

GLOBAL PLATFORM HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2011

On Thursday, participants met in a plenary on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation, followed by general plenary statements in morning and afternoon sessions. An informal plenary on the implementation of the outcomes of the Mid-term Review of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HPA) continued for a second day as well as a number of roundtables on managing watersheds, children for resilience, DRR and gender, DRR safety nets and mountains of risk. Winners of the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction were announced in an evening ceremony.



Representatives from: Sante Fe, Argentina; San Francisco, the Philippines; and North Vancouver, Canada, receiving their 2011 Sasakawa Awards for Disaster Risk Reduction

PLENARY: CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: ALLIANCES FOR RESILIENCE

The plenary was chaired by Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and moderated by Raghida Dergham, Al Hayat News Agency. Panelists discussed opportunities to harmonize DRR and adaptation in national policies and in the design and implementation of resilience-building programmes.

Socorro Flores Liera, Minister and Special Advisor for Climate Change, Mexico, called for more specific information to understand how to adapt to climate change and its impacts on agriculture, hydrology and species conservation. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Parliamentarian, Bangladesh, highlighted the importance of looking at the impacts of climate change on livelihoods. He said that in his country, projects, such as early warning systems, increasing the capacity of rivers to avoid floods or raising homesteads, are showing the value of integrating DRR and climate change.

Mamadou Traore, Secretary-General, Mali Red Cross, emphasized the role of civil society in responding to climate change. Cheikh Mamadou Abiboulaye Dieye, Mayor of St. Louis, Senegal, described his city's effort in setting up climate change observation centers, training programmes and the role of teachers as a "brigade for climate change." He added that as many as 70 countries do not have the capacity to understand and implement information on climate change adaptation. Jan Egeland, Director, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, lamented that a lot of knowledge about climate change adaptation is not reaching those who need it the most.

Jack Dangermond, Founder, Environmental Research Institute, US, highlighted the importance of geographic understanding and the role of education through geospatial

visualization. He said that the lack of open-data sharing policies is an obstacle to greater awareness, including social obstacles to using climate change information. Marcus Oxley, Chairman, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction, UK, said that there are many projects, each requiring a separate regime taking up institutional and financial resources, which are virtually trying to achieve the same thing.

In an ensuing discussion, participants from Bolivia and Cuba stressed the need for additional climate adaptation resources, while a participant from Switzerland emphasized the importance of linking knowledge with decision-makers and the role of leadership. In the closing remarks, Chowdhury stressed the focus on mitigation as "otherwise it is looking at the symptoms and not the causes" of climate change.

INFORMAL PLENARY: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE HFA MID-TERM REVIEW

Continuing their discussion from Wednesday, 12 May, Co-chair Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative for DRR, said the session would focus on strengthening institutions, defining how to advance HFA implementation, and the role of the international community. Co-chair Manuel Dengo, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, Geneva, noted the need to strengthen institutions, standardize evaluation and accountability systems, and promote knowledge and motivation to build more resilient communities. Letizia Rossano, Senior Coordinator of the HFA Mid-term Review, reported on outcomes of the Review, including: growing multilateral political momentum for DRR; the need to mainstream DRR in development programming and funding; and the need for common standards and guidance tools. She said suggestions for accelerating HFA implementation include monitoring accountability and conducting comprehensive risk assessments.



Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction

Participants engaged in discussions on the need to: establish results-oriented standards and tools; support the work of National Platforms; utilize outcomes of regional DRR fora; and quantify risks. To increase accountability and transparency, participants favored: peer reviews; financial tracking systems; and involving all stakeholders. One participant shared experiences of regional evaluation frameworks to minimize the reporting burden of individual countries.

Participants also outlined successful HFA implementation at the local level that could be replicated in other areas, with others noting the importance to link DRR to the Millennium Development Goals and UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20), and expressing concern about the multitude of scientific tools causing confusion at the local level. Highlighting the momentum created by the Resilient Cities Campaign, one participant suggested creating a Resilient Communities Campaign.

Several participants recommended discussing the changing role of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), keeping in mind the close links between DRR and development. Others noted the importance of strengthening UNISDR and stepping up its cooperation with regional intergovernmental organizations. On ways forward, participants supported the creation of an inter-global platform mechanism to enhance HFA implementation, taking advantage of the priority placed on DRR by the UN Secretary-General and the World Bank.

Co-chair Wahlström summarized the discussion, and noted the consensus to extend the HFA Mid-term Review advisory group to synthesize recommendations on standards, tools and baselines. She also suggested that the UN Secretary-General set up a high-level group focusing on how to carry the HFA forward.

PLENARY STATEMENTS

Participants continued to hear statements throughout the day. Mufeed Al-Halemi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Water and Environment, Yemen, cited weak institutional infrastructure, inadequacy of public awareness and, with Nada Yamout, Councillor, Beirut, Lebanon, and Prasith Detphommatheth, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR, limited financial resources as factors hindering DRR progress. Mohammed Sani Sidi, Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency, Nigeria, highlighted DRR programmes at universities to increase capacity, and with Vaitoa Toelupe, Samoa Disaster Management Office, and Stephen Ramroop, Ministry of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago, noted the incorporation of DRR into their schools' curricula. Ahmed

Rezq, Director-General of Civil Defense, Palestinian Authority, said that volunteer groups are implementing wide-scale DRR awareness campaigns throughout many towns and cities.

Jorma Julin, Director-General, Department for Development Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, said building resilience to disasters is a long-term issue, highlighting the creation of a National Platform for the HFA. Ana Victoria de Obaldia, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Panama, emphasized the importance of making DRR a high priority at the local level to increase resilience of local communities.

Yahya Abdul Rahman, Director, National Disaster Management Centre Brunei Darussalam, Brunei, and Jose Ernesto Betancourt Lavastida, Deputy Head, Civil Defense, Cuba, said their countries had success with using a multisectoral approach for DRR. Elizabeth Wright-Koteka, Director, Central Policy and Planning Office, Cook Islands, announced the establishment of a disaster risk management trust fund in her country, which she hoped would mobilize local and international funds.

Amgalanbayer Tsevegmed, High Commissioner, Chief of National Emergency Management Agency, Mongolia, said that the Mongolian DRR policy addressed social and economic development, capacity building and involvement of local and national authorities. Milton Rondo Filho, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil, cited, *inter alia*, food security, climate change and early warning systems as important aspects to consider when building disaster resilience. Mohammed Fawzi, Director of Crisis, Disaster Management and DRR Sector, Egypt, underscored the importance of cooperation at the international level.

ROUNDTABLES

MANAGING WATERSHEDS FOR URBAN

RESILIENCE: Chair Siththy Marina Mohamed, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management, Sri Lanka, said the session aims at raising awareness for sustainable watershed management and better understanding urban-rural dynamics. Noting a steep increase in water-related disasters, Mark Smith, Director, Water Programme, IUCN, suggested that integrated water resources management (IWRM) is strongly related to the HFA and enhances watershed resilience by improving local coordination, landscape restoration, social entrepreneurship, municipal-provincial relations and disaster planning.

Aisea Tuidraki, Special Administrator, Nadi, Sigatoka Town Councils, Fiji, said flood risk reduction in his municipality has improved economic and social development, rural productivity and watershed management. He emphasized the creation of a committee for IWRM to raise community awareness, integrate



the business sector, and enhance the use of risk studies. Jean-Claude Eude, Director General, Loire River Basin Authority, France, described his organization as a tool for subsidiarity, stakeholder involvement and conflict resolution at the river basin level. He recommended avoiding global solutions in favor of a set of reaction measures that would allow for more inclusiveness.

Marcelo Rivera Arancibia, Mayor of Hualpén, Chile, said ensuring sustainability of water management and constant availability was a challenge in his country, lamenting that large water resources are met by a lack of investment in proper use and weak legislation. Mahesh Narvekar, on behalf of Shraddha Shridhar Jadhav, Mayor of Mumbai, India, described measures to prevent urban inundation, including: the widening and deepening of riverbeds; retaining walls; installation of early warning systems that use rainfall and upstream water flow information; and pumps to move water to the sea when river floodgates are closed.

CHILDREN FOR RESILIENCE: The facilitator, Sian Gardner, International Consultant, emphasized the importance of discussing children's involvement in DRR. Suzanne Dvorak, CEO, Save the Children Australia, introduced the Children's Charter, an action plan developed by children listing their priorities for DRR. She noted that children are actors, not victims. Dhar Chakrabarti, Director, South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation Disaster Management Centre, India, presented the regional "Framework for Care, Protection and Participation of Children in Disasters," which focuses on: assessing vulnerabilities; education and schools safety; and participation of children in DRR.

Tricia, youth delegate, the Philippines, described her personal experiences from dealing with disasters, stressing the importance of education and risk assessment. She said children know a lot about DRR. Andre, youth delegate, the Philippines, outlined activities of the local Red Cross Youth Council, including: coordination with village officials; education on DRR; establishing warning systems; hazard mapping; and planting trees. He urged participants to commit to the Children's Charter. Johnson, youth delegate, Kenya, highlighted local community involvement and education, and the need to recognize children's DRR priorities.

Alan March, Humanitarian Coordinator, Assistant Director General, AusAID, Australia, noted the need to incorporate children into DRR programmes, to mitigate vulnerabilities and build knowledge resilience, and said current activities must be scaled up. Martin Owor, Commissioner for Disaster Preparedness and Management, Uganda, described practical steps in Uganda to educate teachers and children and construct schools accounting for local risks.



Panelists on the roundtable on Disaster Risk Reduction and Gender

Many participants said children are vulnerable and have a right to participate, stressing the need for education and empowerment, and others raised concerns about engaging children that cannot access formal school structures. March emphasized demystifying the DRR concepts and engaging trusted interlocutors, and Andre said they conduct community films on DRR to educate people. One participant described a DRR programme for preschool children in New Zealand.

DRR AND GENDER: Chair Lorena Aguilar, Global Senior Gender Adviser, IUCN, said engagement with gender issues is not about political correctness but implementing DRR effectively. Margareta Wahlström asked for concrete suggestions to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the HFA, describing empowered women as a "completely untapped resource for turning things around" in DRR.

Lily Caravantes, Presidential Secretary for Food Safety and Nutrition, Guatemala, called for empowerment from the central to the local level, emphasizing that participation of women is indispensable for linking the public and private spheres. Dhar Chakrabarti welcomed that the gender gap in literacy and education in India is quickly closing, and lamented that millions of women take decisions in disaster recovery at the grassroots, but not at the national level. Laura Gurza Jaidar, General Coordinator for Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior, Mexico, advocated a long-term vision that sees risks for women not as product of nature, but as exposure to disadvantageous social, economic and institutional contexts.

Polotu Fakafanua Paunga, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture, Tonga, noted active participation of women organizations in Tonga's disaster risk management planning, including with UN organizations, describing this as an opportunity to improve gender equality. Saumura Tioulong, Cambodia, described cross-party coalitions of women parliamentarians to advocate gender perspectives in law making, emphasizing that DRR and gender policies are efficient long-term investments.

Interventions from the floor were then made on: a rights-based approach to DRR; gender specific disaster relief programmes; the lack of accountability mechanisms in the HFA, DRR policies and adaptation programmes; the role of disaster migration for gender inequalities; and women banks and credit programmes.

DRR SAFETY NETS: Chair Alfredo Lazarte, Director, Crisis Response, Prevention and Recovery, International Labour Organization, opened the session, stressing that social protection systems offer mechanisms to reduce the impact of disasters on the most vulnerable populations. Providing social safety nets to the poor, he added, requires a great deal of partnerships, which include alliances between the government, NGOs and the private sector.



Youth participating in a session on Children for Resilience

Ato Mitiku Kassa, State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia, described his country's safety net protection programme, which supports a mix of safety net transfers: food, cash and food, and just cash. With 31% of his country's population living under the poverty line, Aslam Alam, Deputy Minister and Secretary in Charge of Disaster Management and Relief, Bangladesh, said that his government devotes 2.5% of its GDP to social protection services, which includes food and cash transfers.

Milton Rondo Filho, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil, said that water, food and land should be viewed as rights. Ruben Hofliger Topete, Director-General, Natural Disasters' Fund, Mexico, described a government fund – FONDEN – which provides disaster relief and finances reconstruction efforts, especially for vulnerable communities affected by a disaster.

Relinda Sosa, President, National Confederation of Women Organised for Life and Integrated Development, Peru, stressed the important role civil society, especially women, play in disaster resilience. Carlos Scaramella, Coordinator, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, World Food Programme, said that social protection is an important aspect of DRR and should feature higher on the international development agenda.

MOUNTAINS OF RISK: During the Mountains of Risk roundtable, chaired by Andreas Schild, Director-General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Nepal, panelists discussed the impact of climate change on mountain communities and the unique contribution of such communities to DRR and resilience. Panelists highlighted: that a discussion on mountains should be more prominent within the Global Platform, as well as inform the agenda of Rio+20; the need for an institutional platform for transboundary cooperation on mountain DRR; and that climate change is an "add-on" to existing mountain challenges.



Tashijam Tsho, Bhutan Climate Summit Secretariat

Minjur Dorji, Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, Bhutan, introduced a presentation by Tashi Jamtsho, Bhutan Climate Summit Secretariat, on his country's vulnerabilities to climate change, reflected, for example, in accelerated melting of glaciers and, in species, like tigers, shifting to higher elevation. María del Pilar Cornejo, Minister, National Secretariat for Risk Management, Ecuador, discussed the impacts of retreat of glaciers in the Andes. Ed Barrow, IUCN, highlighted local knowledge systems, as well as IUCN and partners' efforts in harnessing them. Thomas Probst, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, discussed adaptation strategies in his country. Walter Amman, President, Global Risk Forum, proposed a multi-risk approach.

THE WAY FORWARD: Christoph Pusch, World Bank, outlined the emerging themes from the previous days' discussion, namely: how to develop an effective global



UNICEF's Act!on @ The Frontline video display

framework for DRR; improving systems and instruments for recovery and reconstruction; and establishing a global reconstruction and recovery knowledge practice. Max Dilly, UNDP, noted that there has been a shift in thinking, which can allow preparedness to be forward thinking and far reaching to provide immediate relief. Shanaz Arshad, World Bank, Pakistan, suggested that in post-disaster situations a results framework should be included in plans so that stakeholders are aware of targets.

In the ensuing discussion, participants highlighted a number of issues including the increasingly important role of civil society. One participant said that investing in building government officials' capacity may not be as efficient as investing in a community's capacity, as government officials are temporary. Other participants noted that these funds should be closely linked to DRR, with some noting that post-disaster reconstruction financing should be predictable, additional and be easy to access for local and national governments as well as civil society actors. Some highlighted investing in infrastructure for DRR that has multipurpose functions, while others noted the importance of training local bodies to ensure construction codes are adhered to. In closing, participants underscored that: reconstruction is a development issue; output-based approaches should be undertaken; prevention always pays; and there is a need to build on existing networks of the centers of expertise across the world to build a global reconstruction and recovery knowledge practice.

FEATURED EVENT

UN SASAKAWA AWARD: The cities of San Francisco (Philippines), Santa Fe (Argentina) and North Vancouver (Canada), were awarded the biennial UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is given to institutions or individuals that have carried out outstanding and internationally recognized actions in DRR. The 2009 Sasakawa Award laureate was Eko Teguh Paripurno, Director of the Research Center for Disaster Management of the University of National Development in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

San Francisco, a small coastal city prone to typhoons, won US\$25,000, and was chosen for its innovative use of the Purok system, a traditional method of self-organization within villages where members voluntarily contribute to a money bank used by those in need of emergency funds after a disaster.

One of two cities receiving US\$12,500 was Santa Fe, a city frequently hit by floods, which was recognized for effectively communicating risk to everyday citizens. The District of North Vancouver, which experienced a landslide in 2005, also received US\$12,500.