ISSUE BRIEF: DISASTER RISK GOVERNANCE

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

United Nations Development Programme

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Resilient nations.

"The earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 was about the same magnitude as the major February [2011] quake in Christchurch, but the human toll was significantly higher. The loss of 185 lives in Christchurch was 185 too many. Compared with the estimated 220,000 plus killed in Haiti in 2010, it becomes evident that it is not the magnitude of the disaster or natural hazard alone which determines its impact."

– Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator

Poorly managed economic growth, combined with climate variability and change, is driving an overall rise in global disaster risk for all countries.

Human development and disaster risk are interlinked. Rapid economic and urban development can lead to growing concentrations of people in areas that are prone to natural hazards. The risk increases if the exposure of people and assets to natural hazards grows faster than the ability of countries to improve their risk reduction capacity.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND GOVERNANCE

The catastrophic impact of disasters is not 'natural.' Disasters are triggered by human acts and decisions. For example, building a new road may attract people to settle in an area that is flood prone, creating increased exposure and vulnerability to flood risk. Every disaster is unique, revealing actions by individuals and governments that lead to catastrophe.

When people and institutions consider integrated disaster risk from the outset, it is possible to reduce the number of deaths and damage from natural hazards.

Disaster risk reduction is, within the remit of UNDP; attainable when risk reduction measures are taken; and cost effective, both because it saves millions of dollars in humanitarian assistance, especially when integrated with climate change adaptation, and because it needn't cost a great deal to implement. For example, a text message to a farmer telling him when and what to plant in view of an impending drought, requires only the sharing of data and very little investment.

Disaster risk governance refers to the way in which the authorities, public servants, media, private sector, and civil society coordinate in communities, and on regional and national levels in order to manage and reduce disaster and climate related risks.

This means ensuring that sufficient levels of capacity and resources are made available to prevent, prepare for, manage and recover from disasters. It also entails mechanisms and processes for citizens to articulate their interests, and exercise their legal rights and obligations.

Around the world, it is the poor who face the greatest risk from disasters. Those affected by poverty are more likely to live in drought and flood prone regions, and natural hazards are far more likely to hurt poor communities than rich ones. Ninety-five percent of the 1.3 million people killed and the 4.4 billion affected by disasters in the last two decades lived in developing countries, and fewer than two per cent of global deaths from cyclones occur in countries with high levels of development.

In the context of risk management, this requires that the general public are sufficiently informed of the natural hazard risks they are exposed to and able to take necessary precautions.

Disaster risk governance can include land-use planning and building code regulations; tools for assessing disaster risk; and helping government institutions to take on the responsibility of managing disaster risk and recovery by helping to mandate institutional responsibilities; as well as involving vulnerable populations in the planning and implementation of community based measures.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN DEVELOPMENT

Disasters touch everyone in a society. If people and assets are to be protected, resilience must be integrated, or "mainstreamed" into planning, infrastructure, livelihoods, and broader economic and social development strategies.

The end result of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation would be that these concepts are embedded into development practice, fully institutionalized within development agendas and that they have become underlying principles of sustainable development.

Mainstreaming is a governance process that helps ensure that development is protected from the impacts of disasters, and that development does not increase existing and future levels of natural hazard risk.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Based on extensive experience, UNDP has developed a framework that provides practical guidance to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The framework outlines a number of entry points for mainstreaming:

- Policy development (e.g. integrating disaster risk reduction into development policies, such as agriculture or education policies);
- Organizational/institutional development (e.g. identifying disaster risk reduction focal points across government agencies and strengthening cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms);
- Improving advocacy and knowledge for disaster risk reduction (e.g. technical guidelines, training and educational programmes);
- Supporting the implementation of specific disaster risk reduction measures (e.g. conducting risk assessments and integrating risk reduction into recovery interventions); and
- Supporting broad participation in disaster risk reduction (e.g. community based disaster reduction plans and programmes, as well as increasing the involvement of women in risk reduction plans).

Despite increasing recognition that good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually supportive objectives, the understanding of how this is best achieved is still in the early phase.

A global review conducted by UNDP in 2007 discovered that "although increasingly risk management and reduction are mentioned in governmental development policies, plans and strategies, they are not treated as a truly multi-sectoral concern." Similarly, the 2011 UN Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction concluded that "Using development mechanisms and instruments for DRM [*disaster risk management*] requires a reform of many existing risk governance arrangements. This requires increased political authority and policy coherence in central government, competent and accountable local governments, and the willingness of governments to work in partnership with civil society."

The failure to prioritize disaster risk management leads to new or heightened patterns of disaster risk, and ultimately an increased risk of the loss of lives and livelihoods.

UNDP'S APPROACH

UNDP has more than 20 years of experience in disaster risk reduction, which has made it a trusted partner of governments, communities, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector. Hands-on advice, and support for strengthening capacity in risk governance and disaster risk reduction have become established areas of focus within UNDP.

UNDP employs a number of specific mechanisms to provide this support, including:

- UNDP country programmes, many of which are implemented by governments;
- Knowledge products and training courses that ensure UNDP practitioners have access to up-to-date developments in this practice area;
- Advisory services for disaster risk reduction at headquarters, working closely with other parts of UNDP, i.e. UNDP Country Offices, the Bureau for Development Policy, Regional Bureaus, and others;
- Entry points through other country-level programme areas and technical service lines. UNDP believes it is important to integrate risk reduction standards and measures into the planning and delivery of its core development services and processes, including education, environment, health, poverty reduction, livelihoods and governance; and
- Partnerships with specialized institutions working in the mainstreaming and governance area.

UNDP IN ACTION

The following demonstrates how the disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation mainstreaming framework has been put into practice by UNDP in its programme countries, realising reduced vulnerability to natural hazards.

Assisting in the development of disaster risk reduction policy:

- In the **Dominican Republic**, UNDP supported the development of a comprehensive National Seismic Risk Management Plan and assisted the government to implement this plan in two major municipalities;
- In **Honduras**, UNDP supported the development of a legislative framework for the National Risk Management System, which was approved by the government in 2010. The legislative work paved the way for the writing of a national risk management plan, which is due to be finalized in 2012;
- In **Indonesia**, UNDP helped the government to integrate disaster risk reduction into the national five-year development plan, making sure that future activities to reduce disaster risk will be prioritized in the state budget;
- In **Pakistan**, UNDP worked with five ministries under the leadership of the National Disaster Management Authority to incorporate disaster reduction into the government's long-term plans. All development projects at federal and provincial level are now required to take disaster risk reduction into consideration; and
- In **Peru**, UNDP helped the government to issue a state policy that makes it mandatory to incorporate disaster risk reduction into development projects.

Supporting organizational/institutional development:

- In **Indonesia**, UNDP supported the establishment of Disaster Management Agencies in 357 high risk districts and municipalities. Institutional mechanisms for disaster risk reduction are now in place at all levels of government;
- In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, UNDP supported the review of the national platform for disaster risk reduction, which helped the government make the system of disaster preparedness more efficient and reduced duplication between municipal institutions, departments and agencies;
- In **Malawi**, UNDP helped the government establish District Disaster Risk Management Officers in 14 disaster prone areas, resulting in improved disaster management and post-flood assessments during the 2011 floods; and
- In **Mozambique**, since 2000, UNDP has supported a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction that has included assisting the National Institute for Disaster Management. The country is now considered a regional leader in disaster preparedness.

Supporting advocacy and knowledge management for disaster risk reduction:

- In **Guatemala**, UNDP helped run a post-graduate degree in risk management with the University of San Carlos and the government's planning department. Initially designed for national planning specialists, the degree is now open to government officials from all Central American countries;
- In **Honduras**, UNDP provided advice to the Secretary of Planning to develop guidelines for integrating disaster risk reduction into regional, municipal and local development planning;
- In **Jordan**, UNDP assisted local authorities to prepare technical guidelines on earthquake vulnerability that have since informed public and private investments in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone; and
- In **Kenya**, UNDP advocated for faster passage of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy in 2011, which was prepared with UNDP technical assistance.

Supporting the implementation of disaster risk reduction activities:

- In **Armenia**, a National Disaster Loss Observatory was established in 2011, which monitors and registers landslides, mudflows, floods and earthquakes. The observatory is using archaeological, historical and geological data to assess the probability of future seismic events based on historical evidence, in some cases going back more than 2000 years;
- In **Bangladesh**, UNDP is helping local authorities to develop local risk assessments and action plans in 40 districts;
- In **Haiti**, UNDP's assistance was instrumental in ensuring that all earthquake recovery projects consider risk reduction measures. In addition, a seismic roadmap and a macro-zonation of Port-au-Prince were completed;
- In **Mozambique**, UNDP helped the government improve its ability to manage climate risk by building on recovery programmes following Cyclone Favio in 2007;
- In the **Philippines**, UNDP has helped the government develop multi-hazard maps that are now used in local disaster preparedness and land use planning; and
- In **South Asia**, UNDP helped develop and implement risk management strategies in the Himalayan regions of Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan to reduce the risks faced by mountain communities and to mitigate the impacts of climatic hazards.

Supporting participation in disaster risk reduction:

- In **Iran**, UNDP supported the training of women in selected cities to reduce their own and their families' vulnerability to disaster;
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNDP helped bring about a new law on "Local Self Governance," which was adopted in 2011. The law means that municipal budgets will be modified to include provisions for disaster risk reduction. In 49 communities, UNDP ensured peoples involvement in developing disaster mitigation and preparedness measures; and
- In **Pakistan**, UNDP trained 30 community volunteers and district coordination officers in the Jhang District of Punjab province in emergency response. As the 2010 floods unfolded, they were able to save 1,800 people, their belongings and many cattle.

A man plants mangrove seeds in Pakistan as part of UNDP supported disaster risk reduction activities. Satomi Kato, UNDP Pakistan

PARTNERSHIPS

UNDP has forged several strategic partnerships to further enhance its country level work on risk governance and mainstreaming.

- With the UN Office for Disaster Reduction and partners, UNDP works to increase high-level political commitment for integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptability into economic and social planning processes, i.e. the "Mainstreaming Adaptation and Disaster Reduction into Development" initiative;
- With the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UNDP is working on the preparation of a global report on how legislation can enhance the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction at the national and community level, and on legislative gaps and relevant solutions to disaster risk reduction challenges;
- With the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN Office for Disaster Reduction, and other partners, UNDP manages a global partnership that works to enhance the ability of UN agencies at country level to jointly deliver disaster risk reduction strategies with a focus on capacity development, called the the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative;
- With the UN Staff College, the Development Operations Coordination Office and the UN Office for Disaster Reduction, UNDP guides the preparation of UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) in high risk countries. UNDAFs provide a vehicle for ensuring that the entire UN programme in a country includes disaster risk reduction considerations; and
- In support of the UN Office for Disaster Reduction, UNDP helps to consolidate lessons learned from the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action that will guide the direction of post-Hyogo arrangements, including the organization of national and regional consultations to solicit inputs from a wide range of stakeholders.

UNDP AT A GLANCE

UNDP works in 60 high-risk countries on disaster risk reduction and recovery. In 2010, disaster risk reduction and recovery expenditure amounted to $140 million, of which more than 90 per cent went directly to national programmes. In addition:

- UNDP has over **200 full-time professionals** working in the area of disaster risk reduction;
- The pool of staff is complemented by a crisis prevention and recovery **roster of experts** to provide technical expertise to UNDP Country Offices on short notice, especially in the immediate aftermath of disasters;
- UNDP has placed 15 full-time **national disaster reduction advisors** in high-risk countries around the world and jointly funds four others with the World Bank; and
- UNDP has also placed six full-time **regional disaster reduction advisors** around the world to roll out disaster risk reduction programmes, offer technical advisory services and help mobilize resources.

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