

Concept Note of National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction <<ARNAP>> Foundation in the Republic of Armenia

1. The need for establishment of DRR system and DRR National Platform

Armenia is at high risk of natural and technological hazards, owing to high levels of exposure and vulnerability. Risks associated with geophysical hazards are significant, as Armenia lies in one of the most seismically active regions of the world. Earthquakes have affected large numbers of people and caused significant economic losses over the past 20 years. The most devastating seismic event was the 1988 Spitak earthquake in Armenia that killed 25,000 people, injured 15,000, left 517,000 people homeless, caused significant damage to several cities, and resulted in direct economic losses of \$ 14.2 billion.

The landslide hazard zone covers one-third of the country, primarily in foothill and mountain areas. Nearly 470,000 people are exposed (around 15 % of the total population). Average annual damages caused by landslides amount to approximately \$10 million.

Meteorological disasters have become more frequent and intense in the last few decades. Floods, mudslides, and debris flows threaten half of the country's territory, mainly in medium-altitude mountainous areas, where they typically occur once every three to ten years. During 2004-2007, mudflows damaged some 200 settlements and 600 sites on main transportation routes. Average annual damage from mudflows in the past four years is \$2.9 million. Drought occurs almost every year in one or more locales of Armenia. In 2000-01 a severe drought resulted in losses of around \$143 million in Armenia (with 297,000 people affected). Hailstorms and strong winds cause significant damage to the agricultural sector, with average annual losses of \$30-40 million and \$3.6 million, respectively.

Climate change is expected to amplify the frequency and intensity of meteorological hazards in Armenia. According to the available projections, by 2100 temperatures are expected to climb by 1.7°C, and precipitation is predicted to decrease by 10%. Boundaries of thermal belts in mountain areas are expected to move upwards by 150-900 m. The lengths of dry spells within years are projected to increase, precipitation to become more intense during wet periods, and the number of extremely moist and extremely dry years to rise. A shift in the beginning, peak and duration of hydrological drought and flood periods is expected, owing to greater share of rainfall and glacial melt and smaller proportion of snowmelt in river flow. Alternating drought and flood periods, together with shifting rainfall patterns, could expand mudflow zones in foothill areas.

The risk of technological disasters is also significant. The Metsamor nuclear power plant is functioning in Armenia, and there are around 26 hazardous chemical enterprises that use ammonium, chlorine, chloric acid, nitric acid, etc., and over 1,500 enterprises are at the risk of explosion or catching fire.

The population, economy, and environment of Armenia are highly vulnerable to natural hazards. Most significantly, according to the World Bank poverty incidence is around 30% and is concentrated in rural areas and provincial cities.¹ A high degree of urbanization (64%) concentrates disaster (particularly seismic) risks in cities. The economy remains highly vulnerable. In any given year, there is a 20% chance that a major disaster will result in losses of 12.7% of GDP.² During 1990-2005 Armenia lost close to 20% of its forest cover (around 63,000 hectares), which has greatly increased the likelihood of mudflows and landslides.

There are many issues and concerns in the country, which increase the vulnerability and exposure of the Armenian population to the above mentioned hazards. These include:

1. Need of a Comprehensive approach to Disaster Risk Reduction
2. Absence of DRR strategy;
3. Imperfection of DRR legislative field;
4. Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities of DRR stakeholders;
5. Poor coordination among various stakeholders in DRR sector;
6. Insufficient level of cooperation in DRR sector;
7. Agency interests are a priority;
8. Insufficient level of knowledge and education in DRR sector;
9. Imperfection of awareness raising process;
10. Inefficient use of resources;
11. Insufficient level of analytical capacities;
12. Absence of DRR common methodology;
13. Imperfection of monitoring system in DRR.
14. Lack of comprehensive understanding of DRR in the development perspective
15. Need of multi-stakeholder partnership on DRR

Natural and technological hazards threatening Armenia and the above mentioned issues urge the need of development and strengthening of DRR system in Armenia. This process implies involvement of all the potential of the country, which can be achieved through elaboration of DRR National Platform.

¹ World Bank, 2007, *Armenia: Geographic Distribution of Poverty and Inequality*.

² UN ISDR, 2009, *Central Asia and Caucasus Disaster Risk Management Initiative (CAC DRMI): Risk Assessment for Central Asia and the Caucasus, Desk Review*.

2. Main principles of and approaches to the DRR system and DRR National Platform

Disaster risk reduction is the most important factor for sustainable development of the country. For effective implementation of the mentioned factor, it is necessary to develop and strengthen national system for disaster risk reduction where DRR national platform has a major role.

DRR system is a framework of functions and processes with the aim to reduce population's vulnerability to disaster risks. It is aimed at prevention or reduction of negative impacts of hazards and contributes to sustainable development of the society. DRR system is a multi-sectoral forum.

DRR process requires comprehensive approach, i.e. resource mobilization, involvement of political, technical, scientific and participatory components.

DRR implies joined actions by the Government, state bodies, communities, civil society, scientific organizations, private sector, as well as the mass media.

DRR NP in Armenia is a structure elaborated and administered by the country with the involvement of stakeholders. It aims to promote DRR implementation at all levels, coordinate, analyze and consult in main sectors which require joined, participatory and coordinated actions.

DRR NP contributes to emphasizing DRR functions in the country's development policies, strategies and programmes /in accordance with priority actions of the Hyogo Framework for Action/. DRR NP promotes elaboration and further use of DRR national strategy in accordance with the conditions in the country.

DRR NP brings positive changes through coordinated approaches in policy, planning, programme implementations and decision making processes.

DRR NP ensures participatory process including government bodies, private sectors, UN Agencies, NGOs, Academies and research organizations including professional bodies.

3. The goal, objectives, functions and expected outputs of the DRR National Platform

The goal of the DRR NP

The goal of the DRR NP is to establish a multi-sectoral mechanism with involvement of all stakeholders.

Objectives of the DRR NP

1. Elaboration of DRR strategy and coordination of implementation. Improvement and development of the legislative field.
2. Clarification of roles and responsibilities of DRR stakeholders, harmonization of agency interests, provision of functioning and cooperation between and among DRR stakeholders, efficient use of resources.

3. Development of knowledge and learning, raising public awareness, strengthening of analytical skills.
4. Development of DRR methodology, including improvement of monitoring system.
5. Integration of DRR into development policies, programme and planning.
6. Foster Partnership and environment for developing a culture of preparedness and advocacy for disaster resilient communities.

Functions of DRR NP

1. Provision of recommendations for development and review of legislative documents for DRR.
2. Establishment of a forum for all involved in DRR.
3. Introduction and implementation of decision-making participatory process in DRR system.
4. Provision of awareness, feedback and information exchange.
5. Expansion of cooperation, including the HFA and other international programmes.
6. Development and implementation of recommendations for raising the efficiency of mobilization and use of resources.
7. Elaboration and further development of DRR common methodology.
8. Organization of the work of thematic groups and involvement of relevant experts for implementation of DRR strategy.
9. Elaboration and implementation of recommendations for creation of DRR databases, data sharing and administration.
10. Capacity development of the DRR system.
11. Development of recommendations for introduction of DRR in the education system, and organization of trainings for decision makers, specialists and the population.
12. Assistance in monitoring development of DRR system and implementation of the strategy.
13. Advocating and developing capacities for policy and legislations for DRR
14. Documentation of best practices, lessons learnt and share findings of various programme implementations at national, regional and local levels.

Expected outputs of DRR NP

1. DRR strategy and improvement of DRR sector legislative field.
2. Increase the effectiveness of decision-making in DRR system.
3. Introduction of DRR mechanisms, application of common methodology and creation of databases.
4. Strengthening DRR capacities and knowledge, introduction of DRR studies in education system, as well as raising awareness.
5. Inclusion of DRR in all development programmes for empowering sustainable development of the country.

6. Establishment of gender-sensitive DRR system.
7. Expansion of integration into international cooperation, promoting implementation of HFA, implementation of MDGs and provision of transparency, and assistance in regional development in DRR cooperation.
8. Improvement of conditions for effective use of natural resources and protection of the environment.
9. Capacity Building of various stakeholders for integrating DRR into the development planning, policy and programmes
10. Linking DRR into other sectoral interventions and ensuring disaster proof development in any developmental initiatives

4. Participants and structure of the DRR NP

Main beneficiaries of the DRR NP are citizens of Armenia, communities, local-self-government bodies,

Main participants of the DRR NP are government authorities of Armenia, Ministry of Emergency Situations, and international and donor organizations working in the field of DRR, UN, Armenian Red Cross, as well as scientific institutions and experts.

At different stages, **other participants** may be involved in the process, including representatives of various state and public agencies and organizations, private sector and religious institutions.

The institution of DRR NP should provide opportunities for meaningful and effective participation of the mentioned participants. At the same time, it should provide effective functioning of the NP, implement specific functions and be able to solve issues related to the establishment of the NP.

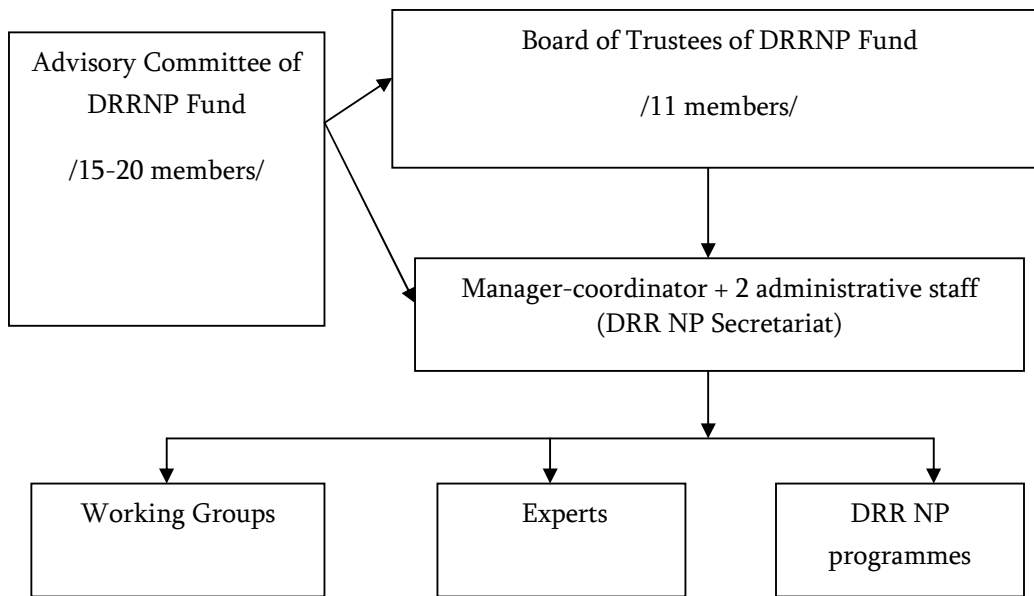
As to the structure, the platform should provide effective cooperation between and among state, non-governmental, scientific and international organizations, which will contribute to integration of the platform in international and regional relevant networks.

Taking into account the above mentioned, the goal and objectives, as well as the functions of the NP, **fund** was selected as a format of the platform out of all the alternatives discussed among the working group. Being a non-governmental organization, it provides opportunities for state, non-governmental, private and international institutions to participate in decision-making and consultation processes.

At the same time, it provides opportunities for organizing and controlling day-to-day operational activities, implementing long-term projects; it also provides necessary flexibility to respond to new challenges. **DRRNP Fund** (Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform) has been suggested as a name for the fund.

The structure and works of the DRRNP Fund

Recommended structure of the DRRNP Fund is as follows:



Advisory Committee – this committee is the main forum of the DRR NP where regular discussions will be held on main issues of the DRR system, recommendations will be developed which become guidelines for the activities of the platform. One of the discussion issues, for instance, is development and implementation of DRR national strategy. It is planned to include 15-20 members in the Advisory Committee from all stakeholders. Decisions on quantity and quality of the Committee members are decided by the Board of Trustees. Committee sessions are advisable to hold on quarterly basis, and call for special sessions, as required.

1. **Board of Trustees** – is the managing body of the DRR NP which makes decisions on organizational, financial, structural and other important issues of the DRR NP. The Board decides on the strategy and work plan of the NP in close consultation with the Advisory Committee. It is recommended to have 11 members in the Board, in particular:

1. Minister of Emergency Situations- Head of the Board
2. Representative of the Ministry of Territorial Administration
3. Representative of the Ministry of Economy
4. Representative of the Ministry of Justice

5. Representative of the UN
6. Representative of World Bank
7. Representative of EU
8. Head of the Armenian Red Cross
9. Recognized expert of DRR
10. Recognized expert of DRR
11. Representative from one International/Local NGO

It is preferable for the Minister of ES to manage the works of the Board. Board sessions are held, as required, at least twice a year. The Board assigns Manager of the Fund who will report to the Board of Trustees.

2. **Manager, administrative staff** – a small staff headed by the Manager will work on organizing ongoing activities of the Fund. In other countries, DRR NP usually has a secretariat the role of which will be implemented by the administrative staff. Organizational and financial decisions of the administrative staff are made by the Board of Trustees. The Manager and the administrative staff will assist in organization of the works of experts and working groups, and will also initiate projects in accordance with the DRR NP objectives.
3. **Working groups** – main functions of the NP require thematic formation of working groups and organization of their work. This will assist in effective use of human and other resources for overcoming long-term and short-term issues of the system.
4. **Experts** – one of the objectives of the DRR NP is to involve local and international experts for strengthening the DRR system. In this sense, the DRR NP may expect active participation and assistance of international and donor organizations.
5. **DRR NP programmes** – based on the DRR NP goals and objectives, special programmes may be initiated and implemented to strengthen the DRR system and the DRR NP. Programmes must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Elaboration and registration of the DRR NP, beginning of works

Steps of elaboration of the DRR NP are as follows:

1. Discussion and update of the DRR NP concept. All stakeholders, representatives of state bodies, non-governmental, scientific, and international and donor organizations will participate in the discussions.
2. Decision on elaboration of the DRRNP Fund, official registration.
3. Formation of Advisory Committee and Board of Trustees.
4. Inform the UN and other international organizations.
5. Elaboration of strategy and working plan for the DRR NP. Beginning of works.

It is assumed that this process will last 1-2 months.