

Towards a post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES TO DISASTERS



POST-2015 FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION ONLINE DIALOGUE

27 AUGUST 2012 – 7 DECEMBER 2012

As part of the consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) hosted a first online discussion from 27 August to 7 December 2012 of a series of online consultations that UNISDR will arrange before the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015, Japan. The results of the online dialogues will help provide the substance for a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2).

The first online dialogue was structured around five rounds, with each round spanning a period of two weeks. The inputs were reflected experiences of practitioners from mid levels of Government, technical institutions, UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross and thoughtful commentary and insights of academics and analysts.

SUMMARY OF ROUND 1 - SETTING THE CONTEXT

The first round of the online dialogue towards a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2), entitled "Setting the Context" increased awareness of the post-2015 framework and the consultation process, and enabled participants to freely share views of all kinds and give valuable guidance to the organizers of the dialogue and on line platform, as well as the consultation process itself.

Some important themes raised by participants included:

- The need for a review of HFA implementation and impact
- Greater linkage of disaster risk reduction with climate change adaptation, and poverty reduction
- Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development, multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships
- Empowerment of local communities
- Devolution of resources to local governments and communities
- Recognizing and building on local and indigenous knowledge, the role of UN agencies at local, national and global levels in advancing HFA and disaster risk reduction
- The role of regional entities particularly in trans-boundary hazards

Participants called for more discussion on specific themes including the role of women, children, the elderly and indigenous people in advancing disaster risk reduction,

technology justice, ICTs, a focus on integrating disaster risk reduction into recovery, agriculture and food security, natural resource management, role of cities and local governments, risk assessment and improved early warning, disaster risk reduction in conflict and post conflict societies, religions and the links with peace-building.

On the post-2015 framework itself, there were suggestions for it to be mindful of regional and country specificities, better linked to climate change adaptation and the post-2015 development agenda, and recognizing the role of various stakeholders and constituencies in implementation.

SUMMARY OF ROUND 2 – TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING AHEAD

The second round of the online dialogue on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2), entitled “Taking stock and looking ahead” aimed at linking these consultations on the new framework with the acceleration of HFA implementation in the last 3 years of the decade; while learning lessons from the progress made, and challenges faced in the last 8 years since January 2005.

Key achievements in building resilience since the adoption of the HFA in 2005

- A rich and balanced tapestry of experiences in 33 comments by 30 participants from 17 countries spread across 4 continents recognize that HFA created a ‘buzz’ around disaster resilience and the emergence of political will and ownership of disaster risk reduction at highest levels in developing countries as ‘natural’ disaster setback achievements of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Development actors and communities have shifted from business as usual to disaster risk reduction as a way forward. Catastrophic events served as turning points, and with the HFA, created landmark new laws, agencies, and partnerships representing a ‘360 degree shift from purely disaster response regime’.
- Mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in national and line ministry development plans has begun. National DRR Forums/platforms provide an enabling environment for bringing together Government agencies, institutions, UN Agencies and CSOs; shaping national disaster risk reduction action plans and promoting shared responsibility.
- Officials from provincial (West Bengal, India) and city (Macae city, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil) governments report on their programs and role in the UNISDR City campaign. Innovations in resourcing disaster risk reduction come from allowing unused calamity funds (5% of total local government budget) in the Philippines to be created as trust fund locked for 5 years to implement disaster risk reduction and preparedness and response, and mobilizing private sector funding through CSR and long term public-private partnerships.
- Progress is reported on monitoring and observing disaster events, archiving disasters and creating disaster databases, effective early assessment of hazards, vulnerability, and dissemination of early warning and risk information, but there is greater need for education, use of new technology and innovation.
- A substantial impact of HFA in academic circles is reported from Nigeria, recognizing disaster risk reduction dimensions which must be incorporated in

many areas of academic specialty: Medicine (Human or otherwise), Management, Engineering, Sociology, Military, Public Administration, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration etc.

- Development NGOs in Africa and Asia report a growing recognition that disaster risk reduction is relevant for community development issues of livelihood, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, education and ecosystem protection. Organizations of youth, farmers, pastoralists, fisher-folk, local church networks, religious groups, volunteers, and humanitarians are beginning to do work on disaster risk reduction, build their expertise, and mobilize resources. CSO networks grew significantly and are contributing to HFA implementation; at sub-national and national level - Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines and regional level.

Accelerating HFA implementation in the remaining three years and three months till 2015

Some key gaps and barriers to implementation were identified as slow progress in priority of Action 2-5, insufficient levels of technical and financial support, and the risk that a new global challenge will preoccupy government and the media and public, and cause them to lose interest in disaster risk reduction. It was also recognized that if scientific knowledge is confined to only academic community, then the public may not have the right information on risk to motivate them to take action. Participants also recognized certain key development challenges related to corruption, injustice, political instability, poverty and poor structure of governance institution as main hurdles to making progress.

Actions to focus on:

- A much greater effort to link disaster risk reduction with action on climate change and more fully integrated into both development and recovery. Special support should be provided to these areas as per their needs.
- New disaster risk reduction legislation creates new decentralized arrangement at sub-national level, and devolves authority for this subject of disaster risk reduction to local authorities. It is necessary to eliminate barriers and apply incentives that have been identified to accelerate disaster risk reduction implementation and effective enforcement of legislation and building codes.
- Disaster risk reduction must become a priority for those who hold the purse strings. Sharpen the economic case for disaster risk reduction. Let developers know that 'no DRR, no deal' is the way of the future. Showing the economic benefits of risk reduction, or better yet, embed disaster risk reduction into any and all development projects Legislation with teeth to bite is necessary, one whose time has come.
- Funding to risk reduction seems to any planner and decision makers as speculative investment. If the return is not a clearly visible product that can be showcased, no decision maker is interested in risky investment.
- Significant capacity should be developed among the people who work for disaster risk reduction in state and non-state agencies to communicate, educate and

- convince the people who prepare the budget or policy strategy to put money for disaster risk reduction in the budget.
- Resources means and facilities should be made for the CSOs that have been working with governments to reduce the risks at all levels from mitigation to rehabilitation stages.
- Adopt and promote good practices more appropriate for specific countries that display similar characteristics such as climate, human development index and population. Strengthen the initiatives to establish a national building code and to apply building codes and upgrade the critical infrastructures. Keep up advocacy both national and international levels.

Tackling major challenges to building resilience and reducing disaster risk

There was an interesting mix of statements of broad principle to specific and actionable proposals for implementation. Targets were suggested for risk assessment, early warning systems etc. The proposal is to develop a scheme called “targets for community disaster risk reduction”. Each country should have a sheet to list up all high risk communities and to show achievement in the past and plan in the future for each community. Based on this country sheet, a regional sheet should be prepared by regional organization and a global sheet, which should be shown on the website of respective organizations so as to be accessible by any in the world. This monitoring will be helpful for government in implementation/budgeting in a more planned manner, and will make communities eager to accelerate disaster risk reduction in competition with other communities in the country.

SUMMARY OF ROUND 3 - STEPPING UP FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

The third round of online dialogue focused on the role of the most vulnerable. It was held in parallel to the International Day on Disaster Risk Reduction under the theme: “Women and Girls – the (in)Visible Force of Resilience” on 13 October 2012.

How to make women and girls the visible force of resilience?

Many dialoguers shared various experiences on how women have been a force in various stages of disaster management cycle, from preparedness to emergency such as shelter management, psychosocial care and first aid, grassroots support to resettlement and overall cooperation in design, decision making and planning for disasters. Those examples illustrate well how grassroots women are change makers in resilience initiatives and leaders in creating safe community.

Proposals for priorities and actions needed for current and future HFA were also made such as:

- Effective participation in decision making in activities to reduce risks.
- Greater access to quality of education and technical training. This entails that gender equality and equity are prerequisite and community’s assets for resilience and sustainable development.
- Establishment of mechanism for increasing resilience of the poor and most vulnerable.

- Introduction of sustainable development for youth supplement through intervention and education.
- Social inclusion as a key factor to benefit to adaptation and sustainability.
- Inclusion of Governments level laws and policies.
- Proper attention toward the poor and rural women with special care to their cultural norms.

It was suggested to gather further evidence though research on the causes of women's vulnerability in disasters with regard to the specific characterization and culture of each country and on their role in planning for disaster risk reduction activities, decision making and implementation. Also, research on psychological assistance to families, neighbors and those in need after the disaster, transfer of knowledge amongst women themselves are needed.

How are groups with special needs best recognized and their knowledge harnessed for their participation in the different priority area for resilience?

By answering to the second question, dialoguers commented and shared ideas for the future, post-2015, discussed opportunities to build the resilience of those who need it most.

Various contributions recognized that “groups with special needs” are women, children, elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities and the poor. Those groups with special needs best recognized are members of communities who are generally likely to be the worst-hit in case of disasters because of their deprived access to resources such as social networks, influence, transportation, information, skills (including literacy) and employment, personal mobility, secure housing, control over decision-making, land and other economic resources and dependence upon others. This needs to be applicable to slum dwellers and rural settlements.

Harnessing these group capacities, knowledge, and special skills is feasible and measurable if there are state-level disaster risk reduction systems, approaches, and clear gender equity policy to ensure that the national platforms are explicitly sensitive to gender. Since disaster risk reduction is a cross cutting theme, community resilience needs to be integrated in each sector of economy. Projects of livelihood, education, health, water and sanitation or any developmental programs can harness the disaster risk reduction integrated approach towards community resilience. Gender sensitivity is suggested to be part of all structural and non-structural mitigation measures, all the disaster risk management plans, contingency plans, response plan and all laws, departmental projects and planning. Interaction between those with special needs will pioneer the path to discovering and harnessing the potential in them.

The participation of marginalized communities in disaster risk management should start with the issue of general accessibility, which should be part of national laws, and disaster laws. The principle of human equality constitutes a basis for human rights. Participatory method, bottom-up approach, role of religious institutions, and role of educational institutions, strong applicable laws and accountability can support their empowerment

and participation in awareness raising, risk assessment, decision making. Social and cultural values have great role in this regard.

On the question who is responsible to make this happen, dialoguers tent to conclude that all the segments of the society are responsible for attaining the desirable results. But the main responsible stakeholders are governments, NGOs, communities, religious institutions, media and different legal/social forums. One participant refer to the *Universal design* - quote “design or accommodation of the main solution as regards the physical conditions so that the normal function of the undertaking can be used by as many people as possible”. Public and private undertakings that offer goods and services to the general public should be obliged to ensure that universal design is applied to the normal functions of the undertaking.

The two proposals for top three issues to be addressed in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2) are as follows:

1. Building climate-responsive livelihood centered capacity
2. Providing a regular source of income such as micro-finance
3. Building social coherence
and
 1. Poverty (rural population specially)
 2. Laws and accountability at state level
 3. Governance and basic human rights

SUMMARY OF ROUND 4: POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: CREATING RESILIENCE, BUILDING PROSPERITY

The fourth round of the online dialogue on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2) entitled “*Post-2015 Development Agenda: creating resilience, building prosperity*” was moderated by UNDP. This round on including disaster risk reduction and resilience in post-2015 development goals aimed to understand why and how to better address the issue of disaster risk in the setting up and monitoring of development objectives and in particular the post-MDGs.

The recommendations emerging from the contributions to this online discussion was incorporated into the ‘Global Thematic Consultation on Violence, Conflict and Disaster in the Post-2015 development agenda’ Report to be presented at a high-level meeting in February 2013.

To kick start the conversation, Tom Mitchell of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) proposed a reflection on the options for integrating disaster risk reduction into the post-2015 development framework. Forty three contributors brought valuable insight and offered practical recommendations on how disaster resilience can gain prominence in the post-2015 development agenda.

Contributors agreed that disaster resilience should be an explicit priority both vertically and horizontally in the strategic areas, targets and indicators of the post-2015 development framework as a standalone goal and integrated across the other goals and their respective targets and indicators.

Various options for including disaster resilience in other goals, whether by incorporating it explicitly into indicators, creating an added degree of co-dependency between the goals or by cross-referencing to the goal on resilience were discussed

Contributors agreed that managing disaster risk cuts across traditional development sectors, such as health, education, infrastructure, water and agriculture. Achieving efficient development progress requires each of these sectors to invest in risk management measures. There is a case for the inclusion of disaster resilience as an enabling factor in sector-oriented goals.

Ensuring internal consistency of the goals under each framework, separately and in combination was recognized as crucial. This involves, for example, ensuring that disasters do not contribute to chronic poverty: with much greater attention to physical and human asset management, institutional reforms and recognition that prevention is less expensive than relief management.

SUMMARY OF ROUND 5 - INTEGRATING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The fifth round of the online dialogue on the post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, entitled "*Integrating Disaster risk reduction, Climate change adaption and Sustainable development*" was hosted in parallel with the 18th Conference of the Parties (COP18) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The purpose of this round was to enhance understanding of the linkage between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and Sustainable development, and thus strengthen the mainstreaming of both disaster risk reduction and adaptation into development planning and practices. This was done through 3 questions which anchored the 3 threads of the discussion as follows:

Changes in severity and frequency of extreme weather and climate events and consequent changes in behavior

Some debate ensued on whether this is normal climate variability or attributable to climate change. In Namibia human induced changes such as urbanization, deforestation, land use, and reservoir regulations were as much causal factors as climate change, the impacts being more severe because they had been absent for so long.

Bridging the knowledge gap and promoting awareness of the practical and operational aspects of climate variability and change science and disaster risk reduction is needed. Improved preparedness and capacities of local communities and effective management of the climate variability these floods and drought represent will then enhance our capacities

to adapt to climate change. Resilient building ‘solutions’ identified were rainwater harvesting, aquifer recharge, changes in type of crops or the plantation season, better planning of construction and water management, safe dwellings, sustainable livelihood sources.

Optimism underpinned recognition of good practice on communication of future uncertainties achieved through the cooperation of hydro met services, technical institutions and operational administrations in climate forecast applications in Bangladesh and regional climate outlook forums in the great Horn of Africa. Practical examples were given of no/low regrets options and scenario-based planning that works across of “range of possible futures”. Institutions need to become ““adaptive” and able respond to new information about emerging risk covering both future hazards and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

Linking DRR and CCA in policy, programming and institutional partnership

This thread affirmed the importance of linking both disaster risk reduction and CCA in the new framework and presents an insightful mix of country based experience and trends of such linkage, recognizing progress, analyzing causes for its slow pace yet striking an optimistic tone being inspired by innovative initiatives.

Both disaster risk reduction and CCA share common goals of reducing vulnerability and building resilience. Steps to remove the institutional barriers to cooperation and coordination, recognizing these inherent synergies, reported were integrated structures for Disaster risk reduction and CCA in Pakistan and France, increased coordination in Indonesia and Bangladesh, with the latter having joint delegations in intergovernmental forums, and still limited cooperation in Fiji and Haiti.

Practical progress is reported in a) Bangladesh having common tools to deal with DRR/CCA in local and national planning processes, and NGOs bringing both sectors under one umbrella and doing common programming, b) at the provincial (West Bengal) level in India of integrating both into all aspects of economic and social development at local level c) in Algeria a multi institutional partnership study on vulnerability to climate change in Algiers, identifying actions to enhance adaptive capacities and build community resilience. d) DRR/CCA being enmeshed in existing arrangements for local development planning and funding, has met some success in some Lower Mekong basin countries, e) risk based approach by the Asian Development Bank in a CCA project in the Pacific. f) Community groups’ autonomous action and building capacities for self-protection against disaster and climate risk in the UK.

Barriers to collaboration that were identified include a) each sector tending to work within its own institutional home and specialist community of practice resulting in dialogues held in parallel and work programs are developed separately b) occupying separate policy spheres, differences in concepts and perspectives despite the interaction and overlap on all levels c) many donors (and governments) allocate two different sets of funding sources to two different departments, reinforces the problem d) decentralization and autonomous functioning of districts, and the structural challenges of resource /power

sharing and leadership e) having a composite assessment of the impacts of climate change and disaster risk, and the geographical areas and sectors most at risk due to different methodologies used by different institutions making such analysis , f) functioning of institutional systems at sub national or local government levels, lack of political authority, technical capacity and financial resources as critical issues for DRR CCA linkage, g) vulnerable people have little or influence over these arrangements in the absence of external development agencies, h) public policy and social action lags behind scientific knowledge.

The strong basis for integration is a) both are about behavioral changes and b) communities do not isolate the adverse impact of each in their day-to-day lives. Progress will be made by changing perceptions and altering incentives.

Some recommendations include a) DRR/CCA to be an integral component in each governmental development projects with feasibility studies of infrastructure projects assessing impact of climatic hazards, b) not treat disaster risk reduction as a sector but build the case to redefine urban development to include mitigation infrastructure, site development improvements and drainage, lower urban densities and move to scale through investments in finance, training and capacity building, c) framing policies and guidelines for cooperation, coordination, and action in finding realistic solutions and enabling local community action, otherwise it just “sits on a shelf”, d) improving livelihoods that are in harmony with environmental conservation and good natural resource management, can contribute to economic development that is sustainable, e) accelerate innovative local action, respectful of global implications which can create new mindsets, f) calls for countries of South and Central Asia to develop joint regional strategies on disaster risk reduction and CCA and learn from each other.

Learning lessons from mainstreaming DRR into development planning and sectors

The posts emphasized that mainstreaming disaster risk reduction is essential across development planning and sectors to reverse the wide ranging potential adverse consequences of disasters on agricultural production, fisheries, industries, water quality and supply, ecosystems, land management and the built environment; and avoid impacts on livelihoods and poverty, health and education, psychosocial well-being and gender relations.

There are challenges in mainstreaming to address a) what is "acceptable risk", b) what each area is ready to invest to enhance resilience, c) how to balance the interests of diverse groups who are differentially impacted by risk, d) how to negotiate tradeoffs at trans-boundary and global levels, e) develop and implement national coordination arrangements, f) how to increase availability of and access to tools, and planning instruments, g) deliver awareness raising and capacity building efforts h) scale up fragmented efforts and ensure consistency in their delivery, i) sharing workable examples, and f) effectively using existing resources such as available handbooks on mainstreaming practices in specific sectors and manuals on safe construction techniques.

Getting mainstreaming right and a routine part of decision making in all sectors is a crucial element of the new framework, and whose practice will continue both during current HFA implementation and as well as long into the implementation of the new framework.

Many dialoguers share hopes that these online consultations motivate stakeholders, key planners and policy makers, to ponder over the issues” and act decisively to make a difference for the “future world we all want”.

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