



Implementation of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Developing an Arab position on the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction “HFA2”

Regional workshop (24-25 November 2013, League of Arab States, Egypt)

Background:

Disasters are not sudden events and the Arab region is not immune from disasters. Different parts of the Arab region are regularly exposed to geological hazards such as earthquakes and landslides, in addition to weather related hazards such as floods, extreme temperature events, drought, sand storms, wildfires and cyclones. Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, water scarcity, changing demography and migration trends are further amplifying levels of vulnerability among the Arab population. Secondary risks associated with population displacement, disease outbreak, pandemic influenza, conflict and civil unrest pose multi-fold challenges to the region, on a larger scale than ever before. All these factors challenge countries and limit their capacities to reduce and manage disaster risk.

In response to the alarming trends of disasters, and in consideration of commitments towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Arab States have adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA), developed at the World Disaster Conference held in Kobe, Japan in 2005 and endorsed afterwards by the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/195. The League of Arab States, through the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), has taken concrete steps toward increasing awareness and commitment to disaster risk reduction and the integration of disaster risk reduction measures in regional policies on sustainable development, climate change adaptation, environment and disaster management coordination mechanisms.

The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 (ASDRR 2020) was developed in collaboration between the technical secretariat of CAMRE at the League of Arab States, and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) through its Regional Office for Arab States in collaboration with many other partners from the UN system, international organizations and civil society. The ASDRR 2020 was adopted by CAMRE resolution #345, in its 22nd session held at the League of Arab States 19-20 December 2010 and has been further endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League in September 2011 and later in March 2012, ASDRR was adopted by Heads of States at the Baghdad Arab Summit. A Plan of Implementation for ASDRR is being prepared by all partners. Regional organizations contributed to the draft, which was shared with the Arab countries. Before adoption at the next CAMRE Meeting, the Plan of Implementation of ASDRR is yet to receive more inputs from the Arab countries.

Towards further consolidation of regional actions on DRR and HFA implementation, the 1st Arab Conference on DRR was organized by UNISDR, UNDP and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) to address DRR challenges and progress in the Arab Region – including HFA implementation and post 2015 Agenda – with a thematic focus on Urban Disaster Risk Management. The conference was organized in partnership with the League of Arab States and the Jordanian Government; it was hosted by the Aqaba



Special economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess SumayaBint El Hassan. The Conference was attended by more than 250 participants, including Arab ministers, senior government officials, city mayors, civil society representatives, bilateral development agencies and United Nations officials.

This first Arab regional high level multi-stakeholder gathering on DRR facilitated the identification of opportunities and challenges in the existing policies and institutional mechanisms for disaster risk management and discussed the regional progress towards risk reduction and HFA implementation. Furthermore, a key outcome was the consolidation of a regional position and input towards post-2015 DRR Global Framework. As HFA is approaching the end of its 10 year timeframe 2005-2015, the Member States of the United Nations requested UNISDR to facilitate development of a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction through United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/199. The deliberations of stakeholders in the Arab region on the post-2015 DRR agenda serve as a direct contribution to the development of the “next” global DRR framework coming in 2015.

Consultation on the ASDRR Plan of Implementation:

The League of Arab States has circulated the draft ASDRR plan of Implementation to Arab States. This workshop aims to further solicit inputs and finalize the plan of implementation to be put up for adoption at the next CAMRE meeting.

Consultations on post-2015 DRR Framework “HFA2”:

UNISDR has launched wide consultation processes to engage various stakeholders and assess their perceptions on priorities for the Post-2015 Framework. Based on a February 2012 background paper, consultations have been and are being organized at global, regional, national and local level. These are being complemented by specific theme-based/ stakeholder-based consultations and two rounds of on-line dialogues (details can be found at <http://www.preventionweb.net/posthfa/>). The objective of these consultations is to identify key elements to be considered for the new disaster risk reduction framework. Based on the wide range of experiences of participants in areas related to disaster risk reduction and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, consultations provide critical contributions towards adoption of a new framework by 2015. Taking place in all regions of the world, each consultation is part and parcel of a global process and contributes to shape a consensus based agreement singling out details of what should be priorities for DRR beyond 2015.

The first regional consultation on the post-2015 Framework for DRR (HFA2) took place in Aqaba, March 2013 during the Arab Conference on DRR. A review of regional progress in disaster risk reduction and the implementation of HFA was presented and discussed by participants. This helped set the context for the HFA2 discussions that followed. The regional consultation focused on substantial aspects for resilience building as identified in the 2010 Hyogo Framework for Action Mid-term Review and on the key findings of the 2009 and 2011 Global Assessment Reports on DRR. In particular, participants discussed: (1) Institutional Mechanisms, Governance and Accountability; (2) Climate Resilience; (3) DRR at Local Level; (4) Economics of DRR and Investment; (5) Integrating DRR into Development Planning.



A two-day workshop to support accelerating progress on DRR and advancing discussions on HFA2 in the Arab Region:

On the initiative of the League of Arab States (LAS), UNISDR in collaboration with UNDP, UN-OCHA, LAS Department of Environment, Housing, Water Resources and Sustainable Development and the LAS Crisis Department, a two-day regional workshop will be organized on 24-25 November 2013 to finalize ASDRR Plan of Implementation and take stock of regional progress and key institutional challenges with respect to implementation of DRR actions and HFA priorities at national and local levels. The workshop will offer an opportunity for participants to present their final comments on the ASDRR Plan of Implementation as well as review current status of progress in the region within a global outlook and will facilitate discussion on effective means to advance DRR in the Arab region in the context of the post-2015 agenda and the anticipated new global DRR framework.

The workshop main objectives are:

- Finalize the Draft of the ASDAR Plan of Implementation
- Raise awareness among key stakeholders on the existing institutional gaps related to implementation of HFA and DRR at national and local levels;
- Identify effective means to overcome current challenges facing DRR implementations with particular attentions to (local) governance and accountability mechanisms;
- Scope out key issues of importance for decision-makers in the Arab region considering the post-2015 agenda and the new DRR global framework. These issues will build upon outcomes of the 1st Arab Conference on DRR held in Aqaba, March 2013.
