



European
Commission

Acting now for a resilient future



Humanitarian
Aid and Civil
Protection

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“If we want our assistance to be effective and cost-efficient, we must not just put a bandage on the wound – we must help find a cure. This requires a shared vision from the humanitarian and the development communities and a joint commitment to act”

Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva¹



Irrigation scheme for drought resilience
Kenya, Turkana -March 2012

Reducing disaster risks and building resilience

The European Union (EU) is one of the world's largest donors providing life-saving assistance to people affected by various crises. Over recent years the demands for such assistance have increased substantially – far outstripping the resources available. Such assistance is vital, but it is aimed mainly at coping with emergency situations and needs to be supplemented by support to populations at risk to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks. The EU is committed to making resilience central to our development and humanitarian work.

From Humanitarian assistance and DRR to longer term resilience

ECHO already incorporates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as a core principle of humanitarian assistance and works in collaboration with development partners to build long-term disaster resilience to reduce poverty and humanitarian needs. ECHO's DRR policies, programmes and commitments contribute to, and are enhanced by, the new EU resilience approach that requires new partnerships, different ways of working and shared objectives between development and humanitarian actors.

The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters and humanitarian crises results in ever greater suffering and losses, posing a major threat to long-term development and economic progress of the poorest and most vulnerable people. Crises and shocks worsen already precarious livelihoods and negate opportunities to escape from poverty.

More than 22,200 disasters/events were recorded between 1980 and 2011, out of which 17,400 (78.4%) were climate related (storms, droughts, flooding, landslides, extreme temperatures and forest fires). Each year nearly two thirds of humanitarian funding is for longer-term recurring crises. In many locations the repeated costs, in financial and human terms, of regular smaller hazard events, are higher than those of larger disasters that make news headlines.

The frequency and intensity of disasters is predicted to increase as climate change generates more severe weather-related events and as the world faces new hazards and pressures such as population growth, urbanisation, scarcity of natural resources and increasingly complex conflicts. The way the international community and countries plan for these risks has to change if future losses are to be reduced. Instead of waiting for crises or disasters to occur, planners and policy makers must do more to assess risk scenarios, reduce vulnerability and enhance capacities to absorb and recover from shocks and impacts – whether economic, political,

¹ Press release: 'EU puts resilience at the heart of its work on fighting hunger and poverty' (October 2012)

² <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2012>

ecological or triggered by natural hazards.

Despite conceptual progress and increasing demands for sustainable development, risk management too often remains separate from dealing with immediate development priorities or is inappropriate to the scale of the risks and consequences faced. Because shocks and threats are not systematically considered, development initiatives and their recipients are not protected and opportunities to reduce risks are not taken, even when this would efficiently, or cost effectively, avoid losses and suffering in the longer term.

Committed to resilience

In response to the increasingly critical need to protect lives and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable populations, the EU aims to place resilience building as a central development and humanitarian priority, whereby the root causes of crises are tackled, rather than just their consequences. Reducing vulnerability and building resilience to future stresses and shocks is a pre-requisite for poverty reduction and sustainable development. It also makes sound ethical and financial sense. Investing in resilience today is more cost effective than responding to a crisis tomorrow. Action now, to reduce future suffering and losses, is an ethical obligation in areas of recurring crises and known risks.

In October 2012 the European Commission adopted a Communication on resilience: "The EU approach to resilience - learning from food security crisis." Using Food Security, Climate Change Adaptation and DRR as examples, the communication stresses that risk management approaches must be an integral part of all development processes within all sectors and in all contexts. In countries facing recurrent crises increasing resilience will be a central objective of EU external assistance.

The Commission is at the forefront of a growing international resilience agenda and is working with other agencies, member states and development partners to build national and local risk management and resilience capacities. The Commission has already launched two flagship resilience initiatives, the Supporting Horn of African Resilience (SHARE) and l'Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience Sahel (AGIR-Sahel).

In its humanitarian interventions, the European Commission promotes and integrates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and links relief and rehabilitation to development (LRRD) and community-based approaches to disaster reduction and preparedness. These add to, and are part of, ECHO's approach to resilience. This is aimed at reducing humanitarian needs, enabling more timely and effective humanitarian response and, ultimately, better coverage of humanitarian assistance.

DRR, DIPECHO and the Resilience Action Plan

ECHO will build on past experience and enhance capacities to reduce disaster risks, protect livelihoods and reduce humanitarian needs:

1. DRR: An essential element of resilience

The resilience agenda will add to, and be informed by, ECHO's firm commitment to DRR. DRR is integrated within all Commission humanitarian interventions through support for positive coping mechanisms, livelihoods, or through integrated DRR activities in different sectors such as WASH, health, shelter, food assistance and nutrition. In 2012 over 16% of ECHO's humanitarian funding went to DRR and more than 40% of ECHO funded projects included DRR activities.

DRR is, and will continue to be, an essential component of resilience building. Good DRR incorporates many facets of resilience-based approaches, such as collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, integrating risk reduction into normal planning processes and multi-sectoral approaches. However, resilience is a broader concept than DRR, covering a wider variety of potential shocks and stresses to livelihoods and systems. Resilience must bring sustainable benefits to the most vulnerable populations, increasing their capacity to absorb shocks and to cope with stresses, but also improve livelihoods and economic opportunities. To reach this target, action is needed at various levels and contexts, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution and state-building.

The focus of ECHO's DRR has been on natural hazards and this will continue – but our DRR work will be conducted within, and contribute to, holistic development strategies that consider all risks and differing vulnerability and capacities to them.

In 2010 donor government DRR funding fell below 4% of their humanitarian aid expenditure. Donors are increasing their allocations to DRR within development expenditure, but, even considering difficulties in capturing data, amounts are considered insufficient. Only three donors contributed more than 1% of their development spending to DRR related activities. The resilience agenda offers a renewed opportunity to mainstream DRR into development.

2. DIPECHO: 16 years of experience in community based approaches

As part of this commitment to risk reduction, the DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO) programme was launched in 1996 to show, through demonstration projects, that community-based approaches to disaster preparedness and risk reduction can limit disaster losses and save lives. The DIPECHO programme has supported over 750 projects and has grown to an annual budget of over Euro 35m in 2012, addressing multiple hazards and covering eight disaster prone regions; the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Southern Africa, Central Asia (including Caucasus), South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

The DIPECHO programme will continue as a vital mainstay of ECHO's commitment to resilience. DIPECHO projects already repeatedly demonstrate that risk reduction works better when activities are considered in context to local needs and priorities. The resilience approach will amplify the impact of the DIPECHO programme. DIPECHO projects and community-based approaches will inform Commission resilience strategies at regional and national levels and the prospects of Governments scaling up and replicating success will be enhanced.

3. From Policy to action: The Resilience Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out how the ten principles of the Resilience Communication will be implemented. It presents a systematic and holistic approach to building resilience in crisis and risk-prone contexts with a focus on more efficient interventions and increased impact.

The Action Plan is designed to give momentum to the resilience agenda, to deliver early results and to allow further development of a body of evidence on effective resilience-focused interventions. It takes into account that a resilience approach cannot be applied to all EU assistance simultaneously and that a series of tools and approaches have to be further developed for supporting resilience in differing contexts and for different shocks.

In line with the humanitarian and development EU's agenda, the Action Plan focuses on poverty reduction and saving lives. The Action Plan adopts a phased and realistic approach: priority will be given to fragile countries that face recurrent crises and that are vulnerable to future risks. In that sense, existing and planned resilience related actions will be implemented, scaled up and/or replicated, and new opportunities will be seized where contexts allow.

The Action Plan lays the foundations for more effective humanitarian-development collaborative action on building resilience; its determinant of success will be a reduction in humanitarian needs and more equitable development gains.

DRR – a vital component of our humanitarian mandate

ECHO supports DRR as an integral part of humanitarian action aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating suffering, maintaining dignity and strengthening resilience in countries and communities affected by disasters. Support for DRR is an expression of our commitment to the principles of good donor ship and is a key expression of the EU's solidarity with those at risk. The purpose of ECHO's DRR activities is to reduce humanitarian needs.

Since the mid-1990s, funding from ECHO has provided essential humanitarian aid to around 120 million of the world's most vulnerable people each year. A significant portion goes towards increasing the preparedness and reducing the risks of communities that are vulnerable to natural hazards. DRR is now a core part of all ECHO programmes, initially through its flagship regional DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO) programmes, then through 'mainstreaming' (or integration) into the different humanitarian sectors. ECHO's support to DRR has gained momentum and contributed to greater attention and investments in DRR by key stakeholders, including the donor community.

In 2012, over 16% of current ECHO's humanitarian funding went to DRR activities. More than 40% of all ECHO-funded projects include DRR, reaching approximately 14

million people. This covers projects in all sectors of humanitarian aid from health to shelter to nutrition, through the development of, and innovation in, tools such as health warning systems, emergency planning, and the protection of livelihoods. ECHO's DRR funding also addresses the area of civil protection (preparedness and prevention), aiming to increase the institutional preparedness of the humanitarian system as a whole.

ECHO contributes to international efforts to push for a greater integration of DRR in humanitarian operations and, more significantly, into development strategies. DRR reduces otherwise avoidable future losses and suffering. It is also cost effective; one euro spent on risk reduction activities before disasters strike can save up to seven euros in response after a disaster has occurred – savings that make more funds available to respond to urgent humanitarian needs.

In complementarity with efforts undertaken by Member States and other DGs and Services of the European Commission, ECHO supports a range of risk reduction initiatives and approaches through its partner organisations, including the United Nations, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement.

ECHO generally supports two types of DRR interventions: 1) Targeted DRR – "Stand-alone" measures that are not part of a humanitarian response 2) Integrated DRR – where risk reduction is factored into and delivered alongside humanitarian assistance.



Ready to respond. Stockpiling emergency surgical kits, Katmandu, Nepal

EU Humanitarian support for DRR

ALL HUMANITARIAN ACTION
TO BE RISK INFORMED

TARGETED DRR
"stand-alone" measures

e.g. Early Warning Systems,
Community-Based
Disaster Preparedness,
DRR advocacy, capacity
development of partners to
respond, etc.

INTEGRATED DRR
in humanitarian action

- Directly reducing risk to people and assets;
- "Risk proofing" actions, to protect them from future hazards.

ECHO's DRR approach

ECHO's involvement in disaster risk reduction is based on the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid that recognises that both "local responses to crisis and disaster risk reduction are essential to life saving and enabling communities to increase their resilience to emergencies. The importance of DRR is emphasised in the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (1257/96) that states that humanitarian aid operations "shall also comprise operations to prepare for risks or prevent disasters."

ECHO's involvement in DRR dates back to our beginning in 1992; it is based on the ECHO's humanitarian mandate, and, in accordance with key humanitarian principles (Humanity, Independence, Neutrality, and Impartiality). ECHO's approach to DRR is underpinned by the following:

1. DRR is a key part of the humanitarian imperative

ECHO supports DRR as an integral part of humanitarian action aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating suffering, maintaining dignity and strengthening resilience in countries and communities affected by disasters.

2. ECHO requires programmes to be risk-informed

ECHO requires that all humanitarian action it supports be based on a sound assessment of risk and the intervention should seek to reduce immediate and future risks.

3. With a focus on natural hazards, ECHO adopts a multi-hazard approach

ECHO DRR actions primarily seek to strengthen resilience to shocks triggered by natural hazards. A multi-hazard approach is used, whereby capacities are strengthened to reduce risks to all hazards (in any location), including those related to climate change.

4. ECHO promotes a people-centred approach to DRR

ECHO DRR is targeted at, and prioritises support to, people most at risk. Community members are best positioned to identify risks, to prioritise actions and to manage change for themselves. Special attention is given to promoting gender equity and the full participation of vulnerable groups.

5. ECHO seeks complementarity and partnership in its DRR action

ECHO engages pro-actively with other services of the Commission, Member States, partners and donors to coordinate commitments to strengthening DRR and its contribution to resilience. In particular, ECHO recognises the strong link between relief, recovery and development.

In the light of growing humanitarian needs and changing patterns in frequency/intensity of certain natural hazards, we target assistance to those most at-risk, including women, boys and girls, older people, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. ECHO seeks to empower these

groups by establishing their particular needs but also to support how they can be agents of change within their communities.

We also see DRR as a key strand in supporting efforts to link relief, recovery and development and, where feasible, will promote joint working between humanitarian and development actors.

Finally, we require that any investment in DRR is focused on major needs and is likely to have clear and substantial impact, particularly in strengthening the resilience of disaster-affected or at high-risk populations. Proposals from partners should include a clear process rationale of why selected approaches will deliver expected results within the community and how these will be used to influence others.

Examples of ECHO's DRR initiatives

Promoting inclusive DRR through Consortium, Myanmar

With funding from the DIPECHO programme, six partners have joined efforts through the Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience (MCCR) to support Safer Coastal and Urban Communities. These agencies are ActionAid (lead), HelpAge International, Malteser International, Oxfam, Plan and UN-Habitat.

This Consortium supports a range of activities, including inclusive Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction, strengthening institutional mechanisms for disaster management, city-level earthquake assessment, small-scale infrastructure and services, and information, education and communication. A highly inclusive community-based approach is used, actively engaging children, women, people with disabilities and older people.

Preparedness and Early Response, Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone

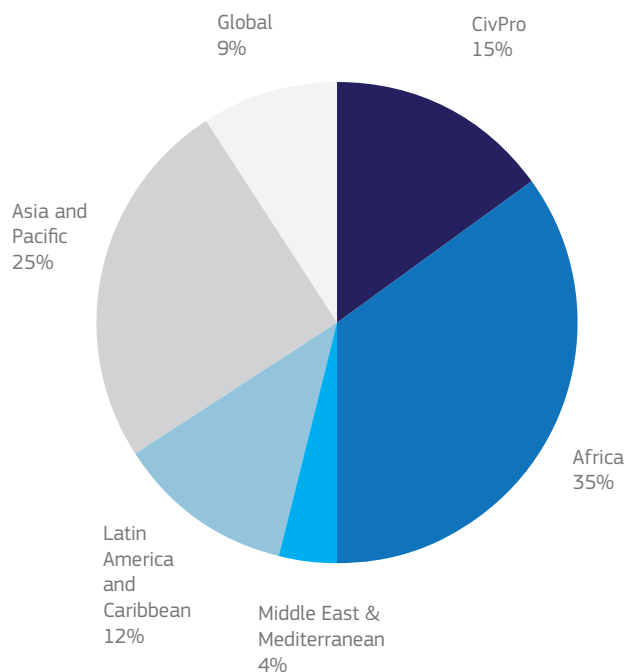
ECHO, through its partner Action Against Hunger (AAH), has been supporting cholera preparedness and early response in Guinea Conakry and Sierra Leone. It was decided to support AAH with a grant for both countries, building on the partner's experience of preparedness and early response. This early support allowed the strengthening of prevention, surveillance and rapid response capacity, in both rural and urban areas. Faced with the 2012 outbreak, the crisis committee within the health sector was activated and actors developed response activities in the two affected regions.

Livelihood resilience, Madagascar

The introduction of short cycle rice varieties to the vulnerable east coast of Madagascar was initiated by ECHO partners and has been considered by external evaluators as one of the most successful activities of DIPECHO in the region. These varieties mature in three-months instead of six, allowing farmers to harvest before the peak of the cy-

clone season and to replant following a cyclone, thereby reducing the risk of harvest losses during the cyclone season and providing the opportunity to replant if any losses do take place. Farmers are more resilient because their harvests are secured before cyclones arrive and if the rice seeds are certified they offer better marketing opportunities. The degree of acceptance by farmers has been very high and the use of these seeds is being expanded quickly throughout cyclone affected areas. Scaling up the use of these seeds and integrating their use and dissemination in national policies is an objective of a consortium of DIPECHO partners, led by FAO, and that is supported for three years by the EU. The program focuses on quality assurance, seed multiplication and linkages to markets. We expect short cycle rice seeds to be integrated as part of Madagascar's national agriculture programme.

DRR funding per region (by % of DRR funding allocated)



Health Sector:

DRR is relevant in every aspect of health sector interventions in disaster-prone countries. Investment in making health systems accessible and more disaster resilient should always be based on an assessment of local hazards, vulnerabilities and existing capacities. Following a disaster or epidemic, health systems should be further strengthened to cope with current and future risks.

Good Practice:

Epidemiological surveys warn of the risks of post-disaster outbreaks of diseases such as dengue, malaria and cholera. In the most at-risk communities, by improving the water and sanitation of the most vulnerable and reducing threats such as water pollution or mosquitoes, these outbreaks can be prevented or at least reduced.



(Photo; Patients receive health attention at the mobile clinic set up by ECHO partner Johanniter in Haiti. Johanniter/Paul Hahn)

Food Security and Livelihoods:

There is a direct correlation between disaster risk and food insecurity. Food-insecure people are the least able to cope with disasters. Exposure to high levels of disaster risk and lack of capacity to manage these risks trap poor households in a cycle of food insecurity and poverty that quickly deteriorates into a food crisis and acute undernutrition when a disaster occurs.

Food assistance interventions contribute to disaster risk reduction either by protecting livelihood assets (particularly human and social capital) and/or supporting and advocating for a conducive environment in terms of structures and processes. EU's humanitarian food assistance seeks to avoid undermining community resilience and coping capacity.

Good Practice:

In dry pastoral areas, drought leads to less water, less pasture and a heightened risk of disease and death in animals. A deterioration of their animals' health has a direct impact on the herder's food security. In the short-term, food consumption is seriously compromised, while in the mid-term livelihoods are jeopardised, leaving herders more vulnerable to future crises. In such a situation, pre-emptive 'de-stocking' (i.e. the exchanging of some animals for cash, thereby giving pastoralists the cash they need to buy food, maintain a core herd and access the services they need) is one tool to reduce the impact of food crises caused by drought.



(Photo: ECHO-funded Food Assistance, Kenya EC/ECHO/Malini Morzaria)

Disaster Preparedness by ECHO (DIPECHO) - Learning from experience

The objective of DIPECHO is to support and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerabilities.

What is DIPECHO?

DIPECHO was created by ECHO in 1996 as a programme dedicated to show, through demonstration projects, that community-based approaches can limit disaster losses and save lives in disaster-prone areas.

Since 1996, the DIPECHO programme has grown to an annual budget of over Euro 35m in 2012, addressing multiple hazards and covering eight disaster-prone regions, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Southern Africa, Central Asia and Caucasus, South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

In 2012 ECHO carried out a study to draw from 16 years of DIPECHO and 750 projects for vulnerable communities, to identify "what worked" and also what didn't in order to find ways of carrying out our work more effectively.

The results demonstrate the extensive impact of DIPECHO in different contexts, further establishing the conditions necessary for success and demonstrating that community-based approaches effectively and efficiently reduce vulnerabilities and disaster risks.

Impact on communities

There is significant evidence that DIPECHO-supported communities have coped better with disasters than unprepared communities.

In Haiti, large-scale awareness campaigns and mitigation activities have been conducted to teach thousands of vulnerable children and adults how to react in the event of a disaster. These have had a very clear impact on the prepar-

edness of communities and local institutions, particularly in remote, highly vulnerable areas. This was the case, for example, when typhoons hit in 2004 and 2008. In 2010, disaster management committees from the North were deployed to Port-au-Prince to participate in the earthquake relief operation and to disseminate preventive messages during the cholera outbreak.

When typhoon Frank hit Southern Leyte in the Philippines on June 20, 2008, just 25 days after the installation of the Community-Based Early Warning System, the Data Centre's siren sounded a series of alerts and critical flood warnings. The siren was triggered by the real-time data sent from the unmanned water level sensor station located upstream on the Lower Bantawon River. This warning enabled the Local Government Unit of Saint Bernard to evacuate people from flood-prone areas.

Impact on local, national and regional institutions

DIPECHO has increased the visibility of the community-based approaches in many national and regional institutions in charge of DRR, leading to its integration into national policy in a number of countries. Through its field programmes and specific investment with national, regional and global mechanisms, DIPECHO contributed to give a higher profile to community-based approaches in national DRR law and policies in Vietnam, Nepal, Haiti, as well as at regional level, for instance with ASEAN.



Building Resilience in the Ganges Delta
Evacuation roads like this help people flee when floods and cyclones strike

Impact on ECHO partners and donors

DIPECHO has enabled its partners to promote community-based DRR and to reduce risk through disaster preparedness and mitigation. It has also provided necessary funding for partners to pursue advocacy strategies for greater integration of the approach at partnership level.

In the **Caribbean**, DIPECHO has been a catalyst in encouraging other international donors (DFID, CIDA, OFDA) to adopt ambitious DRR policies and disaster management plans which has led to greater cooperation between regional and international organisations and donors on this issue.

Dipecho success is based on four main factors:

1. Appropriateness and ownership

For a project to become sustainable, it is necessary to have access to resources enabling maintenance, repair, regular refresher training, etc. The appropriateness of technological and organizational choices has a major impact on sustainability and replicability. Some projects have to include sophisticated technology (radars, telemetric systems, etc) and are based on scientific studies (seismic micro zoning, flood modelling, etc). However, in many vulnerable communities, hand-operated sirens, church bells and solar-operated telecommunication systems provide a cost-effective alternative.

2. Social mobilization and participatory approaches

The involvement of communities and the relevant authorities in risk identification and project design and implementation is one of the preconditions for sustainable impact. Social mobilization, awareness-raising and community participation are crucial means towards this end. However, involving the community in risk analysis and the identification of the most vulnerable people is a challenging exercise.

The success of the DIPECHO projects in Thanh Hoa in Vietnam and in Saint Bernard in the Philippines show that working together with local government units from start to finish is crucial for them to become sustainable, replicated and adopted on a larger scale.

3. Capacity of the implementing partners

Partners need to be able to assess the risks faced by communities and to work with them for designing the appropriate response for different vulnerable groups. To do so, they need to combine both development and humanitarian perspectives, they need to be 'learning' organisations and they need to be committed to DRR activities beyond DG ECHO's funding time-frame.

School-based disaster preparedness sessions supported by DIPECHO in Northern Vietnam have reached an estimated half a million 4th and 5th grade schoolchildren and over 15,000 primary school teachers. Using innovative and child-friendly methods, such as the simulation exercises and drills used in Yen Bai province, they have been very effective in preparing children to cope with disasters.

4. Communication, advocacy and coordination

To ensure demonstration projects are replicated on a bigger scale and the community-based approach is disseminated among disaster risk reduction and preparedness institutions, partners have to advocate at national, regional and global levels. When DIPECHO partners have come together as one coherent and cohesive group and spoken with a single voice along with the communities, their message has had greater impact.

Policies and programmes in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam show that DIPECHO has contributed to institutionalizing the relations between national and ASEAN institutions in a multi-stakeholder partnership which has contributed to making the region safer.

The Resilience Action Plan

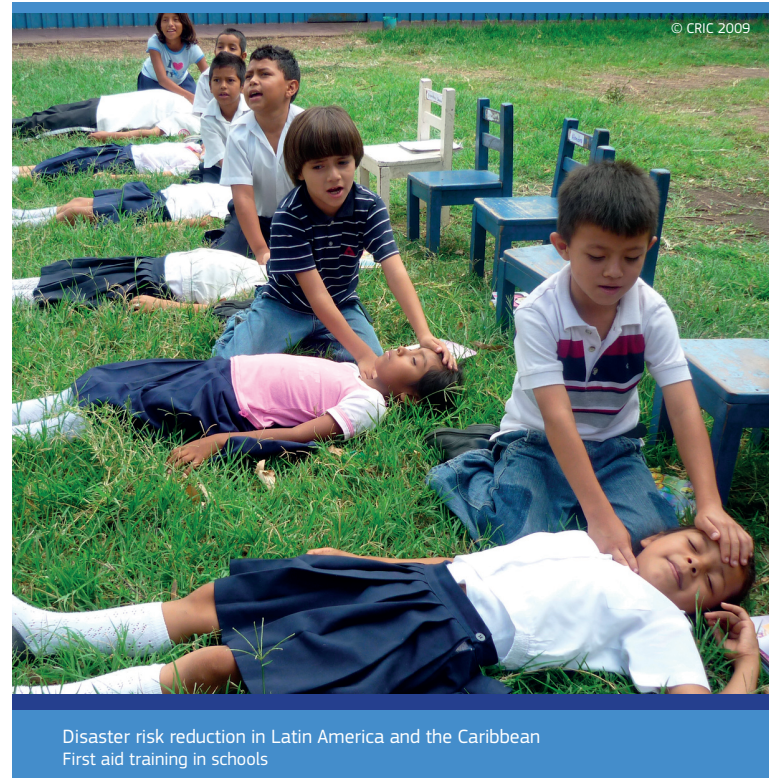
In October 2012, the Commission presented its Communication “The EU Approach to Resilience - learning from food crises”. The communication presented ten steps to increase resilience and committed the Commission to prepare an Action Plan to set out how they would be implemented.

These highlight that new ways of working and alignment of organisational structures are required by the European Commission and partner organisations in support of national and regional priorities. Development and humanitarian programmes will be informed by joint risk and strategic assessments, be focused on the areas and populations most at risk and work towards shared development objectives for the short and longer term. Resilience building requires multi-sectoral co-ordination at all levels that is risk informed and contributes toward the shared goal of reducing poverty and humanitarian needs. Greater engagement with civil society will raise the capacities of the most marginalised and vulnerable. Innovative approaches to risk management, for example working with insurance, will be supported alongside initiatives to build the evidence base to determine what works best.

It is ultimately an individual country responsibility to progress towards meeting key development standards (e.g. for water, education, health, sanitation and social security) and equitable access to them. Governments must be encouraged and assisted in their efforts to build the resilience of the most vulnerable and to address the underlying causes of that vulnerability. In many instances this will require changes to political mind-sets, institutional arrangements and will require technical assistance.

The EU's resilience approach and the Action plan setting out how it will be implemented, adds value and coherence to a multitude of different but already existing EU commitments to risk management and resilience. It reaffirms the strong engagements made in the DRR Implementation Plan and the Nutrition and Food Security Action Plan, as well as in the recent Commission Communication on Social Protection in International Development. It also takes into account the principles of adaptation to climate change applied through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), in particular with regard to policy dialogue and exchange of experiences, aid effectiveness, and mainstreaming into key sectors like agriculture, water, education and health.

The Action Plan is a joint undertaking by DEVCO and ECHO in collaboration with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and European Commission Services.



Disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean
First aid training in schools

Objective and scope

The Action Plan is designed to give momentum to the resilience agenda, to deliver early results and to allow further development of a body of evidence on what constitutes effective resilience-focused intervention.

It takes into account that a resilience approach cannot be applied to all EU assistance simultaneously and that a series of tools and approaches have to be further developed for support to resilience in differing contexts and for different shocks, building on existing evidence and further nurturing it through constant lesson learning. The Plan adopts a phased and realistic approach: priority will be given to vulnerable countries that face recurrent crises and that are risk prone.

The successful implementation of the Action Plan necessitates working in partnership with others, in particular with the EU Member States, partner countries and affected communities themselves, as well as NGOs, international organisations, the private sector and the research community.

10 STEPS TO INCREASE RESILIENCE IN FOOD INSECURE AND DISASTER PRONE COUNTRIES

See Communication from the Commission to the EU Parliament and the Council COM (2012)586 final.

1. Resilience can only be built bottom-up. The starting point for the EU approach to resilience therefore is a firm recognition of the leading role of partner countries. The EU will align its support with the partner's policies and priorities, in accordance with established Aid Effectiveness principles.

2. Action to strengthen resilience needs to be based on sound methodologies for risk and vulnerability assessments. Such assessments should serve as the basis for elaborating national resilience strategies, as well as for designing specific projects and programmes.

3. In countries facing recurrent crises, increasing resilience will be a central aim of EU external assistance. EU-funded programmes will be based on a common operational assessment prepared by humanitarian and development actors, covering medium to long-term interventions.

4. The Commission will systematically include resilience as an element in its Humanitarian Implementation Plans.

5. Flexibility will be key to responding to the needs of disaster-affected countries. The Commission will continue to ensure maximum flexibility in implementing its humanitarian programmes. For development funding, in times of unforeseen crises and major disasters, the Commission will seek maximum flexibility in mobilising non-programmed funds.

6. When working to improve resilience in fragile or conflict-affected states, the EU will pursue an approach that also addresses security aspects and their impact on the vulnerability of populations.

7. The EU will seek to replicate existing initiatives such as SHARE and AGIR, as well as successful projects on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

8. The EU will promote innovative approaches to risk management. Working with the insurance and re-insurance industries is a particularly promising way forward.

9. For countries facing recurrent crises, the EU will work with host governments, other donors, regional and international organisations and other stakeholders to create platforms at country level for ensuring timely exchange of information and coordination of short, medium and long term humanitarian and development actions to strengthen resilience.

10. The EU will promote resilience in international fora including the G8, G20, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Rio Conventions, the process for revision of the Millennium Development Goals, the development of Sustainable Development Goals and discussions on the follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action of 2005-2015. Resilience will feature as a key theme in its partnerships with organisations such as FAO, IFAD and WFP, as well as UNISDR, the World Bank, and civil society organisations.

Action Plan priorities

1. Support to the development and implementation of national resilience capacities

Early priority in this Action Plan will be given to those vulnerable countries and regions where humanitarian and development EU actors work together, have done so in the past and are likely to do so in future. The intention is to develop shared assessments, strategies and implementation plans to build resilience. The Action Plan will, therefore, include targeted support to a number of countries to facilitate such processes and continue building the necessary body of evidence for further action.

The Action Plan recognises that the EU is already incorporating resilience into many programmes beyond those in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. EU interventions in areas such as climate change, DRR, agriculture, and social protection, already have resilience as a core policy priority. The Action Plan sets a way forward to consolidate existing initiatives, such as DIPECHO, and to learn from them for the effective development of resilience strategies elsewhere.

The Action Plan includes:

- The Sahel AGIR initiative
- The SHARE initiative in the Horn of Africa
- Country and regional resilience "Flagship" initiatives
- Building on ACP EU DRR programmes in the Caribbean, Sub Sahara Africa region and Pacific
- Civil society contributions for household and community based resilience solutions
- Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) programmes
- The Commissions commitments to Food and Nutrition

2. Innovation, learning and advocacy

A common understanding of resilience objectives is required by governments and development partners. A body of evidence on the effectiveness of new approaches needs to be built for resilience to be systematically included into key international commitments and documents.

Innovation will be supported, as will collaboration with new partners at all levels and in particular EU Member States, other bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society, and the private sector. New resilience approaches will be tested in differing regions, differing environments and scales. These will seek to address known gaps and areas of concern with risk management and humanitarian assistance.

Building resilience requires a better understanding of what works and what does not and why. Strong monitoring and evaluation systems, including an understanding of costs and benefits, will have to be developed. Research will be undertaken to create the evidence base necessary for establishing better practice and as a basis to scale up, or to advocate for, resilience.

The Action Plan includes initiatives for:

- Risk financing and risk transfer
- Scaling up social protection projects and aligning them to resilience strategies
- Private sector engagement and incentives
- Evaluation and cost benefit analysis
- Advocacy – Factoring resilience into post Hyogo and Rio plus 20 frameworks

3. Methodologies and tools to support resilience including EU procedures and mechanisms

An immediate step is to produce relevant tools and guidance to assist the EU in implementing resilience. An early emphasis will be placed on how to conduct joint risk assessments and strategic planning. Particular attention will also be given to how resilience can be factored into policies and programmes.

Guidance will be prepared and training organised accordingly for Commission, Member States' departments and partners to be fully aware of the resilience approach and its implications.

Results based performance monitoring

Each action included in the Action Plan is linked to an overall objective and a specific output. These will serve to regularly monitor effective implementation of the Plan. A performance management framework, as well as related monitoring and evaluation frameworks, will track progress on the implementation of the Plan.

A review of the Action Plan will take place as appropriate and shall be informed by the lessons learnt throughout its implementation.

AGIR initiative for the Sahel

In 2012, severe drought and a failed harvest left 18 million people across the Sahel region of West Africa without enough food. The underlying causes of this persistent food insecurity is the limited access to food among the poorest which leads to high acute malnutrition rates, low levels of food production, poor access to basic services, acute poverty, environmental degradation, rapid population growth (3% per year), and poor governance. 80% of those requiring emergency humanitarian aid in a crisis come from the 20% of the population who are the poorest of the poor with no access to land or income-generating assets.

While drought is inevitable, the hunger and suffering it causes are not. At the initiative of the European Commission, the AGIR-Sahel initiative was launched in June 2012, together with governments, UN agencies and other humanitarian and development bodies. It proposes a roadmap for better coordination of humanitarian and development aid so as to protect the most vulnerable people in the Sahel when drought hits again. The initiative also covers the development of better prevention and preparation strategies to future disasters, including improvements to early warning systems and links with the insurance industry.

Example of humanitarian assistance contributing to resilience

To reach some of the most vulnerable people affected by the food and nutrition crisis in Mali, Oxfam, with support from the European Commission, has helped 3,500 families rebuild their livelihoods in the Kayes region of western Mali. Between August 2012 and February 2013, these families received **cash grants through local banks and a local microfinance organisation**. Most of those who received the money were women, and all who received support also received **training on household budget management, nutrition and hygiene**. As a result, most of these people have not only been able to feed their families through the leanest months of the year, but also to invest in building livelihoods that will make them more resilient to future shocks.

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