

Summary Report on Meeting of Parliamentarians at the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 18 June 2009

Draft as of 19 June 2009, 08:00

We, parliamentarians from Argentina, Austria, Cambodia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Finland, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, the Philippines, Senegal, Turkey, and Uganda, and GLOBE Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, met at the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva on 18th June 2009.

The main objective of our meeting was to share information, experiences, and ideas on the role and responsibility of parliamentarians in reducing the risk of disasters and the impact of climate change.

In opening the meeting, the Chair emphasized that promoting disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) is our shared responsibility that transcends political affiliations and geographic boundaries. Moreover, the parliamentarians from the Philippines and the African Group reported on the progress made in advancing disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at national and regional levels.

We, parliamentarians fully recognized the important role we can play in integrating DRR into socio-economic development through legislation, policies and budgetary allocations and in bridging the existing gap in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework at local, national, and regional levels. We also recognized that investing in DRR is essentially investing for a safer future and that participation in and ownership of such process is the best way forward.

We, parliamentarians are also highly committed to help create a political environment for facilitating the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and promoting the linkages between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with gender considerations. In this regard, the following are among our related concerns and actions:

1. Advocate for DRR in legislature and executive governance, across political parties, and promote coherent policy, greater awareness, and a culture and mentality of prevention among politicians;
2. Appreciate the cross-cutting nature of DRR and ensure its systematic mainstreaming in legislation and budget appropriations;
3. Enhance UNISDR support to the parliamentary process of mainstreaming DRR, through existing global, regional or sub-regional parliamentary fora and help desks;
4. Address the concern over the lack of budgetary capacity and fiscal incentives of Governments for building institutional capacity, community awareness and fulfilling their potentials as drivers of DRR;
5. Seize opportunities to link the DRR agenda to that of civil society and private business groups including trade associations;

6. Advocate for swapping developing country debt for DRR commitment and interventions, which has been done for ecosystems regeneration and protection, and for making DRR a criteria for ODA, to be articulated in ODCE and ahead of COP15;
7. Encourage donor countries to integrate DRR in their development aid budget, to provide supplementary support for climate change mitigation and adaptation to developing countries, and engage parliamentarians of recipient countries in the process;
8. Lobby the parliamentarians in both debtor and donor countries to make DRR assessment a precondition for any ODA instrument, and to ensure that most support for DRR and climate change adaptation is granted to benefit grassroots communities in line with the recent thrusts of the European Union;
9. Explore the possibilities for increasing investments in DRR from the existing national budgets for development and earmarking a share for institutional capacity building including awareness raising;
10. Set up a national DRR platform in every country which shall be replicated at regional and local levels and shall facilitate exchange of best practices among countries.

We, parliamentarians concluded that an extraordinary awareness-raising effort is urgently required at all levels, from parliamentary assemblies to schools; that DRR and CCA are important development and human rights issues; and that women are a key driver for building community awareness and resilience. To this end, we agreed to focus on increasing the awareness and understanding of parliamentarians on DRR and CCA related issues through the following immediate actions:

1. The IPU shall serve as a global platform for engaging politicians in DRR and CCA through awareness campaign at the next IPU assembly in Bangkok in 2010;
2. The Costa Rican Parliament will host a regional parliamentary consultation on DRR and CCA in 2009;
3. Chad will host the Central African consultation supported by UNISDR and the African parliamentary group in 2009;
4. Parliamentarians from recipient countries shall lobby their colleagues at the European Parliament and inform their scrutiny of the European Commission Communication on the EU Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries;
5. The Mediterranean Assembly in partnership with UNISDR and other parliamentary networks will organise a global parliamentary meeting to further increase understanding among parliamentarians on DRR in the context of socio-economic development (tbc).