



GLOBAL MEETING OF NATIONAL PLATFORMS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

A preparatory meeting of national coordination mechanism focal points to the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
Monday, 15 June 2009, 14-17:30 hrs

The Global meeting of National Platforms for Disaster risk reduction (NPs) was organised as a pre-session event of the Global Platform for Disaster risk reduction convening from 16-19 June 2009 in Geneva to:

1. Provide a forum for National Platforms and selected HFA focal points to share information and knowledge in coordinating national initiatives for disaster risk reduction,
2. Discuss challenges and priority actions for National Platforms, including suggestions for UNISDR and other ISDR partners' support,
3. Adopt a common position on National Platforms with recommendations by National Platforms to be communicated to the second session of the Global Platform's Informal Plenary,
4. Share existing tools and services made available by ISDR system partners for National Platforms.

Opening

UNISDR Director Mr. Salvano Briceno and **UNISDR Deputy Director Ms. Helena Molin-Valdes** in their introductory remarks reminded that National Platforms are key mechanisms to lead the implementation of the HFA. They are key in fostering coordination and for providing advice, advocacy and support to integrate Disaster risk reduction (DRR) in various sectors. The number of declared NPs has increased from 39 to 50 since the last Global Platform meeting. However this number is still limited and the UNISDR Director invited other countries to declare their Platforms to the UNISDR secretariat to show long-term commitment to the involvement of stakeholders and multiple sectors in DRR and while climate change brings the historical chance to recognize disaster risk reduction as necessary tool. Mr. Briceno reminded also of the need to provide more support to National Platforms both by Governments and by ISDR system partners.

Mr. Andreas Goetz of the Swiss National Platform PLANAT in his introductory remarks on behalf of the host **Switzerland** argued that there is a need for a minimum safety level. However this is challenged through rising damage potential, limited land resources and impact of climate change. The solution therefore lied in an "integrated approach": the use of variety of measures, the involvement of all actors, the inclusion of social and environmental aspects, the consideration all types of disasters, and the building of international solidarity. National Platforms for DRR were to be built on to provide answers.

National Platform and other presentations

The presentation of National Platform experiences started with the intervention of **Mr. Ablay Sabdalín**, Deputy Minister for Emergency Situation & National Platform Focal Point in **Kazakhstan**. Mr. Sabdalín mentioned that the NP has been strengthened through the adoption of a DRR action plan. Priority areas of the strategic plan had been implemented to improve government strategies to strengthen prevention. Budget had also been allocated for DRR and all important institutions in Kazakhstan were involved. He pointed out that the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) related legislation provides a role to civil defence, fire fighters, air rescue divisions and others. Frameworks for safety and security have been developed. Hospital bases and disaster management centres have been included into the disaster management policy as well as cooperation between the Ministry of Education and UNICEF started on DRM. Mr. Sabdalín mentioned as challenges the insufficient monitoring systems including hazard forecasting system.

Mr. Krishna Pribadi, Chairman of Executive Board of Planas PRB/National Platform for DRR, **Indonesia** reminded in his exposé that his country enacted a new disaster management law in 2007 and established the National Platform for DRR and a National Disaster Management Agency in 2008. Resources are being allocated for DRR. An education consortium was in place and Local platforms in several provinces were established. The National Platform was based on pooled funding. It has a non-governmental status. The NP works through sectoral working groups with one focusing on climate change adaptation. Mr. Pribadi mentioned as challenge the coordination among partners in view of the wide spread of the country.

Ms. Janet Edwards, Coordinator of the National Platform for DRR in **Sweden** highlighted that climate change adaptation provides a new perspective for risk assessments. It provides a general overview on which new areas of research are needed, such as floods and forest fires. The Swedish National Platform had been set up in September 2007 motivated by hazardous events and other country examples. For the moment it is composed of governmental departments and technical services; however the intention is to further open towards other partners too. The added value of the National Platform has been the number of actors who speak with a common voice and increase capacity for preparedness in the nation. It facilitates the accessibility of information and communication. The National Platform provides training and support programmes to train the public in DRR. It has also been involved in the drafting of a major report on how climate change affects Sweden, which is available online. From the lessons learned, there is further investment in good urban planning as a new priority and using lessons learned to enhance National Platform effectiveness. The Swedish National Platform intends to cooperate more with other National Platforms.

Mr. Luis Felipe Palomino Rodriguez, Chief of the National institute of Civil Defence & Division General, HFA & National Platform Focal Point for **Peru** referred to his country's high exposure to almost all hazards. Climate change in Peru might even lead to hurricanes in the future, while the country has had to cope with many earthquakes. Gen. Palomino underlined his country's interest to exchange and learn from the experiences of other countries in risk reduction and management. He pointed out that the National Platform has already a broad range of stakeholders including Ministries like the one for Economy and Finance or Environment, but also includes civil society like the NGO PREDES. The private sector is also included, like local communities. Despite the fact that Peru has had a strong national system for Disaster Management, stakeholders felt that there was a need to still improve and involve more actors. The National Platform in Peru has been organising itself in five working groups, which correspond to the HFA Priorities of Action. One key objective is to formulate a DRR policy. A challenge remains to have all actors involved in a decentralized fashion.

Ms. Ana Elizabeth Cubias Medina, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in **El Salvador** pointed out that DRR has been enshrined in her country's law. Based on the work in the framework provided by CEPREDENAC progress had been made on Disaster risk management. However, the need was felt to have a High-Level forum for exchange on related matters, which was resulted in the development of the National Platform. The National Platform is led by a technical service for territorial studies and includes the Finance Ministry. It does not yet include NGOs, but relays on churches for awareness-raising. A participatory process applied to include additional stakeholders. Though only recently established, the National Platform managed to achieve a better integration of DRM in sectors. The NP has set up a working group on climate change and an advisory committee for civil protection. It holds two meetings per year to provide analysis of the economic situation and to provide technical guidance. As challenges, Ms. Cubias mentioned to ensure enough funding to ensure the Platform's sustainability. The National Platform also needed further political tools for DRR and effective participation of all sectors. By 2015 El Salvador wants to have integrated DRR in all development activities.

Mr. Makala Jeffrey Ngaka, Assistant Director, Post Disaster Recovery and Rehabilitation Directorate, Agricultural Disaster Risk Management, **South Africa** presented his country's National Platform. A Green paper on disaster management was issued and led to actions including the Disaster Management Law, which foresee mitigation and preparedness actions in South Africa. Subsequently the National Disaster Management Framework was established. The National Platform is called National Disaster Management

Advisory Forum (NDMAF) and has the following characteristics: It includes all stakeholders from private sector and civil society to serve as an Advisory Forum and has been established by law. It meets quarterly on up-coming hazards. Some 18 technical teams and Task Forces are established which report regularly to the forum. Challenges are that actors sometimes lack training to carry out their tasks in DRR and that the Forum faces financial constraints. Additionally, it was mentioned that more needs to be done to engage in preventive work and to link up with SADC and other African countries.

Mr. Koffi Hounkpe, Chief, Division for studies, programme and M&E, Ministry of the Environment and Forestry Resources & HFA NP Focal Point **Togo** mentioned that the legal framework for risk reduction in Togo stems from the Environment law of 2008. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is in charge of coordinating the multi-stakeholder National Platform for DRR, which has been set up through an administrative order, but shall in the future be supported by a decree. The four members of the technical secretariat of the national platform are permanent staff, funded by the Environmental Ministry's budget. Most members represent government services. The objective of the NP is to make DRR a tool for poverty reduction and development. The National Platform meets at least three times a year. At present the NP is working on a DRM strategy and an annual work plan. It is planned that DRR will be better mainstreamed in partner projects, including UNDP funded projects, which shall give additional possibility to receive additional funding for DRR activities. At present, the NP also reviews technical and material needs of key institutions in the academia and for meteorological services. An agreement is being reached with universities on involvement of young researchers into the work of National Platform. A school manual on DRR in form of a comic strip has been developed. A study on climate change is being conducted. Sub-committees on resource mobilization, prevention etc. have been established which will take over the work which the National Platform Secretariat is doing alone at present.

Following these National Platform presentations, **Mr. Lars Bernd**, Programme Officer National Platforms, **UNISDR Secretariat**, delivered a presentation on his agency's work on National Platforms. The presentation referred to UNISDR support to establish and strengthen National Platform both through guidance documents, best practice documentation, information sharing by email and websites and in-situ technical support. To allow for more discussion time, the presentation was shortened, but a larger version is placed on the meeting's website.

Ms. Lorena Aguilar, Global Senior Gender Adviser of the **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** then launched her organisation's Policy and Practical Guidelines on making Disaster risk reduction gender-sensitive. She reminded participants of the importance of making DRR and the work of National Platform's gender sensitive in composition and action to address the complexity of disasters and the different ways hazards affect women and men. Gender gaps and deaths related to natural disasters are linked, increasing the deaths of women compared to the deaths of men in countries which do not consider women rights. In disaster situations for four women that die only one man dies. Guidelines have been developed on mainstreaming gender into DRR. Ms. Aguilar pointed out that ecosystem management supports the reduction of underlying risk factors. The involvement of women into risk assessment mapping has to be ensured. Gender sensitive early warning systems and the use of gender sensitive indicators are needed and should be applied.

Discussions on the presentations

Following the presentations a lively debate ensued.

Several delegates stressed the positive role women have been playing in the national DRM system. In **Senegal**, the network of women has been integrated in the National Platform and is an important partner. Women know how to receive weather forecast and know how to disseminate the information to communities and what to do to prevent losses. Senegal also developed a Parliamentarians network for DRR, which is another important partner for DRR.

Argentina voiced support for engendering DRR, but proposed rather to set a general focus on vulnerable communities of society. He pointed out that poverty is the main driver of vulnerability and that women may be particularly faced by it, but we should not forget other vulnerable communities or groups of society like indigenous people, the elderly, handicapped, youth or others.

Ms. Helena Molin Valdes, **UNISDR**, pointed out that we should come out of this meeting with a clear message to the Global Platform, how to include gender mainstreaming into the work of the National Platform.

Ms. Lajana Manandhar of the Huairou Commission in **Nepal**, a women organisation, pointed out that Gender and women's roles were still mostly missing in many National Platforms for DRR. She strongly voiced her opinion that the consultation of women and grassroots organizations should be added to official National Platform recommendations to the Global Platform.

A delegate from **Costa Rica** pointed out that many women were already participating in the country's National Platform. The national emergency degree and fund mentions women.

A representative from **Nicaragua** supported the IUCN presenter's suggestions and supported that a close cooperation with communities and women is crucial, because women are at the forefront but also sense the disasters first and are in the frontline of response. Similar support was received from the **Dominican Republic** and the **Philippines**. In the Dominican Republic, it was pointed out, additional efforts need to be carried out to involve women in the National Platform, as requested by the women secretariat. An inclusion of gender in the National Platform recommendations was supported.

A representative of **Bolivia** questioned the added value of National Platforms. He said that they should at least be built on existing national coordinating mechanisms. In response several National Platform representatives provide their view of the **added value** stressing elements of avoided duplication, stronger Government and other partner commitment to DRR and effective refocusing of programmes, and overall a more comprehensive, wider and integrated view on the issue of disasters and risk than what more traditional national systems for disaster management can provide.

A representative from the **Panama** National Platform, Mr. Rafael Bonillo, pointed out how critical it is to involve the Ministry of Economy and Finance in the work of the National Platform.

Presentation and discussion on proposed recommendations by National Platforms to the Global Platform

Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel, Chief Executive Officer, German Committee for Disaster Reduction/National Platform, **Germany**, presented the initiative by several European National Platforms to prepare recommendations on National Platforms for adoption by National Platform world-wide. He explained that the objective was to clarify the position of National Platforms to the ISDR system and to ensure that their voice is heard in the Global Platforms, as – contrary to “good practice” in 2007 – the National Platform meeting does this year not take place as integral part of the Global Platform but “only” as a pre-session event. Mr. Zentel stressed that these recommendations have been shared among established National Platforms, whose comments – originating from some ten National Platforms from all geographical regions - were integrated in the current version.

Comments from the Plenary

Mr. Stephen Barnes, HFA focal point in the **United Kingdom**, remarked that the recommendations have not been shared with HFA focal points. In his response, Mr. Zentel emphasized that this is indeed a National Platform initiative and that recommendations come from existing National Platforms and not necessarily represent the variety of all stakeholders on DRR.

Ms. Lorena Aguilar, Global Senior Adviser, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**) stressed the importance of adding gender to the recommendations. This was generally acknowledged.

The representative of the National Platform of **Argentina** voiced his country's support to the document. Referring to the recommendations' call for better communication among UNISDR and National Platforms, he pointed out that normally National Platform and HFA focal points coincide, but that Argentina wanted the Secretariat to channel information and communications necessarily through the National Platforms as country entry point. He also pointed out that often the national system focus very much on emergency management, and differ from National Platforms for DRR, which underlines the importance to speak to National Platform and not only to focal point institutions, which are often heavily focused still on disaster response to the dispense of risk reduction.

Mr. Amade Belem, focal point of the National Platform in **Burkina Faso** demanded that some comments his Platform had sent can still be included in the recommendations. He believed central to include the call to set up of a sub-regional or regional fund for DRR and to support countries in equipping themselves with early warning and risk management technology.

A representative of the National Platform in **Indonesia** suggested that the recommendations should be called "statement" and not necessarily "recommendations". Links need to be established between National Action Plans for Adaptation (to Climate Change) Focal Points and that the Governments and the ISDR system should be invited to "coordinate" and not only "facilitate" those links. He pointed out that National Platforms and DRR stakeholders should advocate internationally for inclusion of Climate change adaptation into DRR and support Local Platforms and a decentralised support to DRR.

A representative from **SOPAC** underlined the role of Regional Platforms. She suggested including this and the importance of coordination for information sharing in the recommendations

Peru supported these comments and proposed that Nations should set up access mechanism for information sharing.

Mr. Rahul Sangupta of **UNDP/BCPR** stressed the importance of sustainable governance structures to build resilience and pointed in this regard to recommendations provided in the ISDR Global Assessment Report. He invited National Platforms to look into this issue and to help in building such a sustainable system. Governance and sustainability needed to be integrated into the recommendations.

The National Platform Focal point from **Madagascar** suggested calling for funds for the National Platform's secretariats to help them in coordinating the National Platform.

The representative of the National Platform in **Burundi**, Col. Nitunga Servilien called for a harmonisation of existing mechanisms. The aspect of disaster response should also be linked to the work of the National Platform, as response is often part of their members' activities. This goes beyond what is already noted in the Priority of Action 5 of the Hyogo Framework for Action. This should be reflected in the recommendations.

Mr. Dominiciano Mulenga of the National Platform of **Zambia** confirmed that his country's comments to the recommendations were reflected in the document and suggested submitting it.

The National Platform representative from **France** supported this call and stressed the importance to have a voice in the Global Platform meeting, where National Platform should speak out and refer to them.

The National Platform from **Sweden** voiced her support and suggested convening a small working group to reflect the comments made during this session, which was agreed upon.

Conclusions by the Chair

Ms. Helena Molin-Valdes concluded the meeting by facilitating the setting up of an ad hoc drafting team to finalise the National Platform recommendations, so they can be submitted to the Global Platform the following day. She thanked all participants for the fruitful discussion and good aspects, which have been raised including those on funding mechanisms, gender, channelling of communications, and information on the variety of approaches to make them work. She pointed out that the holding of the meeting was a recognition of National Platforms, their increasing number and the trend that they are becoming a more important voice nationally and internationally. She supported a remark made earlier by Argentina on the added value of National Platform for DRR, that help to come to a risk sensitive development, which is not the same mechanism like a disaster management or disaster risk reduction coordination mechanism already in place in countries.

For further information on the event, including the final recommendations delivered on Friday, 19 June 2009, in the Global Platform's Closing session, please access the following websites:

<http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/programme/pre-sessions/v.php?id=92>

<http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/programme/plenary/v.php?id=114>