourcing and supporting community initiatives

Without at least some external seed resources vulnerable people and community-based groups find it difficult to maintain a culture of prevention. Finances, tools, materials and guidance should be made available, however not in a manner that encourages dependency. Training should be provided on sustainable resourcing approaches. Further, strong public services support the notion that prevention is of primary importance. Facilitation to support communities partnering with local authorities and other stakeholders helps to instil not only more sustainable approaches, but also a long-term and solidarity-based culture of prevention.

Time needed to develop a culture of safety and resilience

Generally it takes at last three years of targeted participatory programming to develop a culture of safety and resilience. However in communities experiencing frequent events such a culture is likely already somewhat embedded, and even only one year of DRR programming can achieve a solid culture of prevention. At the other extreme, particularly in less cohesive communities, it can take up to five to ten years.

5.2 If you answered NO to question 5 above: What do you think are the three main elements, at any level (government, media, public institutions, community organizations, international cooperation etc.) that should be in place in order to develop such a culture?

Institutionalised but flexible partnerships

Collaborative working environments engaging all relevant stakeholders help support a culture of prevention through ownership and open dialogue. Partnerships, both multi-stakeholder but also internal between government agencies and ministries, must be institutionalised to be effective and transparent. At the same time,



a certain degree of flexibility is needed, which also helps foster solidarity. All stakeholders must participate recognising that different actors will have different understandings of risks and priorities.

Leadership, ownership and political will

The central government and political leaders should lead by example, themselves practicing a culture of safety and resilience. By showing responsible ownership by enacting appropriate legislation, central government will create the enabling environment needed to foster a culture of prevention. However without political will, even the best designed DRR legislation and policies empowering local authorities and communities will not succeed. Political attitudes must change in that poorly functioning disaster management agencies and approaches cannot be tolerated and must be fixed.

"A more consultative and participatory approach to risk is needed – one that does not assume a pre-defined understanding of the risks people face."

British Red Cross

Simple messaging

Raising awareness at all levels requires understandable and targeted messaging. While it is important to develop policies, frameworks and plans on DRR, sustainable development and livelihoods, key messages should focus on understanding risk and solutions to reducing it. High-level messaging should emphasize that we are not helpless in the face of disaster risk, and that pro-active risk reduction is possible.

Key Question

6. How can implementation of HFA Priority Action 4, reducing the underlying risk factors, be strengthened?

At the highest level states must take responsibility for the well-being of their citizens; however economic well-being cannot be sustainably supported without socio-political stability. Ministries and agencies responsible for long-term economic planning and development must recognise the DRR issues and needs inherent in their portfolios, and externals (donors and international organisations) supporting development should require holistic risk management in all programme designs. Decentralisation of decision-making and resources is needed to empower civil society and local authorities to support communities to reduce their underlying risk factors, with planning taking a bottom-up approach.

At the programming level multi-sectoral partnerships working through common and coordinated approaches are needed. Joint and participatory initiatives must be designed with clear roles and responsibilities from the beginning, working together throughout the process including initial assessments, designing of action and resource plans, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Involved organisations must recognise their own limitations, identifying partners that can fill gaps through a "best-placed partner" approach.

"Most underlying risk factors are deeply rooted in the socio-political situation, the economic well-being of the people and investment in sustainable infrastructure linked with risk-informed planning. For HFA Priority for Action 4, it is necessary to focus on these issues."

Timor Leste Red Cross Society &
IFRC Timor Leste Country Office

Risk assessments at all levels need to be participatory and investigate hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities. Such processes must be used to increase awareness of underlying risk factors of decision-makers at all levels, as well as the public. For better programming, indicators should be developed from the outset and monitored to track progress on reducing underlying risk factors. Emerging issues such as climate change and environmental sustainability must be integrated from initial risk assessments to programme implementation.

Programming needs to be supported by sufficient resources, available also at the local level. Capacity building is needed to ensure that stakeholders understand, link and develop common approaches, while understanding potentially conflicting value judgements. Considering also that the reducing of underlying risk factors requires a long-term approach, to ensure continued engagement it is useful to include activities early in a programme that

provide immediate benefits. For community-based DRR this can include activities such as cash-for-work, income generation, etc.

6.1 In your experience, what has been the best way to integrate DRR into development policies and programmes?

From the outset legislative and regulatory mechanisms must require that DRR-related issues are identified and considered during assessments for designing development plans and programmes. Long-term development policy and plans must be risk-informed and multi-sectoral to ensure sustainability and effectiveness. Strong leadership is needed to ensure such approaches are followed through.

If development policies and programmes are designed based on the needs of vulnerable communities as they themselves have identified and prioritised, risk will by necessity be addressed through a multi-sectoral integrated approach. Local decision-making and private market initiatives need to be given space and support within development and DRR plans to ensure that local needs are being considered and met.

"Legislative and regulatory mechanisms need to ensure that DRR issues are identified during development feasibility studies and assessments, and then properly addressed by the resulting programmes."

IFRC Sri Lanka Country Office

Vulnerable communities need to be capacitated not only in specific disaster-related knowledge and skills, but also to own and develop long-term development programmes, and to be able to advocate on their own behalf.

Finally, decision makers at all levels need to be made aware of the need and benefits of integrating DRR in development, first and foremost to strengthen the sustainability of their actions. Awareness needs to be raised that managing disasters is more than just response; that the different aspects of the traditional disaster management cycle are in fact all part of sustainable development and the changing risk dynamic (for example through climate change) must consistently and systematically be considered. Effective and cost efficient programmes and projects should be show-cased.

6.2 How can the importance of addressing the root causes of disaster risk be further brought to the forefront of the international agenda?

More evidence-based knowledge sharing and advocacy is needed, for example in-depth studies showing how underlying risk (chronic vulnerability) interacts with disasters (acute vulnerability) to hinder development and erode social welfare. Specific impact studies showing where development efforts did not factor in risk issues, ultimately leading to failure and the need for unnecessarily greater investment would clearly highlight the need for addressing root causes. While the GFDRR-led study on the economics of DRR⁷ is a good start, more is needed.

While major disasters tend to receive international attention, small and frequent disasters are what truly erode local welfare. "Upstream/downstream" studies are needed to show the lack of long-term impacts of international and national reactive approaches on chronic local vulnerability. In this light communities should be capacitated to advocate on their own behalf. Successes particularly with utilising indigenous knowledge should be highlighted.

Strong leadership and peer pressure is needed by proactive governments, donors and international organisations alike. If root causes of disaster risk are shown to be hindering the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are therefore a global security challenge, notice will be taken. In particular, the need for more consistent, multi-sectoral and long-term resourcing must be highlighted.

Tangible outputs should be continued to be supported, including further development and mainstreaming of risk proofing tools and guidance, global surveys with transparent data collection and results (for example *Voices from the Frontline*⁸), and good practice documentation and guidance. Information sharing must be in all languages.

⁷ <http://www.gfdr.org/gfdr/node/54>

⁸ http://www.globalnetwork-dr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60&Itemid=69

Additional question added by the IFRC

With the HFA mid-term review and the MDGs 10-year review both occurring this year, the Red Cross Red Crescent felt it appropriate to add this question:

6.3 How can the HFA or any follow-up agreement better link with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

While the HFA systematically references the MDGs and the key role DRR plays in sustainable development, for field practitioners more tangible linkages will help better mainstream DRR into development. At the same time if root causes of disaster risk are shown to be hindering the achievement of the MDGs at all levels, development and DRR practitioners will better recognise the need for proactive integration.

A field-level analysis of objectives that are common to both the HFA and MDGs is needed, with the aim to prioritise these common objectives in the local context. At the same time measurable targets and precise indicators related to the HFA and the MDGs at the community level should be developed, recognising that it is often unclear to DRR practitioners how they are contributing to the MDGs. Overlaps should be highlighted, as well as a mapping of how HFA targets and indicators monitor contributions to the achievement of the MDGs.

Ultimately HFA areas should be incorporated into long-term MDG plans, and HFA monitoring should be part of MDG evaluation and benchmarking. Baselines on DRR should be aligned to the relevant MDGs, and reporting against baselines will allow reviewing progress and achievements for both the HFA and MDGs, leading to the refinement and better integration of plans moving forward.

Key Question

7. What are the three most important things now that country X/region Y would benefit from, from the international community, in furthering the implementation of the HFA at the national and local level?

Provide more appropriate resources

While it is clear that more resources are needed, the nature and delivery mechanisms through which resources are delivered should also be refined. Funding should be made available long-term and across disciplines, responsive to the needs of countries and communities, not based on donor political preferences. More capacity building needs to be provided to practitioners and vulnerable people alike, however not necessarily through standard workshops and trainings. Innovative and sustainable capacitation methods are needed, and research both on DRR itself as well as capacity building approaches should be supported.

Stronger guidance for national governments

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring the security and welfare of citizens lies with national governments. As such, governments need to be strongly guided to lead and coordinate DRR including preparedness, development and recovery, whether through a National Platform or other mechanisms, ensuring that civil society is fully included from the beginning. Governments should be assisted to create enabling environments where integrated development and DRR planning is designed from the ground up, responding to the needs and supporting the capacities of the most vulnerable. More effective institutionalisation is needed to achieve better coordination, and to reach the last mile through local authorities. Donors should ensure that development assistance is provided only contingent on programme development incorporating proper risk analysis (including community-based vulnerability and capacity assessment) and subsequent plans to manage identified risks.

"The international community should prioritise and advocate for the involvement and utilisation of civil society, NGOs and humanitarian organisations in national DRR."

Maldivian Red Crescent

More applicable and outcome-oriented guidance and tools

While a wealth of guidance and tools on DRR already exists, many are not very operational. Concrete actions are needed at the national and local levels, and practitioners need outcome-oriented guidance and tools to properly plan and implement interventions. Particularly in the area of reducing underlying risk factors, guidance on the integration of DRR in development (for example by linking DRR to MDG-driven actions) and addressing dynamic issues of livelihoods, development, urbanisation and climate change through risk-informed approaches are needed. Tools for better monitoring, evaluation, impact and cost efficiency assessment and advocacy would also be beneficial. Finally, a better knowledge and information sharing system that crosses borders and language barriers is needed.

7.1 What adjustments, if any, would be helpful in the international structures of disaster risk reduction to help accelerate the implementation of the HFA?

With overlapping mandates and unclarity in roles and responsibilities, the current international structure of DRR does not provide sufficient coordination. The current structure needs to be clarified and streamlined with clear roles for all stakeholders, and those stakeholders themselves need to recognise and respect such a structure. Coordination only works if all actors are in agreement, and resources are made available for coordination itself.

International coordination must be based on common priorities and targets through comprehensive planning, based on the needs of the most vulnerable. As such vulnerable communities and civil societies must play a key role in the international system, and national actors should be capacitated to work with and leverage community priorities and capacities. The international system should particularly support national governments to create enabling environments for community empowerment and ownership.

The international system needs to develop more sustainable channels for communication and information sharing, including facilitating exchange across languages. This can only be achieved through long-term partnerships with national actors, ensuring information sharing on risks, needs, useful tools and experiences on a regular basis.

Resources at the international level should be pooled to tackle the most urgent needs and priorities through the best placed partners. Long-term international commitments are needed to support climate change adaptation (CCA), and funding for DRR and CCA should be merged where appropriate to be used more effectively and achieve scale. The DRR human resource pool needs also be expanded.

7.2 What kind of financial instruments, as well as monitoring mechanisms, would be helpful in support of DRR action at the national, local and community level?

There are already many financial instruments for DRR; however resources are not flowing to where they are most needed. Funds for national and international programming must include incentives to guarantee that all development work is planned and delivered through a risk reduction lens. In this sense it is not a problem of mechanisms, but rather of the driving policies and strategies, and to some degree enforcement of funding conditions. It is also clear that funding needs to be guaranteed over the long-term, as DRR cannot succeed as a one-off short-term activity.

The largest funding gap is at the local level. Finance allocation, also by governments, needs to be based on local needs and capacities. Grant systems for community-led and/or –centred programmes need to be expanded, including support to capacity building and staffing of local organisations. In terms of directly reaching the most vulnerable, expanded micro-finance programming in support of reducing underlying risk factors (for example through micro-insurance for livelihoods protection) could be useful, but requires sufficient capacitating of beneficiaries for informed decision-making.

National performance frameworks for DRR are needed as accountability mechanisms, fully transparent and publicly accessible. Monitoring systems (stressing input verses output/impacts) should be participatory and decentralised, gauging whether or not progress is being made at the local level. Funds should also to be made available for this monitoring.



Financing and monitoring need also to stress sustainability: will risk continue to be reduced after programming has been completed? Seed funding should be made available for communities to leverage at the end of a programme for further self-driven DRR and maintenance of existing projects.

Key Question

8. How should climate change adaptation be integrated in the next five years of the HFA implementation?

Climate change is increasing the uncertainty of hazards, increasing vulnerability and thus increasing risk, leading to greater humanitarian and development needs. It should be recognised as a cross-cutting underlying risk factor. Climate change adaptation (CCA) must be treated as a multi-sectoral issue and be integrated into economic development planning and programming.

The challenge is to make CCA operational. When development and DRR programmes are being developed, risk assessments (initial and on-going) need to incorporate climate change projections in addition to historical information. In particular, predictions of potential changes in disaster patterns must be considered. Based on this risk information, development and DRR programmes must include provisions for increased uncertainties and/or magnitudes and frequencies of climate-related disaster risk. This needs to cut across all sectors in an integrated manner, particularly in terms of sustainable resilience and livelihoods strengthening.

"Climate change adaptation must be considered a cross-cutting issue that needs to be integrated at all levels of economic development planning and programming."

IFRC Southern Africa Regional
Representation

Early warning early action needs to be strengthened at all levels by better linking scientific studies and data with DRR practice covering all time-scales, utilising forecasts of days, weeks, months, seasons and years. To support this, innovative partnerships with knowledge centres and meteorological services are needed, as well as national and regional support networks and partnerships.

Awareness needs to be raised at all levels, particularly in vulnerable communities and with decision-makers. As many vulnerable communities are already recognising that their weather patterns are changing, it is important to support them in developing adaptive risk management approaches. At the national and international levels, awareness is needed to generate political will for recognising DRR as the major tool for CCA, leading to better resourcing of common DRR and CCA initiatives.

8.1 What kind of policy and programmatic linkages have proven to be helpful for the integration of DRR and climate change adaptation?

Policies need to ensure that guiding frameworks and ultimately programmes, particularly in the humanitarian and development fields, incorporate CCA assessment and considerations from the beginning. Sectoral policies must be linked through common risk assessments and support synergistic approaches between sectors. Collective engagement and accountability must be encouraged.

National policy must identify both DRR and CCA as national priorities and lead to a joint strategic action plan, optimally required through legislation and regulatory mechanisms. To help facilitate a synergistic approach, terminology used in DRR, CCA and development must be harmonized. Ministries must work more closely together and National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)⁹ need to be linked with DRR and development programmes.

⁹ https://unfccc.int/national_reports/napa/items/2719.php

DRR and CCA policy must be based on the needs of the most vulnerable, systematically and continuously assessed through participatory processes. Capacity building to increase knowledge and awareness is needed at all levels to ensure a clear and common understanding, helping to facilitate dialogue. Such a process must be supported through the engagement of knowledge centres and technical agencies.

8.2 What would be the most conducive institutional arrangements at the national level to realize stronger integration between DRR and climate change?

National coordination mechanisms for DRR (National Platforms) must include climate change as a priority focus area. To succeed, these coordination mechanisms must have strong national government ownership and leadership, but with equal and active participation of civil society and NGOs. Strategic frameworks and plans of actions developed through the national coordination mechanism must drive integration of DRR and CCA. A multi-partner multi-sectoral technical expert group could be created to support and advise the national coordination mechanism. Similar participatory coordination mechanisms are also needed at the provincial and local levels.

Closer cooperation is needed between meteorological agencies and disaster risk management agencies, also with knowledge centres potentially as facilitators and providing expert support. Weather and climate data needs to be more openly available, in a form that non-technical people can easily understand and interpret. In some regions there is still too limited skill to deliver adequate forecast information, but even when there is a plethora of data available; it must be delivered more tailored to the needs of DRR practitioners. Technical agencies and knowledge centres should be mandated to support capacity development across the DRR and development sectors, preferably within the coordination of National Platforms or other DRR coordination bodies.

National policies, plans and coordination mechanisms must be cognisant of regional issues, approaches and resources, especially considering the cross-boundary nature of disaster and climate risk. Peer-to-peer support and learning through regional networks should be better integrated into national actions.

Key Question

9. What kind of international instrument/tool do you think would be most useful in furthering DRR to follow-up to the HFA beyond 2015?

In considering follow-up to the HFA beyond 2015 a dilemma is faced: should the next international instrument again be standalone like the HFA, helping to raise the DRR profile but unintentionally fostering a “silo” mentality, or should the focus be on mainstreaming in the MDGs, which while better supporting integration could risk losing the focus and profile of DRR? Potentially a dual-approach is needed, involving an updated HFA-type instrument which links directly (and unavoidably) into the MDGs as well as other potential international frameworks, particularly on climate change.

Preferably the new instrument will be legally binding, not voluntary. In any case it will require very concrete targets and action points that are ambitious but achievable. Similar to the HFA, all stakeholders must be represented, this time with greater space and support for participation of vulnerable communities.

A solid evaluation of HFA 2005-2015 should be used both as a baseline and for guidance for any new instrument, with national commitments regularly monitored and transparently reported. Monitoring must also link into MDG contributions. Ultimately the only true indicator of DRR success is strengthened community resilience. As such any new instrument must include provisions for the tracking of community resilience around the world, including resources for such intensive participatory monitoring.

9.1 Would setting up specific international and national targets help improving DRR impact at the national and local level?

Yes, targets and indicators are very much needed. Most relevant is at the national level to monitor achievements of commitments. Further, regional targets and indicators will support peer pressure between governments and recognises that disasters and sound risk management are not constrained by borders. At the international level

targets are less important, and the focus should be on ensuring policies and resources (including capacity) are in place to achieve local, national and regional targets.

One risk with national targets is the diversion of attention from community-centred DRR. National targets and indicators therefore must include aspects guaranteeing community participation and ensuring a flow of resources to communities and local authorities to support delivery. National targets and indicators must be informed and tracked through participatory monitoring of community resilience.

"A wide perspective is always needed to find the right solution. As such, local action has to be supported by national awareness and commitment."

Spanish Red Cross

9.2 What kind of international institutional structures/instruments would be most helpful to continue to accelerate and support risk reduction work?

Recognising that a number of structures are already in place, particularly the ISDR, the most practical approach to accelerate DRR would be to refine and better focus what exists. Particularly the ISDR global and regional platforms, while in theory being needs-driven and fully participatory, have so far in practice made the greatest impacts only in terms of advocacy and profile raising. The platform system needs to be tweaked to focus on supporting operational DRR that targets the needs of the most vulnerable.

Assuming National Platforms are fully operational, effective and responsive to the needs and capacities of the most vulnerable (which is indeed a great assumption), they need to better link to the regional and global platforms. So far these top-down structures have nominally "checked" the community participation box by including international and national civil society organisations working with vulnerable communities, but not the communities themselves. It should be the responsibility of National Platforms to feed up community needs, priorities and capacities, ensuring that regional and global platforms and the international system in general works through common frameworks and action plans developed through a bottom-up approach.

A few themes within this international structure require specific strengthening. During platform events knowledge sharing occurs, however in between beyond the PreventionWeb (which is a very useful website) knowledge management appears to be somewhat limited. A more proactive and participatory approach for sharing experiences and lessons is needed. Stronger professional skills development, particularly to address HFA Priority for Action 4, is needed across the disaster management and development spectra. CADRI¹⁰ is a good start but capacity is still insufficient at all levels. A cultural shift is needed away from reporting on outputs to focusing on demonstrable outcomes and impacts. Accountability and evaluation should be collective.

Finally, financing mechanisms specifically targeting community-based DRR and CCA are needed. These should collectively pool resources and guarantee resources for long-term programming based on the needs of the most vulnerable.

9.3 The HFA is a voluntary international instrument. Has the voluntary nature of the HFA played a positive or negative role in its implementation and buy-in at the international national level?

The voluntary nature of the HFA has generally played a positive role. It has provided the space for committed actors to fully engage, while still allowing more reluctant actors to participate and learn. Through this, especially between national governments, peer pressure for greater commitment has been pursued. It has also provided for flexibility of engagement by different actors, each able to participate and contribute to the degree with which they are comfortable.

As a voluntary instrument over the last five years the value as well as some of the limitations of the HFA have become more evident, which in terms of limitations could have under a strict obligatory framework

"The HFA's voluntary nature allows for committed states to follow through while also enabling the peer pressure required for more reluctant actors to engage, particularly at the national level."

IFRC East Africa Regional
Representation

¹⁰ <http://www.unisdr.org/cadri/>



led to a stronger embedding of negative consequences. It has allowed for understanding to grow through a natural process. Had it been formal from the beginning, an even larger portion of DRR resources could well have been allocated to hardware-focused solutions, which is where the strongest lobbies and in many cases most powerful actors have tended to lie.

While recognising the above advantages of a voluntary approach, it has also had major drawbacks – in particular in the tendency in many states for the commitment to DRR to remain more rhetorical than concrete. A great deal is already being attempted to foster a higher sense of accountability under the voluntary framework (including, for example, this mid-term review and the organization of the Global, Regional and National Platforms), but the fact remains that these mechanisms have not generally been capable of generating any real consequences for non-performers.

On the other hand, even if agreement were achieved on a globally binding agreement, it is not necessarily guaranteed that it would include any stiffer enforcement mechanisms. It would be a positive step if a stronger link could be made between development funding and real progress on risk reduction. Some of the discussions that have taken place in the search for a successor instrument to the Kyoto Protocol have run along these lines. Another potential step would be to consider the development and monitoring of specific, quantifiable objectives related to disaster risk reduction (along the lines of the Millennium Development Goals).

In any case it is difficult to sustain active commitment to a single set of voluntary priorities for ten years, so new energy will need to be injected, whether in voluntary or obligatory form. During its 2005 launch the HFA very much benefited from the timing of the Indian Ocean tsunami, which attracted much attention and voluntary commitment. Future instruments may not benefit from such a window of opportunity.