



Tuesday, June 16, 2009 1630 hrs

### **Informal Plenary 1**

*To prepare for the HFA mid-term review by identifying challenges and best practices in implementing HFA at the national and local levels, financing, Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change adaptation.*

Chair – Margareta Wahlstrom, Assistant Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and  
Co-Chair – Kasidis Rochanakorn, Director, OCHA Geneva

(General comment from the Indonesian delegate): there is more reaction than pro-activity in disaster risk reduction. Governments already have many priorities and it is onerous when they are asked to add climate change and disaster risk reduction strategies to their other responsibilities – creates increased competition and demand for already limited financial resources

Madame Wahlstrom stated that the overall framework for what we need to do is an essential part of the Mid-Term Review (MTR). MW's key focus is the local level linkage, and everyone of us knows that this is where our DRR work ultimately 'plays out'.

It is incumbent upon us to rationalise everything we do. Yes, it takes an incredible amount of money to do this, but we have to undertake our current investment in disaster risk reduction in a more risk-sensitive manner. The extent of the increased cost will depend on the country and the type of investment required. However, we need more clarity in determining what types of investments we have to make and how much we are willing to pay for those types of investments.

Let's ask ourselves the hard questions – I know we can achieve a great deal by doing things 'a little bit differently' (from our current practice)

We do not need to wait for a lot of 'things' to happen; we can move now.

The World Bank offers some very interesting elements that will make us smarter about our investment strategies and task and this period will see even more research coming forward in the future.

A significant question is how to do the financing and how to accelerate that financing at the local level. We need to get policy implementation moving forward.

We have observed that the impact of disaster risk reduction policies fades away the closer one gets to the local level. Policies seem to be missing women in particular. Madame Wahlstrom said that we need to focus on how we can improve this and increase women's involvement in disaster risk reduction's implementation.

Co-Chair Kasidis Rochanakorn urged everyone to remember that this exercise is stakeholder driven. We need to allow the process to generate ownership of the way forward.

Madame Wahlstrom noted: the GAR covers the concept of extensive risk – these are the disasters that arise from the development losses that do not make our media headlines. The costs are every bit as enormous as those we do hear about. Let us also look at the types of decisions that governments have to take once they understand the risks and the approaches they must take.

We speak a great deal about how policy extends from the centre out to the local level, but we must ask what we do, and can do, about the policies that derive and are harvested from the local level. We must examine the implementation practices of various organisations and Government and we must ask whether we need to change the things we do.

Madame Wahlstrom wondered to what degree we should use our collective wisdom to invest in a cause of action. This is an important component of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) which will try to detect and relate how we actually learn from our actions. From these actions, we need to learn from each other, test practices and implement what we have learned

The ASG asks us to ask what the obstacles are to our progress. We are well able to identify both the problem and what needs to be done but when it does not happen, you must tell us what the obstacles were to your response? This is a key area that we can share together.

In Peru, the senior leadership decided that it could no longer afford to pursue the same bureaucratic responses to the great cost of earthquakes in that country. The Government decided that it needed to cut through the bureaucracy and empower the people more quickly and tangibly, particularly at the local level, by assisting local power structures through risk management in a variety of ways.

We should examine the efficacy of having parallel planning processes so that if we say we want to do something, it should happen without multiple processes as part of the response. Let us change the way we take decisions. If you have a pot of money for climate change adaptation to

be completed in one year, are you willing to look at also using these funds for disaster risk reduction management and ecosystems maintenance?

Madame Wahlstrom emphasized that this process of avoiding parallel processes requires national governments to take decisions on how best to deal with programs. It is perhaps the most difficult point because a government should ask the question whether it needs several different ministries to deal with these issues (humorously, a delegate questioned whether there was in fact a need for so many UN agencies). She stressed that she was not taking a particular position but simply asking the question. She also noted that in looking at the obstacles to more effective responses, this question will likely not be resolved this year or next, or only at the national level. We need to begin to speak the same language, however. We need stronger and more rational policies and we need to use our money well and can we have a unified agenda to deal with climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Madame Wahlstrom has asked use to determine what our emphasis should be in the next five years? Part of this emphasis must include the matters of local implementation, financing coherence and public awareness but there may be more.

How can the principle stakeholders drive the review process and what should our role be in supporting that? These are the questions we shall pursue tomorrow.

In closing, Madame Wahlstrom asked what would be the most effective and participative review process? What should be our measurements in the Mid-Term Review? In Kobe, a large group did not want to have any targets. Here, we have no obvious baseline against which we can measure and whether we should measure. But in the first self-assessment review of the GAR, is this the way we should do the MTR? These self assessment reviews are linked to the goals and objectives of the Hyogo Framework and they are more about qualitative measurements than quantitative targets. Perhaps we could have an MTR that is not entirely based on self assessment – perhaps one comprised of peer reviews, or regional reviews with ISDR support involving other organisations with certain competencies; looking together at what we have achieved.

Through the GAR, we are trying to bring some good news to your about places and organizations that have made good progress with limited resources, but through great determination.

