

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF MID-TERM REVIEW WORKSHOP:
ONE DAY WORKSHOP ON THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION (HFA) MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR)
ORGANISED BY SAARC DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (SDMC),
NEW DELHI, INDIA

Date: 10 June 2010

The South Asian Workshop was convened to address progress, shortcomings and potential improvements of the Hyogo Framework for Action as part of the Mid-Term Review coordinated by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The meeting, which was organized by the SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) in New Delhi, saw the presence of representatives from the governments of SAARC countries, National Platforms Coordinators, Hyogo Framework for Actions Focal Points, representatives of International Organizations and of experts in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Overall the meeting sought new perspectives and insights through plenary debates, country presentations, and thematic discussions. For the latter, participants were divided into two groups and different sets of key questions were assigned to them: group 1 focused on intra-governmental coordination, while group 2 focused on local-level implementation of the HFA. Country presentations were delivered by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and India in the course of the morning plenary session and by Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in the course of the afternoon one.

Morning Session

Mr. P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, Director of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, welcomed participants and briefly outlined the results of the First Biennial HFA Review 2007-09. He highlighted that 13 out of the 62 countries which completed the survey were Asian, and stated that significant progress was reported in HFA Priority Actions 1 and 5, while consistent progress was reported in Priority Action 2. On the contrary, he stressed that weak progress was reported in Priority Actions 3 and 4. While comparing regional data, Mr. Chakrabarti observed that both Asia and Latin America reported consistent progress, yet that such progress was still unsatisfactory. Furthermore, he underlined that in all Priority Actions, but the 4th, South Asia lagged behind other regions, and ultimately stated that national-level progress in South Asia was also highly uneven. Mr. Chakrabarti concluded his presentation by describing the two main objectives of the Mid-Term Review, namely to critically analyze the current status of HFA implementation with a view to accelerate it in the next 5 years and to provide initial thinking on future DRR instruments to follow-up the Framework beyond 2015.

Subsequently Ms. Rossano provided a briefing on the Mid-Term Review. The presentation focused on the process through which inputs were being sought, and described preliminary findings of the literature review as well as the main points raised in previous regional workshops. Before leaving the floor, Ms. Rossano explained the goals of the workshop and organized the floor in two discussion groups.

The following is a summary of the discussions of the two groups, as well as of the country presentations delivered by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and India.

Afghanistan

The representative from the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) briefly listed some of the hazards commonly affecting the country, and outlined the DRR Priorities embedded in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)¹ and reported on the Afghanistan National DRR Platform established on February 28, 2010. He stated that as of March 2010, the platform counted 54 agencies and 137 individuals registered on the database, and stressed that membership was on the rise. Furthermore, he highlighted that the platform's terms of reference – as well as its working model – had been drafted, and that a declaration had been signed by the Second Vice President, thus confirming the Afghan government's commitment to promote DRR in the country. The representative concluded by reporting upon the platform's ongoing initiatives (including the creation of provincial disaster management plans, the strengthening of emergency operation centers, the promotion of public awareness, and the establishment of an early recovery network) and briefly listed present and future challenges affecting its success.²

Bangladesh

The representative from Bangladesh reported on the HFA Progress Monitoring Review which took place between January and December 2009. In reference to the HFA Strategic Goal Area 1, he stated that the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) shifted its policy focus from traditional relief-centric approaches to Disaster Risk Reduction, and highlighted that DRR had been incorporated in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), as well as in the policies and programs of all ministries. Moreover, he highlighted that the GoB was in the final stage of enacting the National Disaster Management Act, as well as implementing the National Plan for Disaster Management which had been prepared in line with HFA commitments. Overall, he stressed Bangladesh's effort to enhance regional, sub-regional and bi-lateral cooperation, and to contribute to the global efforts on DRR by sharing its knowledge, experience and effective practices. Subsequently the representative briefly reported on the country's progress in Strategic Goal Area 2 and 3. In reference to the former, he highlighted the country's efforts to mainstream DRR in institutional mechanisms and sectoral plans, and to promote multi-stakeholder coordination through national platforms. Moreover, in reference to the latter, he reiterated the need to develop guidelines for the standardization of response and recovery mechanisms, and to strengthen existing early-warning mechanisms through the inclusion of broadcasting systems.

Bhutan

The representative from the Department of Disaster Management first highlighted the country's major progresses in the field of DRR as a result of HFA implementation. He reported that Bhutan promoted an enabling environment for DRR, both in terms of legislation (adopting the 2006 National Disaster

¹ These included: conducting disaster risk analysis at the provincial level; developing professional skills for ANDMA staff; developing SOP for rapid assessment and quick response; reporting and requesting national and international assistance; establishing EOC at the provincial level; developing a DMIS database; developing a comprehensive early warning system; establish back-up communication systems; establishing community emergency response teams; developing provincial disaster management plans; promoting public awareness on disaster risk management; and creating community-based mitigation and action plans.

² These included: weak coordination at multiple levels, lack of financial resources and equipment, shortage of trained human resources, ineffective early warning systems, and the inability to pre-position relief materials.

Risk Management Framework and the 2008 National Disaster Management Bill) and institutional set-up (establishing Multi-Sector Committees and DM focal points in all relevant ministries and agencies). Furthermore, he stated that the country had initiated disaster risk management and preparedness planning through the Community Based Disaster Risk Management Program and the Joint Rapid Assessment Tool and Mechanism. Overall he reported increased awareness and capacities, as a result of activities such as the Safe School Campaign and community-based disaster management trainings. On the negative side the representative stated that success of DRR was largely impaired by the inability to establish it as a priority and the lack of practical tools and guidelines to mainstream DRR into sector plans and programs. To conclude he zeroed in on those elements which should be strengthened, namely Risk Assessment and Multi-Hazard Zonation, the coordination of existing institutional mechanisms, and capacity-building at the local government level to mainstream DRR into development plans and activities.

India

The representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs focused upon India's progress in HFA implementation, and stated that different legislative, institutional, financial and coordination mechanisms for DRR had been put in place following the 2005 Disaster Management Act and the 2009 National Disaster Management Policy. Moreover, he reported on the creation of dedicated funds for capacity building and disaster response at both national and state level, and on the constitution of the National Disaster Response Force, positioned at eight separate locations across the country in order to provide fast and effective response to disasters. He continued by highlighting the establishment of the National Integrated Emergency Operation Centre and the National Action Plan for Climate Change, as well as the ongoing development of the National Emergency Communication Plan. Before leaving the floor the representative briefly described some of the challenges to HFA implementation. These included capacity gaps in integrating DRR into development planning at the local level, limited understanding of different hazards risks and associated vulnerabilities, and partially-operationalised Disaster Management Authorities at state and district level. To conclude he stated that "DRR is everybody's business and hence requires Inter-departmental coordination mechanisms", established in India through the constitution of the National Executive Committee and the National Disaster Management Authority.

Group 1: Thematic Discussion on Intra-Governmental Coordination

Participants started the discussion by focusing on whether the HFA has been instrumental over the past five years in reducing disaster losses in communities and countries in the South Asian Region. The representative from Pakistan informed the group that the country established the National Disaster Management Authority and adopted a holistic approach to disaster management, and that focal points had been appointed to work on disaster management issues. Furthermore, he observed that most ministries promoted disaster mitigation and management, and reported a significant reduction in the loss of lives - especially when related to hydro-meteorological disasters. Lastly he highlighted that the country, in line with the National Framework, promoted hazard, risk and vulnerability assessment and overall improved humanitarian response capabilities.

The group then focused on the existence of information-sharing gaps between national and state/district level governments; it was in fact reported that the latter were often unaware of the HFA. Furthermore, participants also highlighted that the connection between mayors and ministries had to be strengthened.

In addition, it was reported that India had promoted a paradigm shift in disaster management activities from post-disaster relief to pre-disaster preparedness, yet some reiterated that it was difficult to establish whether such actions were directly linked to HFA implementation.

Furthermore it was highlighted that in Bhutan rapid urbanization - a new and legally unregulated phenomenon - was a major factor affecting the success of DRR initiatives. Some stressed that the country was slowly beginning to understand urbanization-related risks, and added that policy makers should be made aware of them.

Overall, all the countries agreed that the HFA was to some extent instrumental for DRR activities. Yet, some reported major differences in terms of HFA implementation within the region, and believed that such discrepancies could be attributed to a general lack of resources. Moreover, it was stated that it was necessary to promote community-level awareness and initiatives in order to endorse a holistic approach to DRR. Participants strongly agreed with such view, and stressed the importance of creating mechanisms to promote grass-roots level awareness programs. Furthermore, it was highlighted that capacity-building initiatives should be undertaken at multiple levels, yet that the rural one should be privileged. Overall, the group stressed that it was utmost important to empower people in order to promote local-level ownership of the HFA.

On Pakistan, it was reported that the country followed HFA guidelines in responding to the 2005 earthquake, yet some highlighted that information dissemination from national to state level was not well focused. Participants from Afghanistan shared similar concerns; moreover, they mentioned that in rural areas local communities were always the first to respond and take care of those in need, yet highlighted that such cohesiveness was missing in urban areas. They stated that people lacked sensitivity and that communities lacked cohesiveness as a consequence of technological advancements and the education system. Furthermore, they strongly supported the promotion of existing patterns of oneness and the use of local knowledge in order to develop better DRR measures. Ultimately they suggested undertaking specific research studies on such issues.

Subsequently the group focused upon less-effective elements of the HFA. It was stated that in Afghanistan coordination and information-sharing mechanisms were weak, and some reported a lack of integration amongst the various departments working on disaster management. Participants emphasized the need to develop specific guidelines for disaster management activities within the HFA, and stressed that the HFA should be used as a planning and monitoring tool. Furthermore some reported weak civil society involvement, and expressed the desire to receive guidelines on how to build local-level capacities in rural areas. Overall participants unanimously highlighted that lack of funds was a principal factor militating against HFA implementation, and therefore stressed that an in-depth analysis of priority areas was necessary.

It was reported that in India the HFA was well known at the national government level, and that it was being converted into concrete policies at the district level. Furthermore it was stressed that District Disaster Management Authorities had been set up, yet that District Disaster Management Plans had to be revisited - especially in multi hazard-prone district - in order to integrate HFA guidelines. It was also highlighted that in India governance mechanisms varied across administrative levels, and as such it was suggested to constitute a task force to develop capacities, skills and allocate resources at the Panchayat level.

At last, some mentioned that the Pakistani government was in the process of preparing DDMPs and identifying DRR programs. Nevertheless, it was also reported that the country mainly followed the NDMA-led response mechanism in spite of it being heavily dependant upon international donor support; it was in fact highlighted that people living in central and southern regions were less aware of the HFA, as this was principally associated with the national government.

The group then focused on the question of whether HFA implementation was helping countries in achieving their goals. Participants largely felt that countries first had to identify their problems and vulnerabilities in national policies in order to transform the HFA into a useful process.

It was reported that in Sri Lanka the HFA had strengthened the country's mechanisms for DRR, yet that community mobilization was stronger in eastern Sri Lanka than in the rest of the state. Furthermore, some advocated for the promotion of a yearly reporting system and the creation of a common forum (to convene on an annual or biannual basis) for multiple stakeholders to exchange experiences and gain visibility. Furthermore, it was stressed that in India many states and districts were very active in DRR, yet that it was difficult for DRR initiatives to reach every district as multiple line departments made coordination and implementation a cumbersome procedure. Some ultimately stressed the importance of setting measurable targets and the need to hold accountable those countries not achieving them.

While focusing on the question of what was preventing governments from achieving HFA goals, participants suggested that monitoring indicators should be country specific, and that available technologies should be used more efficiently for monitoring purposes. Some also stressed that local governments could not be ignored, as their active participation was necessary in order to effectively implement DRR activities. Moreover, they advocated for the integration of broader issues such as HIV/AIDS, climate change, and food security in HFA initiatives.

Group 2: Thematic Discussion on the HFA Community Interface

To begin with, the group briefly reviewed DRR practices in their respective countries. Participants from Pakistan reported a general lack of understanding of the HFA especially at the local level, and stated that there DRR was often confused with relief operations. As such, it was highlighted that while the basic principles of HFA were well understood at the national and provincial levels, it was necessary to stress disaster preparedness and capacity-building at the district level. Participants from Bangladesh pointed out that Disaster Management Committees at the Union (sub-district) and Ward levels functioned both during and after emergencies, and had developed a robust early-warning system especially in regard to cyclones. Yet, they stated that post-event recovery mechanisms were inadequate, mostly because of the limited availability of financial resources and equipment. Nevertheless they ultimately reported a gradual improvement in preparedness measures in recent years.

Community Participation through HFA

The group subsequently discussed whether the HFA sufficiently encouraged community participation and the utilization of local knowledge. Participants agreed that the HFA had largely become a national priority, but not yet a local one. It was reported that in Bhutan devolution was clearly outlined in the country's legislative, institutional and policy frameworks. On the other hand, participants from Afghanistan reported a marked lack of coordination between NGOs, donors and the government; furthermore they stressed that capacities of governmental agencies were limited, as priorities were fixed in accordance with donors' agendas. This was considered a major cause for the inadequacy of local-level governmental agencies, overall negatively impacting upon HFA implementation. Moreover it was highlighted that from February 2010 the government of Afghanistan had promoted centralized coordination of NGO initiatives in order to streamline their activities. Participants from the Maldives stated that the country's new government prioritized DRR in reconstruction-oriented activities. They mentioned how reconstruction duties had recently been transferred from the Defense Ministry to the Planning Department in order to promote a more holistic approach towards DRR, and reported that such action increased local governments' achievements especially in respect to training and capacity

building. Some at last observed that across South Asia national institutional mechanisms were in place; moreover, it was reported that three countries already adopted specific DRR legislation (India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), while three more were in the process of drafting it. Yet, it was also reiterated that devolution to the community level was inadequate - as no responsibility rested on local governments - and reported that in India the 13th Finance Commission³ had even decided that district-level funding for DRR was not required. Lastly, the group stressed that across the region approaches had largely remained top-down, without discernible attempts to encourage community participation.

Culture of Safety/Resilience

The discussion continued by focusing upon the promotion of a culture of safety at the community level. It was stated that the lack of proper legislation on land use often led to uncontrolled violations of building codes. Moreover, some stressed that a general lack of awareness seldom resulted in increased vulnerability for citizens. As an example it was reported that in Pakistan extra floors were often added to well-constructed traditional buildings, hence threatening their resilience to natural hazards. Overall, the group stressed that such actions - coupled with gross violations of national building codes, haphazard urbanization, and political instability - worked against the promotion of a culture of safety among people. Some reported that in Bangladesh awareness among vulnerable populations had increased since 1991 in response to the numerous disasters witnessed by the country; yet it was stressed that such awareness was based on single hazards (such as cyclones or floods), while what was really required was a multi-hazard culture. Some moreover emphasized that poverty was the root-cause of vulnerability in South Asia; as such, it was suggested that the HFA had to focus on poverty alleviation, and it was stated that a culture of safety could only come from prosperity. In the view of one participant, the HFA had to embed poverty alleviation and social development in order to be significantly operationalized at the local level. Such an approach was later supported by participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Maldives. The latter in particular stressed that social development - linked with good governance - did indeed encourage DRR in the country. Overall, most participants agreed that a culture of safety had to be promoted through development, and as such that it was necessary to endorse an integrate approach to DRR and development.

Reducing Underlying Causes of Risk

At last participant zeroed in on the HFA Priority Action 4, stressing the importance of reducing underlying causes of risk. Again, the group overall identified poverty as a major constraint militating against such goal. It was highlighted that in Sri Lanka the young and educated segment of the population was increasingly more responsive to DRR, yet that the poor and uneducated one was largely unaware of it. Some reminded participants that poor communities were overall more vulnerable to hazards, yet that rich ones were at risk too when safety concerns were not taken into consideration. Similarly, it was highlighted that awareness of and demand for DRR was higher in those areas which had been ravaged by disasters, yet that it was necessary to promote such culture in other areas as well. Furthermore, the group stressed that existing tools, methodologies and guidelines had to be made applicable to different local contexts. To conclude, it was generally agreed that in the South Asian context disaster-determining indicators - such as DisInventar and CRED - had to be seriously considered.

³ The Finance Commission is constituted by the President under article 280 of the Indian Constitution, mainly to give its recommendations on distribution of tax revenues between the Union and the States and amongst the States themselves. Two distinctive features of the Commission's work involve redressing the vertical imbalances between the taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities of the centre and the States respectively and equalization of all public services across the States.

<<http://fincomindia.nic.in/ShowContentOne.aspx?id=10&Section=1>>

Afternoon Session

Dr. Jairaj Phatak, former Municipal Commissioner for Mumbai, provided a review of urban flood management strategies. In his presentation he stressed that the city government had to deal with multiple complex challenges, as Mumbai was a city afflicted by pressing issues such as rapid population growth and uncontrolled urbanization. He reported that urban floods management involved several agencies at the national, state, and municipal level, and analyzed in details the responsibilities of each of these. Overall, he stressed that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra acted as the highest coordinating authority in the system, and concluded by briefly outlining future plans to reduce the impact of floods in Mumbai.

Mr. Mihir R. Bhat, Director of the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) subsequently reported on civil society perspectives on HFA performance, organizing his presentation around different thematic issues directly highlighted by civil society networks. As such, he first focused on technology, reminding the audience that future key improvements were likely to shape HFA impact and the pace of its implementation. Secondly he zeroed in on good governance, stressing how such factor was fundamental in order to improve results in local communities. Thirdly he highlighted the role of UNISDR in DRR, stating that the organization was key to bridge and promote best practices at national and sub national levels. At last Mr. Mihir R. Bhat reminded the audience that multiple factors - including conflict, ethnicity, religion and resources - militated against HFA implementation and therefore had to be addressed and resolved in order to endorse effective DRR strategies.

The workshop's afternoon session continued with the country presentations delivered by Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, followed by a brief open floor discussion.

Nepal

Mr. Hari Prasad Mainali, Under Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs, reported that the HFA contributed to three major developments in Nepal. In first place, the Framework led to the development and implementation of the 2009 National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management. In second place, it helped mainstreaming DRR in plans and programmes for national development. Lastly, it enhanced institutional capacity for DRR and promoted coordination and networking among stakeholders. Nevertheless, the representative also stressed that multiple governmental, behavioural and methodological issues negatively affected DRR implementation in the country, and concluded by carefully highlighting different courses of action to accelerate the process. These included - amongst others - mainstreaming DRR into national and local level planning, reinforcing the institutional base for effective response, institutionalizing disaster information management systems, and strengthening the National Emergency Operation Center.

Pakistan

Mr. Hassan Zulfiqar, Director of the National Disaster Management Authority, highlighted that a national policy and legal framework for DRR already existed in the country; moreover, he reported that dedicated disaster management entities had been established at all administrative levels, and that a comprehensive national action plan - encompassing all aspects of DRR - had been launched. He highlighted that such plan helped in increasing awareness, developing human resources, building institutional capacity, and enhancing levels of preparedness. Nevertheless, he stressed that scarce

institutional capacities in DRR - together with a general lack of awareness and a low profile on the national agenda - still represented key barriers to HFA implementation. To conclude, Mr. Zulfiqar zeroed in on those DRR elements that needed to be strengthened; in doing so, he highlighted the importance of streamlining internal coordination mechanisms, and called for improved international cooperation.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Tharangani Wickremasinghe's presentation stressed the importance of enhancing early warning systems and identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks. In particular, he highlighted the need to design hazard and vulnerability maps, and to create regional information-sharing systems. In addition, he stressed the importance of training and awareness programs, and reported on the country's efforts to strengthen disaster preparedness. Before leaving the floor, Mr. Wickremasinghe briefly listed some of the barriers to effective DRR, reiterating the negative impact that resource constraints and weak coordination mechanisms had on DRR implementation.

Country presentations were followed by a general open floor discussion to collect views on what kind of instrument would be most useful to follow-up to the HFA beyond 2015. Participants stressed the necessity to promote multi-sectoral allocation of resources and develop a resource tracking system; moreover, they highlighted the need to integrate climate change adaptation in DRR, and to promote effective coordination mechanisms within and between governments, the UN and civil society. Overall they stressed the need to develop tools and methodologies for mainstreaming DRR, and agreed that the UN system had to play a pivotal role in such context. To conclude, participants highlighted that appropriate national-level tools had to be developed with the assistance of UNISDR.

Participants:

Dr. Abdul Maten Adrak Authority	President, Afghan National Disaster Management
Al-Haj Wahid Abdul Ahad Eng. Ghulam Rabani Paygham Lt. Col. Shameem Ahmed	Technical Deputy Mayor of Kabul Director of Kabul 9 District Superintending Engineer (Mechanical Circle), Dhaka City Corporation, Bangladesh
A H Towfique Ahmed	Field Operations Section, Divisional Coordinator, UNICEF Barisal, Bangladesh
Geley Norbu Phuntsho Gyeltshen	Chief Urban Planner, Bhutan Executive Secretary & Mayor, Thimpu City Corporation, Bhutan.
Namgay Wangchuk Abdulla Shahid	Director, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Bhutan, Minister of State for Housing, Transport and Environment, Chief Coordinator, National Disaster Management Centre, Republic of Maldives
Ahmed Mujthaba Hari Prasad Mainali Devendra Dongal	Minister of State, South Central Province, Male, Maldives Under Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal Senior Engineer & Chief of Department of Urban Development, Nepal
Syed Tassadaq Hussian Shah Imtiaz Inayat Elahi Syed Mohsin Shah Hassan Zulfiqar	Plan Pakistan, House No: 9, Pakistan Chairman, Capital Development Authority, Pakistan Main Bazar, DCO Office, KKH, Pakistan. Director, National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan.
W.M.D.T Wickramasinghe	Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Sri Lanka
Buddika Hapuarachchi S. Marina Mohamed	Project Manager, Practical Action, Sri Lanka Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management & Human Rights, Government of Sri Lanka,
N.G.M. Alexander De Silva	Mayor, Galle, Sri Lanka Vikrant Mahajan Chief Operating Officer, Sphere India
Mihir R. Bhatt	Honorary Director, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, Ahmedbad, India
Letizia Rossano	Senior Coordinator for the Mid-Term Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action, UN SDR Geneva
Madhavi Ariyabandu Helena Molin Valdes Sanjay Srivastava	Regional Programme Officer, UN ISDR, Thailand UN ISDR, Thailand Regional Advisor-DRR, Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
P.G.Dhar Chakrabarti	Director, SAARC Disaster Management Centre, New Delhi
Deepak Chamlagain Chandrani Bandyopadhyay	Specialist, Geological Disaster Division, India Assistant Professor, National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, India
Sushma Guleria	Research Associate, National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, India