Utilizing SFDRR Priorities to Strengthen Local Governance and Local Disaster Management

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SFDRR Framework highlights the need for competent local governance and local disaster management solutions. Within its recommendations, it includes methods of communicating effective policies from national to local level. Crucially, national policies need to be communicable and adaptable for localities. Local governance discusses the management of disaster risk, from a human perspective. A disaster occurs when the vulnerabilities of the people and failure to live in harmony with nature that transforms the natural hazards into disasters, which are always man made. It is aptly summarised in the following way: Disaster = Risk (Hazard × Vulnerability) ÷ Capacity. The vulnerability of local communities can be mitigated against through improved capacity.

The SFDRR promotes the importance of local governance and the “engagement of all State institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels and a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders.” It also states it is necessary to empower local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk, including through resources, incentives and decision-making responsibilities, as appropriate. Empowering local government is crucial for bridging the gap between theory and practice. Without stakeholder involvement, the local government cannot obtain all the necessary information, and without a supporting legal framework, it does not have the power to implement changes.

The majority of the literature in the topic have considered five as the major issues to be addressed. Firstly, it is needed to link local and national aspects. Disasters are experienced at the local level, and local governments along with the communities are the first responders and victims. In order to have an effective preparedness response plan it is important to link the plan, policy and action at the national and local level. Secondly, it has to be taken into account the changing nature of disasters. Rainfall patterns have changed, heatwaves and drought become more prevalent. Situations like these two have created the need for developing local capacities (both at the government, non-government, and community levels) in order to deal with such a disasters.

Thirdly, respect and use the diversity of the communities as a motor driven to find solutions. It is the diversity of the communities: it is a well-accepted fact that communities are diverse, and their perception and ways of responding to disasters also varies. Therefore, it is important to decentralize policies and customize them according to local needs and priorities. There is more evidence from recent disasters that well aware and well-prepared local governments and communities can minimize the impacts of disasters. Local experiences and information can be applied to other regions. Increasing global awareness of local needs have been difficult over the last two decades, however there is a need to develop capacity building and policymaking at the local level, by taking into account the factors that influence the local government capacity.

Enhancing local governance and local disaster management requires an effective legal framework and the engagement of multiple stakeholders. The lack of legal oversight, accountability and engagement of multiple stakeholders are the most prevalent issues in South Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region. In both regions, local disaster management has become increasingly important.
Several factors influence the ability of local government to effectively mitigate against disasters:

- **Stakeholder involvement**
- **Cooperation and collaboration**
- **Flexibility and adaptability**

These three factors are featured in the SFDRR report and are essential for enhancing local government capacity in future. From a financial perspective, several innovative methods of financing have proven to help in regards to disaster preparedness the current innovative financing systems support communities and local institutions, build risk culture, and reduce transaction costs in terms of bringing products to people. Social grants are extended to communities for local ownership, transparency, and accountability by enhancing with the local decision-making process. enhancing the local decision-making process. Communities are thus enabled to decide locally where and how to enhance community resilience with particular attention to smaller scale, less media-compatible hazards and events that often evade attention (O’Donnell 2009). These initiatives must be featured in future regional policy.

### 2. CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The severity of disasters in both the Asia-Pacific and South Asian contexts cannot be understated. In 2015, Asia-Pacific continued to be the world’s most disaster prone region. 160 disasters were reported in the region, accounting for 47 per cent of the world’s 344 disasters. South Asia accounted for a staggering 64 per cent of total global fatalities - the majority was attributed to the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal in April which caused 8,790 deaths. These disasters are dealt at national, state, district and local level. The response of many governments has focused on empowering local governments to be better equipped for dealing with disasters. In India, the state government is primarily responsible for disaster however, the role of urban and rural local bodies particularly gram sabhas have become increasingly important in empowering local communities to learn and contribute to disaster management.

Problems surrounding local government have often concerned a lack of local capacity, community awareness and local disaster resilience. Local communities are not equipped to deal with disasters in the local area and do not have solutions within their own context. In addition, they are ill-prepared to mitigate against disasters and lessen the effects of disasters before they occur. This is due to a lack of training, particularly for women, and a lack of education in schools and in the local community. In the past, the coordination between international, national and local actors has been limited by a lack of preparedness and awareness of one another. Existing civil protection and emergency response structures have not been used or have even been weakened, owing both to a lack of knowledge and analysis and also to language problems. In the context of Nepal, poorly constructed housing can now be retrofitted by local masons using local materials, an important step in making local communities aware of, and prepared for disasters. Other local responses to solve issues have emerged in the Asia-Pacific.

In the Indonesian context, there has been a focus on the early disaster warning. Emergency Operations Centres at subdistrict level have been constructed in disaster prone areas which disseminate warnings and information to lower-levels, such as Post-Coordination hubs (Posko) and sub-subdistricts (Kelurahan). This warning system is connected to even more localised level such as the Coordination Posts of Kelurahan Kebon Baru (Sub-Sub-District level) as well as Posko at neighbourhood-cluster (Rukun Warga) level, which receive information and warnings, and monitor water levels using the new Flood Reference mechanism. It is clear that the local government has a role to play in gathering data about its district and receiving information from national governments on how to respond to the circumstances of a disaster. This included the help of local community organisations such as Yayasan Empati Sesama.

Further afield, local governance has gained more credibility through implementing national policy by unifying the agenda to reduce risks during disasters. In Fiji, with the support from UNDP, the provincial administration of Serua and Namosi mainstreamed disaster risk reduction in local development planning in flood-prone areas. The provincial government incorporated disaster risk reduction and developed priorities which were identified by communities into the provincial development plan. Importantly, local governments that have succeeded are those which have taken national and international frameworks, tailored them into local circumstances and by doing that they have improved effectiveness.

Returning to South Asia, the government of Nepal, introduced a national platform for coordinating landslide risk assessments. Importantly this work was distributed to local governments and local populations were consulted. According to this report, Nepalese local residents identified lack of “green” or “eco-safe” post-earthquake construction guidelines, which are specifically tailored to the Nepal context, therefore there is a need to take into account the entire supply chain of sustainable reconstruction. Often during times of crises, solutions are temporarily put in place. Nepal is under pressure to rebuild itself quickly. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) assesses and mitigates potential environmental impacts of proposed policies.

However, these techniques are seldom applied to every local community in a given area and the experiences of different
villages can vary greatly. Furthermore, information sharing is hampered by a lack of data collection at the local level. Pertinent and helpful information can be transferred from local communities to national or regional policy. Current policy options should be analysed with this in mind.

3. CRITIQUE OF POLICY OPTION(S)

Since 2007, Governments of Asian countries have assessed their progress towards the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in regards to Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policies and activities. The have also followed the good practices and lessons learnt that can be used by other countries by the time of planning DRR strategies. The Sendai Framework, which was adopted at the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan on 18 March 2015, endorsed a major shift in emphasis from disaster management to disaster risk management. The global target (f) is to “substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030”. In order to contribute and achieve to the implementation of the global targets, the Sustainable Development Goals on Poverty (SDG1) and Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG9), by strengthening local governance as a main priority. The 2015 Global Assessment Report by UNISDR highlighted that both the “mortality and economic loss associated with smaller-scale, recurrent localized disasters are trending up.” These risks can be driving factors in inequality, environmental degradation, badly planned and managed urban development, and weak governance. They are a central concern for the low-income households and small businesses that depend on public infrastructure and for the local governments that provide it. 3

- The Global Assessment Report from UNISDR has highlighted several key points to improve local government effectiveness. The report notes that local and national governments manage their disaster risks, they have not necessarily generated a culture of prevention. Importantly, the report highlighted how weak or non-existent local capacities are; and also it undermines the national disaster management arrangements. At the same time, preparedness and response plans may reflect preconceptions regarding the affected population or fail to account for the specificities and complexity of local risk scenarios, leading to unintended or negative consequences at the local level.

Throughout Asia and the Pacific, despite progress over the last decade, systematic approaches to incorporate disaster risk reduction and management into local government decision are still lacking. Access to national and sub-national level risk information; school-based assessment of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities; planning and implementation of risk reduction measures; learning and practicing of safety measures for emergencies and disasters; and planning for educational continuity, are not taking place on a systematic basis. Nor are the elements that make up local governments able to communicate effectively with one another. The impact of disasters and investments is not yet being documented sufficiently, nor are mitigation and preparedness measures being monitored and evaluated at a local level to such an extent where it can be utilized nationally.

The different levels of both policy commitments and actual implementation of DRR at the local level, and the limited resources available to increase local capacity have made a significant difference to the negative impact the disasters had on local communities across the countries in Asia Pacific and South Asia. In Nepal, Indigenous knowledge and coping mechanisms have not been sufficient to deal with the compounded impacts of these multiple hazards. Poverty and low level of awareness and preparedness have been major constraints.

Several areas of focus need to be addressed and a critical approach to improve local governance must be achieved.

Multi-stakeholder management

Main actors include local government authorities, civil society organizations, local academia, the business community and community-based organizations, with the support of national entities as needed. Industry is frequently absent. Local government disaster management should encourage businesses, civil society organizations and others to provide disaster risk information in their own area. Information gathering and discussion should take place with a wide forum for discussion as well as to ensure accountability and minimum requirements for all stakeholders to contribute to disaster management planning. Economic and legal incentives could motivate local stakeholders and institutions to establish a more engaged governance system. 12

Therefore, lessons learned commonly call for better stakeholder involvement, capacity building, decentralization and devolution or the transfer of power and authority to local levels. 12 The lack of representation, collaboration, coordination or inflexibility can caused some problems. Stakeholders’ assessment, involvement, cooperation, collaboration and flexibility should take place at every level from local to global scale. This highlights the importance of a strong civil society indicated by a pre-existing local network of local community-based organizations. In countries where the bonds between civil society actors are fractured or ineffective, local governments should build up platforms for communication and collaboration.

Local capacity

Some sectors and territories without comparative advantages for capital accumulation face increasing risks low levels of investment in risk-reducing infrastructure, absence of social and environmental protection rural and urban poverty, and amongst other factors are the main factors. In other words, some areas suffer from a lack of private investment, and therefore the government should take action at local level.

Local capacity can be improved at a higher level by improving resource distribution and trust. Cases such as published material on major disasters and its lessons learned are not accessible to local decision-makers, however by improving the resource distribution more people could have access and
work with them. Therefore by improving the local capacity and information share more valuable lessons can be learned for improving resilience and adaptation capacity.

**Encourage local leadership**

It is important to distinguish between disaster awareness acquired through experience and true learning. Leadership is required to collate these experiences into helpful information sharing. Risk relates directly to the day-to-day concerns of households, communities, small businesses and local authorities.

Awareness and engagement in risk management can be raised by offering trainings imparted in simple language and format so businesses, local governments and communities can easily understand. Leadership positions should be established in areas where people gather: schools, hospitals and work offices.

Individuals can present opportunities for leadership. In India, Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT) looks for women who are natural leaders in communities, and then the organization focuses on housing issues and rights by developing new work skills and gender awareness. This helps women in poverty condition to work collectively, work in masonry work, present themselves towards municipal and official authorities, and among others. One woman named, Thakore had joined MHT’s group of women leaders, called Vikasini (Woman as a Developer), and rose through the ranks to board member. In her case by joining the organization her quality of living improved, she attended workshops, learning the intricacies of housing policies and land law.

**Funding**

Increasing local capacity that may be much vary from state to state even if nation level requires a set minimum standard. In India, the District Disaster Management Authority should have access to State-level Response and Mitigation Funds.

**Local Partnerships**

People need to control their planning and management and to strengthen their urban governance through innovative partnerships between local governments, households and communities. Forums can be set up by encouraging local communities and private entities to address one disaster risk issue at a time.

**Sub-regional cooperation platforms**

In India, the allocation of budget for the next 5 years ($12 mil), 10% of all development schemes will go to disaster mitigation. It is needed also to develop a clear policy guidance, political declaration and a clear road map. In India, collaboration in disaster response between public and private sectors is vital and this will be presented in the next AMCDRR.

### 4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The national governments and their humanitarian and development partners should invest in making disaster resilient communities, by strengthening local governance. The participants of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in India support key elements to be included in the AMCDRR declarations:

- Countries in Asia Region must address disaster and climate risks in development through strengthened governance arrangements in sectors and territories. This requires a combination of prospective risk management to ensure that risks are appropriately managed in new investments, corrective risk management to reduce the risk present in existing capital stock, and efforts to strengthen resilience at all levels.

- National governments should ensure the enabling policies, guidelines and legal frameworks are in place at the national and sub-national level to support the implementation of a local governance framework informed by the national agenda and tailored for local needs.

- National governments commit to improving local government capacity with multi-hazard approaches including conflict and ensure local governments are prepared for different events relevant to their circumstances as part of the national disaster risk reduction and to develop a plan to effectively implement it with adequate budget allocation by 2020.

- National governments commit to build capacity of local communities on what they should do before, during and after disasters and encourages local communities, particularly women, to participate in decision-making processes on how their livelihoods can be made safer for themselves.

- National governments give attention and protection to vulnerable members of local communities, before, during and after disasters and to ensure that local governments provides safe facilities to cater to the needs of the community so that they would be able to survive during disasters.

- National governments should ensure local government investments are able to follow national and regional agendas whilst allowing flexibility and integration of DRR in the local community context.
For The Asia Regional Plan, AIDMI would like to call upon the participants of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in India to include DRR in local governance in the Asia Regional Implementation Plan as follow:

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<th>Priorities for Action</th>
<th>Targets and Indicators for local governance</th>
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<td>Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk</td>
<td>Public • Priority 1 highlights several important issues that national government should consider when dealing with localized issues: it recommends that policy makers “ensure the use of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices, as appropriate, to complement scientific knowledge in disaster risk assessment.” The UNISDR notes that such practice is far from being universally applied.</td>
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<td>Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk</td>
<td>Public • Enabling policies and legal frameworks are in place at national and/or sub-national levels to address key elements of DRR for local governments • Improving the ability to invest in social protection or disaster risk reduction remains limited in many countries. Local governments have developed different capacities to meet the needs of citizens. The ultimate goal is to reduce the disparity between different areas, and raise disaster awareness among the population. • Organizational arrangements, leadership, and coordination for DRR and they focal point responsible need to be established and designated at all levels. Private Priority 2 outlines the need of a “local frameworks of laws, regulations and public policies” with the purpose of defining “roles and responsibilities,” that ultimately guide the public and private sectors in: • Addressing disaster risk in publicly owned, managed or regulated services and infrastructures in local areas; • Promoting and providing incentives, as relevant, for actions by persons, households, communities and businesses, child headed families, women headed families; • Enhancing relevant mechanisms and initiatives for disaster risk transparency, which may include financial incentives, public awareness–raising and training initiatives, reporting requirements and legal and administrative measures; and • Putting in place coordination and organizational structures; Local • These points can be achieved through the “assessment of the technical, financial and administrative disaster risk management capacity to deal with the identified risks at the local and national levels. “These local plans should promote public scrutiny and encourage institutional debates. National and local government coordination forums composed of relevant stakeholders at the national and local levels. This can serve to empower local authorities, as appropriate, through regulatory and financial means to work and coordinate with civil society, communities and indigenous peoples and migrants in disaster risk management at the local level.</td>
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| Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience | Public • Priority 3 is focused on building standards with local priorities in mind. This requires no only uniform buildings standards, which are well regulated and maintained, but also community engagement. Priority 3 calls for “the development of new building codes and standards and rehabilitation and
reconstruction practices… with the aim of making them more applicable within the local context.” In addition, UNISDR high light building resilience performed cross-sectorally and taking the existing local disaster preparedness and early warning structures into account. This is to ensure clarity and transparency amongst local communities.

- Implement the key elements of DRR local governance including implementation of common approach (policies, mechanisms and guidance) for ongoing participatory risk assessment, risk reduction, response preparedness, and local government information gathering.
- In order to sustain community level disaster reduction activities, the development of a continuous source of funds is very important. This will enable the families and community groups to implement disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities, which were identified in the village disaster management plan. The Part (D) FINANCIAL MECHANISM Village Disaster Management Plan 57 local authorities can also help the most vulnerable community to establish a fund through providing seed money. The development of this fund would also allow the local community to use this seed money to mobilize further funds from other agencies. School Disaster Management Plans and Safety Funds at the school level can also help the school authorities, staff and their children to mitigate the risks.

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<th>Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response</th>
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<td>• Priority 4 discusses the preparation for a disaster in improving disaster response. It includes guaranteeing “access safe shelter, essential food and non-food relief supplies, as appropriate to local needs” in combination with “strengthening the capacity of local authorities to evacuate persons living in disaster-prone areas.” Improving local government administrative capacities is key in ensuring the implementation of an effective disaster risk management plan.</td>
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<td>• Local authorities have access to national and sub-national plans for each sector disaster preparedness for effect response, with focus on safety and security.</td>
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<td>• Organize a full simulation drill, held annually, within the local community context, in order to practice response preparedness and to review response plans (based on expected scenarios). The results and observations should be shared and it should contribute to the overall regional response mechanism.</td>
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<td>• Organize drills and trainings with school administration, teachers and children to enhance preparedness at school level.</td>
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1. Report on CRPD Implementation in India, 2013
2. Disaster Risk Management in Asia and the Pacific: Issues Paper, ADB Institute 2013
5. Fatality and economic damage data on the 2015 Nepal earthquake in this paper is from Nepal (2015). Nepal Earthquake PDNA.
7. See, Natural Hazards And Disaster Management, A Supplementary Textbook In Geography For Class XI On UNIT 11 : Natural Hazards And Disasters
9. Local Governments and Disaster Risk Reduction Good Practices and Lessons Learned, UNISDR, 2010
10. Disaster Risk Reduction, UNEP, 2015
11. 2015 Global Assessment Report by UNISDR
12. Djalante J., Pathways for adaptive and integrated disaster resilience, Natural Hazards, 2013

THIS POLICY BRIEF IS PREPARED IN ADVANCE OF THE ASIA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (AMCDRR), IN INDIA, 2-5 NOVEMBER 2016, SHOWS THAT LOCAL GOVERNANCE REQUIRE A FLEXIBLE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO ALLOW FOR TAILORED SOLUTIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. IT CALLS FOR THE COUNTRIES AND THEIR HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO URGENTLY ENSURE THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IMPLEMENT A POLICY OF AWARENESS, RESILIENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING. A FUTURE DIALOGUE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO BE INFORMED AND INFORM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANS SHOULD FEATURE IN THE ASIA REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS, AMCDRR DECLARATION, AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANS AND POLICIES, AND COLLECT BETTER DATA TO MONITOR THE PROGRESSES.