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HFA

Implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action in the Arab Region

Executive Summary

REGIONAL SYNTHESIS REPORT 2005–2015

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UNISDR

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

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Preface

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to disasters emphasizes the need to monitor and review progress in disaster risk reduction in order to document the implementation of the Framework and to inform disaster risk reduction planning and programming at the national and regional levels.

Responsibilities for monitoring the HFA are assigned mainly to governments, but they are also important for regional organizations and institutions, international organizations and partners in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

This synthesis report is based on reports submitted by countries as well as initiatives by regional organizations to respond to the HFA monitoring requirements. Those countries that are yet to respond are not represented.

While in some countries broad consultation exercises may have been carried out as part of the review and monitoring process, it must be recognized that the reports are self-assessments done by national authorities that are prepared by the designated HFA focal points.

This is the last Arab regional HFA report to be published in advance of agreement on a successor to the HFA, as the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is scheduled for March 2015. At that time a new instrument will be agreed upon and submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for endorsement. It is therefore hoped that this report will inform the consultations on how best to continue DRR work in the post 2015 framework, while accounting for challenges in the Arab region.

Acknowledgements

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UNISDR gratefully acknowledges the countries that have reported on the implementation of the HFA and thanks the regional organizations for their support.

These countries are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Palestine, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Special thanks are also offered to the HFA focal points of those countries that facilitated, coordinated and presented the reports.

The regional organizations and initiatives are: the League of Arab States (LAS), the Gulf Cooperation Council Disaster Risk Management Centre, the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry lands (ACSAD), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) work on the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR).

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACSAD	Arab Centre for the Study of Arid and Drylands
CCC	Children in a Changing Climate
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EWS	Early Warning System
HFA	Hyogo framework for Action
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
LAS	League of Arab States
LDC	Least Developed Country
MHRA	Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SIS	Small Island States
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WCDDR	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

Executive Summary

Background

This is an executive summary of the regional report on progress in reducing disaster risk and implementing the HFA in the Arab Region. The regional report provides an overview of trends in progress, challenges and gaps in implementing the HFA, as identified by national and regional partners, for the period 2005–2015. The report is based on a number of national and regional contributions and inputs.

In this regard, national interim progress reports on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) were received from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Syria and Yemen (reporting period 2007–2009); Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Yemen (reporting period 2009–2011); Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen (submitted reports by February 2013 for the reporting period 2011–2013); Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, U.A.E. and Yemen (submitted reports by January 2015 for the interim reporting period 2013–2015).

In certain cases, some countries submit incomplete reports, graded reports without descriptions, or descriptions of progress without grading their efforts in DRR. Finally, it should be noted, Algeria, Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen also submitted reports to the world conference on disasters held in 2005 in Kobe, Japan in planning for the HFA. Synthesis reports on regional progress in the implementation of the HFA in the Arab region were also carried out by UNISDR in 2009 and 2011.

Objectives

The main goal of this report is to provide a critique of the progress achieved at the regional level, and by individual Arab states, in an attempt to inform the attempts to develop a global post 2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in 2015. The specific aims of this report are to:

- Review the progress achieved in the period 2007–2015;
- Identify and validate trends in progress and highlight challenges in monitoring;
- Identify areas where future efforts should be directed;
- Develop conclusions and recommendations

which may inform the process leading to the development of holistic post 2015 DRR Framework.

Methodology

The report attempts to achieve the above aims by analyzing progress using the following parameters:

- The hybrid grade for each HFA priority of Action;
- The grade of the various core-indicators for each HFA priority of Action;
- Descriptions provided by the various countries shedding light on additional details regarding achievements and challenges relating to the various Core Indicators.

It should be recognized that the results of the review are indicative and qualitative due to the following main challenges:

- National reports examined for the purpose of this report are the result of self-assessments conducted by national focal point/ authorities some of which are focused mainly and solely on response and relief efforts such as the civil defense agencies and are therefore challenged to comprehensively answer questions related to HFA priorities for Action 1 through to 4;
- While in some countries consultation exercises were held as part of the review process, the progress reports were designed to be used by governments and are essentially self-assessments by national authorities. Therefore, these reports can often reflect the perspectives of government rather than other stakeholders, such as local communities, all sectors of government, or the private sector;
- Some countries provide core indicators grades without any description or vice versa, thereby introducing an element of subjectivity and interpretation from the perspective of the author of this report;
- The reporting templates changed between successive reporting periods.

Finally, where relevant, the report may refer to select country examples for the purpose of illustration. However, as discussed in the beginning of this section,

¹ <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/progress>

² Progress in reducing disaster risk and implementing Hyogo Framework for Action in the Arab region, Executive Summary 2009, UNISDR

³ Progress in reducing disaster risk and implementing Hyogo Framework for Action in the Arab region, Summary report, 2011, UNISDR.

the goal and aim of this summary report is to identify common themes and challenges across the Arab region.

Findings

Governments and organizations, at the regional, national and local levels, recognize the need to raise the priority of disaster risk reduction and are directly responding to the expectations and directions of the HFA, albeit to varying degrees depending on the level of awareness and development within each individual country. This commitment is evident in the participation of 17 Arab countries in submitting national reports, establishing national focal points and national platforms for DRR within the Arab region.

The specific indicators of progress presented in the country reports show that a large majority of reporting countries attained institutional commitment for ensuring that DRR is a national and local priority. However, so far, achievements are neither substantial nor comprehensive.

Little change is seen in the quantitative levels of achievement relative to what had been reported in earlier reporting periods. Furthermore, in some cases changes reflect less progress as countries improve their understanding as to the purpose and methodology of the self assessment. However, subtle changes are occurring as can be revealed in the text of country reports, where applicable. Indeed the strategic goal statements demonstrate how countries are moving from a culture of directing efforts at response to proactive risk reduction and sustainable development by linking poverty reduction efforts, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. This trend is further underlined by future outlook statements as elaborated by various national reports.

However, it must be recognized that significant challenges remain in the implementation of the HFA; with the lack of clear mandates, financial resources and capacities at both national and local levels constituting the most severe constraints. Clearly more work must be done by all stakeholders to advocate for the importance of public investment in DRR, particularly in corrective risk management strategies for the most vulnerable communities, livelihoods and sectors.

Finally, a trend that is expected to continue post the 2015 framework is that demands for integrating DRR with climate change adaptation, poverty reduction and

sustainable growth are expected to increase as more pressure continues to be exerted on scarce resources due to population settlement and growth trends and climate change challenges, including drought.

Conclusions

At the national level, the strategic goal and future outlook statements demonstrate increased awareness to move from a culture of response to one of prevention and mitigation, thereby improving resilience.

However, several major challenges have been identified that are hindering the move towards integrating prospective and corrective disaster risk management strategies into national and sectoral development and investment; namely:

1. Lack of clear mandates, particularly for corrective DRM strategies;
2. Lack of decentralization and availability of financial resources and capacities, particularly at the local level;
3. Lack of methods for allocating and tracking funds for DRM;
4. Lack of disaster risk governance, including accountability and communication, frameworks, and;
5. Lack of sufficient awareness and guidelines on the need to invest in recovery plans to safeguard development and disaster response achievements.

The allocation of financial resources for DRM strategies remains a major challenge in many countries in the region due to prevalent poverty and the need to direct resources to more pressing and immediate needs as a result of unfolding man-made crises. However, it is hoped that this review, and the coming World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, will further motivate governments to commit to the importance of adopting a holistic development approach that incorporates DRR to protect development gains, attain sustainable development, adapt to climate change, reduce poverty and achieve resilience.

Progress

The national reports and regional initiatives for the 2005–2015 HFA reporting cycles demonstrate the increased recognition of governments and other stakeholders on the importance of raising the priority for disaster risk reduction. In particular, commitments in the Arab region to the HFA are demonstrated by the following facts:

- UNISDR coverage in the Arab region includes 22 countries;
- HFA focal points have been designated in 20 Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen;
- National platforms or committees for DRR have been established in 17 Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen;
- There has been a consistent increase in the number of Arab States reporting progress for the Hyogo Framework: 5 in 2009, 9 in 2011, 13 in 2013 and 15 in 2015;
- Several ministerial level regional agreements, arrangements and strategies have been developed at the League of Arab States (LAS) - regional level - and at sub-regional levels (e.g. the Gulf Cooperation Council) on matters related to DRM;
- UNISDR, the ISDR system, active governments and regional organizations have systematically promoted and advanced the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Challenges to Progress

In particular, the following challenges to progress are identified as areas and issues which future DRR efforts (strategies, policies, plans, programmes and projects) should account for:

- Several countries direct efforts at priority for action 3 and 4 before sufficient progress under priority for action 2. It is necessary that efforts to reduce the underlying risk factors (priority for action 4) and efforts to incorporate DRR in education, research and awareness raising campaigns (priority for action 3) be informed by and grounded on a **gender-disaggregated capacity, needs, hazards, vulnerabilities and risk assessment**;

- **Allocation of resources** and development of **tracking mechanisms**, to incorporate DRR in national and sectoral development budgets;
- Much more work needs to be done to develop tailor made **local legislation**, which accounts for **local capacities** and needs, while allocating resources for improving current local DRR capacities and for developing and implementing **local DRR initiatives**;
- More effort is required to broaden the **inclusiveness of national platforms** for DRR; in order to encompass other public sector agencies (particularly engagement of national finance and planning authorities), civil society organizations (independent NGOs for women, insurance and reinsurance private sector, local communities and the local private sector, vulnerable communities, amongst others).
- More effort is required to base sectoral development programs and plans on **gender disaggregated risk assessments** that identify the various social, economic, institutional, natural and physical factors that contribute to vulnerability and accumulate risk;
- The need to develop national risk management programs on a sectoral level (including for schools and hospitals) that are grounded on balanced strategies incorporating prospective, corrective and compensatory risk management solutions. In particular there is a need to invest more in **corrective risk management strategies in schools**;
- More work is needed to improve data collation and analysis of extensive and intensive disaster risk losses, including losses in informal / illegal settlements and losses in livelihoods of the informal sector. More work is also needed so the **planning and development processes are properly informed and grounded on the results of the disaster loss analysis**;
- More work is needed for the **training of blue collar workers** including technicians, agricultural workers and workers within the construction industry (beyond masons) to address several hazards including flooding, climate change and earthquakes;
- **Lack of linkages between outputs of research programs and the DRR related decision making process**, at the national, local, sectoral and household levels (e.g. microzonation studies are rarely widely and proactively disseminated in contrast to the best practice identified in GAR 2011 where the Sasakawa prize was awarded to the district of North Vancouver, Canada for online proactive dissemination of the MHRA and

- microzonation studies];
- More work is needed to ensure that gender disaggregated vulnerability is mainstreamed into the **training of local governments and in capacity assessments**.
 - More work is needed to **empower local communities** to participate in the incorporation of DRR into EIA practices.
 - More work is needed to incorporate **community participation** and gender disaggregated vulnerability and capacity assessments into disaster preparedness and contingency plans;
 - Further work and advocacy is required to underline the importance of allocating **funds for financing prospective and corrective risk management measures** – particularly to direct corrective risk management strategies at the most vulnerable communities and sectors;
 - More work is needed to **delineate recovery efforts from response plans** and for **developing tailor made recovery plans** that account for national and regional specificities.
 - Further work is needed for the development of

gender-disaggregated damage loss assessment methodologies and post disaster assessment methodologies, while engaging finance and planning authorities;

- More work is needed to develop a **two-way communication strategy on disaster risk reduction**, which would then form a basis for dissemination of DRR information and practices.

Recommendations

Based on the experiences reported by national partners and regional initiatives, and additional information made available through UNISDR and its partners, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration; by Arab states, regional organizations and other stakeholders.

National level

The figure below shows the progress made by Arab states in the implementation of the HFA, where it can be seen that for all priorities the average score is 3 or less.

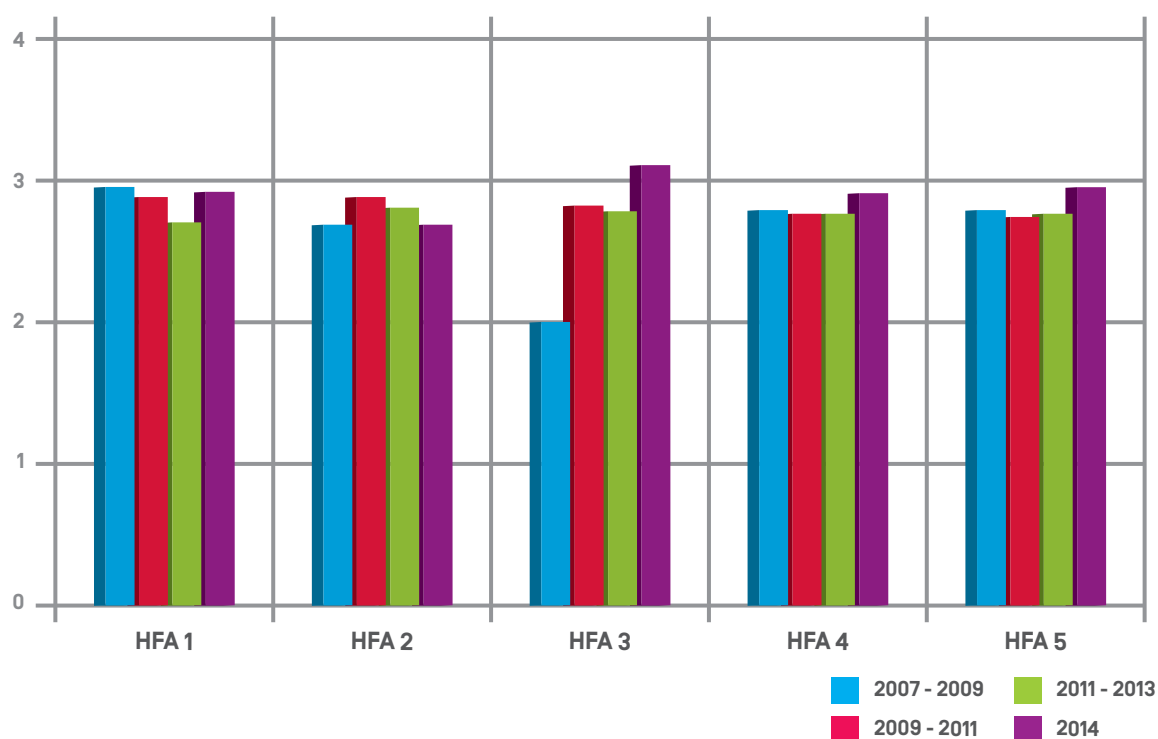


Figure 1 Average score for Arab States for all HFA Priorities

The emerging issues for consideration may be categorized under the five HFA Priorities for Action:

Institutional Basis for DRR

- There is a need to link national strategies and policies to action plans with realistic time frames and costs. To this end, there is a need to provide guidelines to public sector personnel on how to organize, manage and monitor progress in the process of developing time-bound action plans and allocating resources accordingly.
- There is a need to link national strategies, policies and action plans at the national levels to corresponding strategies, policies and action plans at the sectoral, local and community levels. To this end, there is a need to provide guidelines to public sector personnel (at all levels) on how to organize, manage and monitor progress in

the process of developing sectoral, local and community level strategies, policies and plans.

- There is a need to link national strategies, policies and action plans for DRR with poverty reduction strategies and with any climate change adaptation strategies.
- There is a need to develop risk governance frameworks including accountability of decisions related to DRR. This should lead to a major improvement in the accountability of all decision related to DRR under the five priorities for action. It should also facilitate the process of lobbying for effecting DRR change in adopting corrective risk management strategies.
- There is a need to engage more stakeholders in the disaster risk reduction process, including national planning and finance authorities, local authorities, local private sector and local communities.

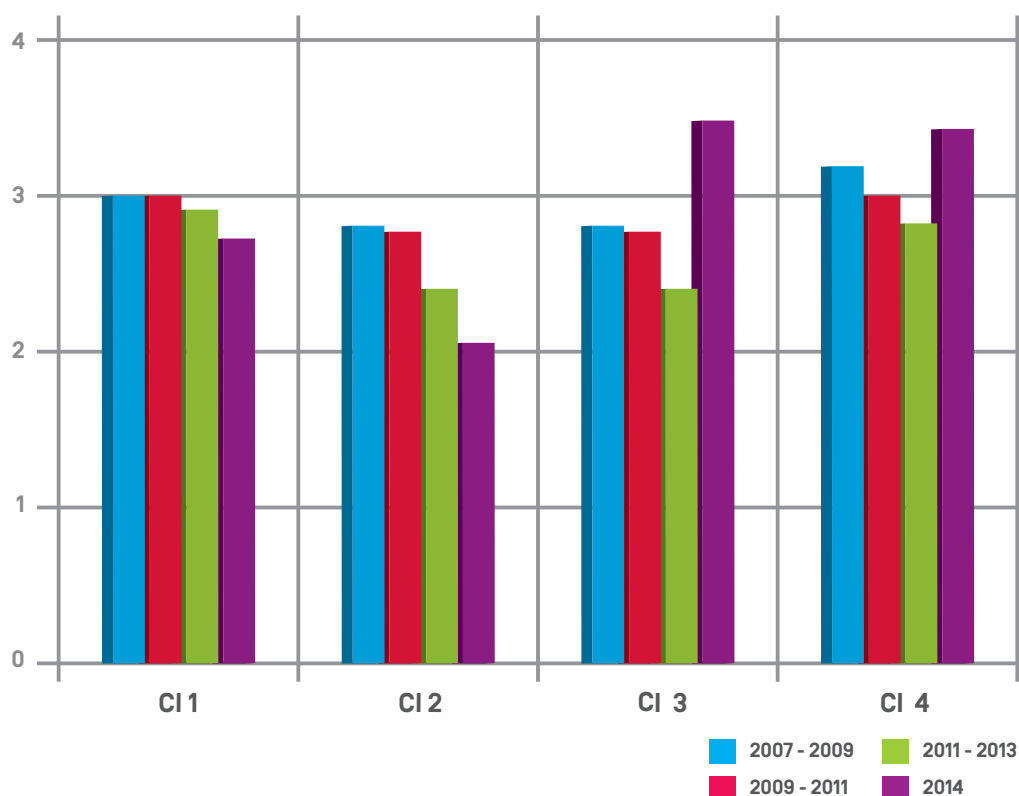


Figure 2 Average Score for Arab States for Core Indicators of HFA Priority 1

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

- The collation and analysis of social, economic, institutional, physical and natural factors contributing to disaster vulnerability requires further effort. While some effort has been directed

at assessing physical vulnerability within some critical infrastructure elements and sectors, very limited effort has been dedicated to understanding how the different factors identified above interact and lead to the construction of risk – a process which has been occurring and accumulating for decades due to the lack of incorporation of DRR

into development and investment processes.

- Improve understanding of the interaction between the physical, economic, social, natural and institutional factors contributing to vulnerability and the main disaster risk drivers, including poverty, weak risk governance, environmental degradation and rapid and unchecked urban expansion.
- Improve understanding of the interaction between climate change, poverty reduction, development and disaster risk management and how these interact to promote (or hinder) sustainable development (and not simply sustainable growth).
- Improve understanding of the interaction between inequality in access to power at the decision making forum, inequality of distribution of hazards, vulnerabilities and risks in different population groups and inequality in disaster losses due to both intensive and extensive risks.
- Carry out extensive, intensive and aggregate

(i.e. both intensive and extensive) disaster risk losses at the sectoral and national levels, to inform efforts for 1) the incorporation of DRR into national and sectoral plans, 2) poverty reduction, 3) development strategies, and 4) climate change adaptation.

- Adopt participatory local and city level hazard, vulnerability and risk assessments, in collaboration with local communities and local authorities, especially in vulnerable communities and for vulnerable sectors and livelihoods, to be informed by local gender disaggregated needs and capacity assessments.
- There is a need to ensure that vulnerabilities and risks that occur informally (whether in illegal housing in slums and illegal settlements or in livelihoods in the informal sector) are being properly identified and analyzed, as opposed to the current situation where in many cases these are neither identified nor managed.

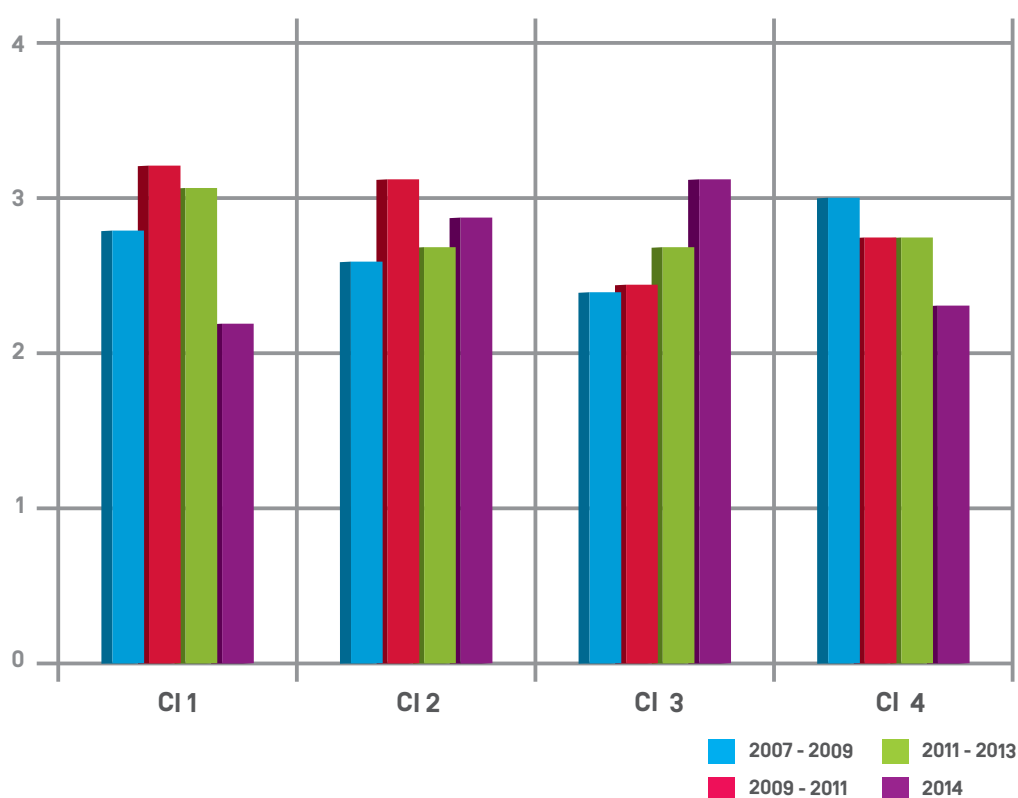


Figure 3 Average Score for Arab States in Core Indicators for HFA Priority 2

Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

- Develop a broad umbrella consisting of a two-way risk communication framework, which takes into account the perceptions and the apprehensions

of the various stakeholders and the public at large regarding decisions and information related to DRR, under which the access to and dissemination of DRR information, must take place.

- Develop hazard specific (e.g., earthquake, drought, water scarcity, flooding) training for blue collar workers including technicians, agricultural

workers and workers within the construction industry.

- Strengthen linkages between outputs of research programs and the decision making process related to DRR, at the national, local, sectoral and household levels. To this end, there is also a need for the development and enforcement of information sharing mechanisms regarding the construction of disaster risk and any corresponding disaster risk reduction strategies, policies and measures. This must be seen as part of the risk governance framework referred to

earlier.

- Develop training strategies, policies, action plans, programmes and projects of local and city governments, and communities, based on the results of a gender disaggregated vulnerability, needs and capacity assessment. Such tailor made training are essential as it is the lack of capacities that are often cited as the reason for the lack of progress on decentralization of DRR efforts.

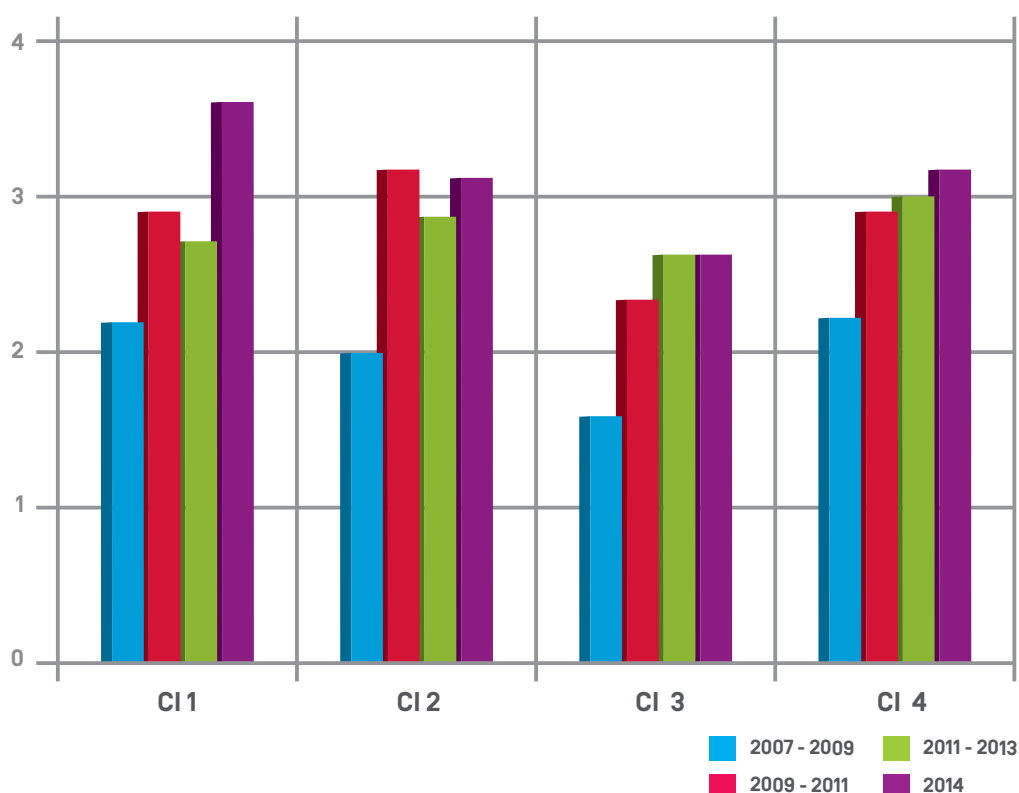


Figure 4 Average Score for Arab States in Core Indicators for HFA Priority 3

Reduce the underlying risk factors

- Develop strategies, policies, action plans and financing mechanisms for corrective disaster risk management for both meteorological and geophysical hazards. This should address both rural and urban hazards. In particular, this should be based on a forward looking pro-active approach that will look at current and future hazards and vulnerabilities including climate change, sea level rise, and earthquake risks in rural and urban areas (including slums and illegal settlements) taking into account the interaction between the two.
- Collaborate with the private financial sector (banking, insurance and reinsurance companies) to ensure that insurance and financing services

are available at the local level, particularly in vulnerable communities, livelihoods and households.

- Develop methodologies to reduce the underlying social and economic factors that contribute to vulnerability that corresponds to both intensive and extensive risks and link those to poverty reduction, education, gender and health strategies that are promoted and financed by various initiatives and organizations.
- Develop methodologies for the incorporation of DRR into EIA practices with guidelines for cost benefit analysis, while ensuring sufficient decentralization and empowerment of local communities based on gender disaggregated vulnerability and capacity assessments.

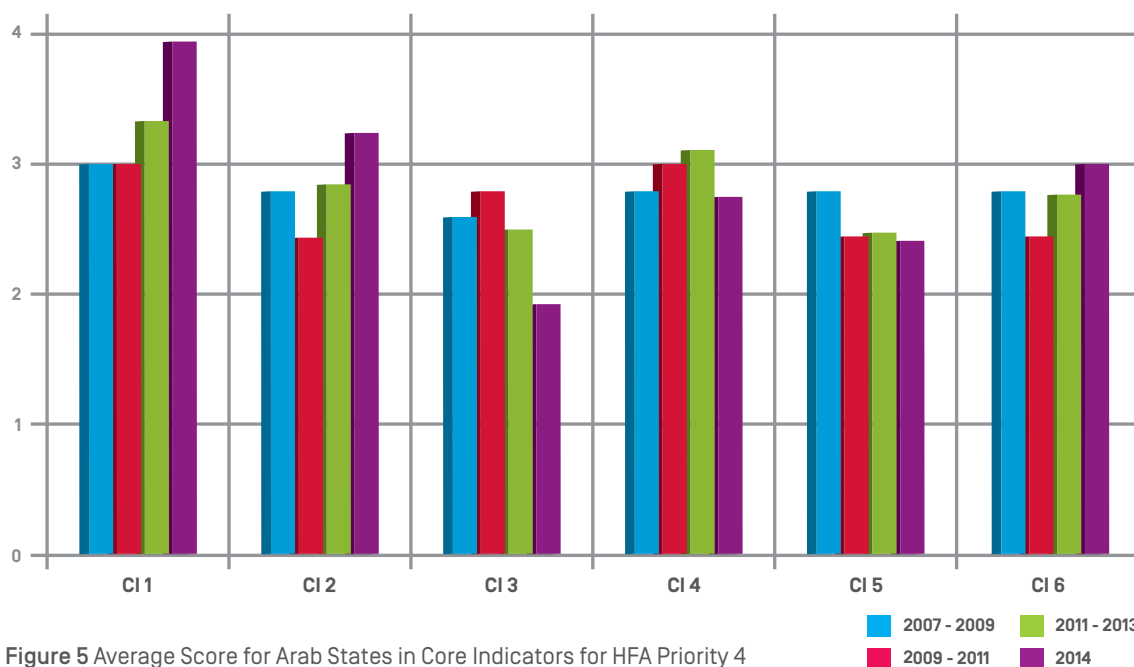


Figure 5 Average Score for Arab States in Core Indicators for HFA Priority 4

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

- There is a need to base disaster preparedness and contingency plans, damage loss assessment

methodologies and post disaster assessment methodologies on community participation and gender disaggregated vulnerability and capacity assessments.

- There is a need to delineate response and recovery

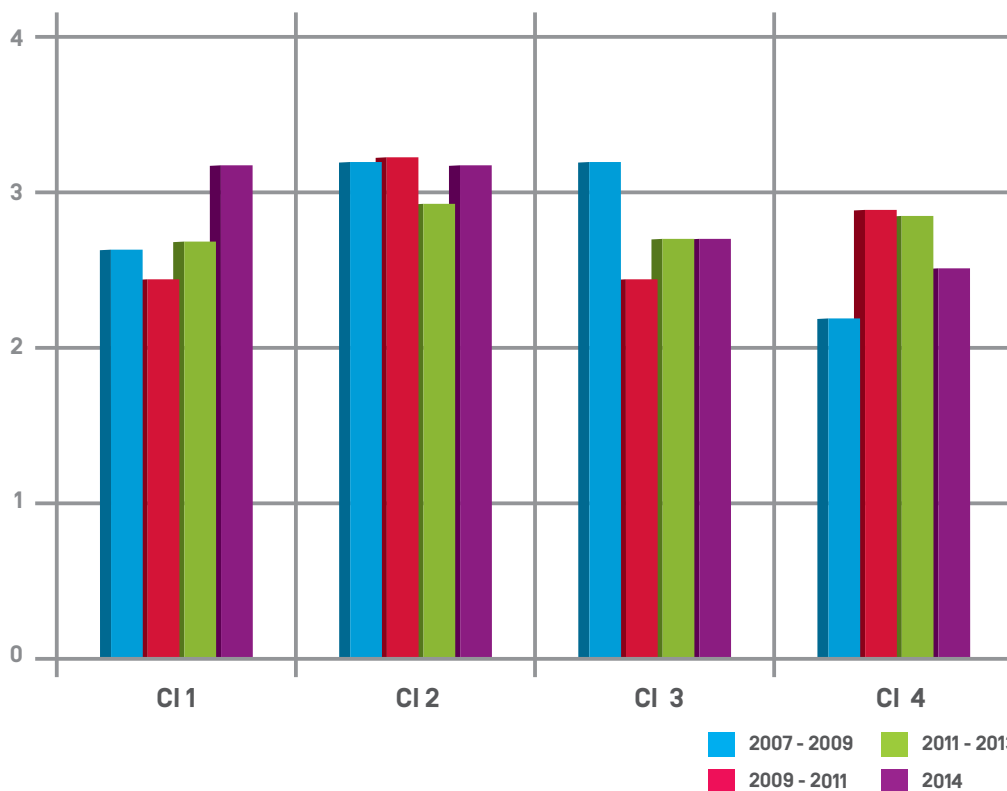


Figure 6 Average Score for Arab States in Core Indicators for HFA Priority 5



efforts and develop separate recovery plans aiming at preventing the reconstruction of risk in any infrastructure and housing reconstruction efforts and any livelihood rehabilitation and strengthening efforts in the wake of any disasters.

Regional level

- Strengthen efforts for sharing information and best practices on disaster risk management between countries and sub-regions.
- Develop tailor made programs and studies at the sub-regional level for countries sharing similar hazard, exposure, vulnerability, capacity and / or needs [i.e. Mashreq, Maghreb, GCC, LDC and SIS countries]. Improve liaison with international and regional organizations also working on DRR (World Bank, Global Network of NGOs, CCC, amongst others).
- Develop tailor made programs at the sub-regional level [i.e. Mashreq, Maghreb, GCC, LDC and SIS countries] to study the interaction between climate change, poverty reduction, development and disaster risk management. Improve liaison with international and regional organizations also working on DRR, development and climate change [including UNDP, UNEP and ESCWA among others].
- Continue research effort, through regional organizations such as AC-SAD, for the study of climate change hazards and its multi-sectoral effects.
- Improve regional cooperation on disaster risk management by strengthening the Arab Platform for DRR with a committee that meets annually to follow up on outcomes of regional platforms and advise on disaster related issues in the Arab region.
- It is envisaged that establishing a permanent committee to follow up on DRR would allow the identification and development of further relevant initiatives on DRR.
- It is envisaged that the League of Arab States have a significant lead role to play in all the above activities. As such its engagement in these efforts should be encouraged and continued partly through strengthening cooperation with regional UN offices including the regional UINISDR office in Cairo.



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