

CLOSING SESSION REPORT

Friday, 19th June

The following report has been prepared by Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

On Friday, 19 June, in closing the plenary, Global Platform Chair Holmes described his impressions of the Second Session of the Global Platform, noting that participants had placed a strong emphasis in the week's discussions on community involvement, education and health, urban risks, the fundamental role of women and children and climate change. David Nabarro, UN System Coordinator on Avian and Human Influenza and the Global Food Security Crisis, stressed the importance of making pandemic preparedness an integral part of DRR planning and identified a number of factors that are essential to such preparedness: political commitment to sustain efforts; intersectoral working capacity; and well-planned communications strategies. Nabarro warned that as the current swine flu pandemic evolves and spreads to other countries, particularly poorer countries, governments and national health authorities need to make sure they are as ready as possible. He also called on policymakers in the health sector to muster political courage and be ready to overstep institutional boundaries in pursuit of effective action. Laura Gurza, Ministry of the Interior, Mexico, added that although the pandemic is a health problem it requires a response from various sectors of government and society, including the private sector.

Luz Amanda Pulido, Ministry of the Interior, Colombia, reiterated the need to ensure that there is greater investment in disaster preparedness and disaster recovery systems, stressing that country-level preparedness for climate change and disasters should be monitored. Norma Schimming-Chase, Member of Parliament, Namibia, gave an overview of the outcomes of a meeting of parliamentarians held during the Second Session of the Global Platform, highlighting, inter alia: bridging the gap in HFA implementation at the regional, national and local level; creating a conducive political environment for the implementation of HFA; and raising awareness on the role of women and other major groups in DRR.

Victor Rembeth, Indonesia, spoke on behalf of national platforms and urged participants to invest in financial and technical support for DRR national platforms, and coordinate the work of DRR national platforms and climate change focal points to avoid duplication of work at the national level.

Haydeé Rodríguez, Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS), Nicaragua, stressed that local level priorities must inform national level policies and added that there is a need for clear mechanisms for collaboration and for growth of the resilience fund. Constancio, Bolivia, and Rhee, the Philippines, spoke on behalf of young people. Constancio called on his country to implement laws that would give children the right to express themselves, be heard and live in a healthy environment. He called for greater involvement of children at future UNISDR Platform meetings. Rhee equated Geneva to a "school for governments" and urged participants to return to their countries and "do their homework" on DRR with a view to including young people in the various processes.

Wahlström said that the UNISDR would make available an online summary of work on the mid-term review, which will be open for comments from all stakeholders as this is a multi-stakeholder strategy. She noted that the HFA will be the basis for the review and said that as the HFA is a very recent framework, the review will be realistic in looking at the achievements already made, with more attention being paid to the lessons learnt.

Ibrahim Osman, Deputy Secretary-General, IFRC, made a statement on behalf of the ISDR Management Oversight Board on the way forward. In setting targets to halve the number of disaster-related deaths by 2015, he called for the establishment of clear, national and international financial commitments to DRR; and a global structural evaluation of schools and hospitals.

CHAIR'S SUMMARY: Introducing the Chair's Summary in the closing plenary, Global Platform Chair Holmes said that the DRR process was increasingly being driven at the local level, particularly from leadership in developing countries. He then highlighted the following areas to be considered critical for future progress:

- Climate change: DRR must be a concrete part of the climate change negotiations at the UN Climate meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009;
- Reduced risk: Success in reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change will depend on the development of innovative partnerships that recognize the mutual dependence of actions undertaken by central and local governments and civil society;
- Financing DRR: Proposals included a variety of innovations, such as incentives for retrofitting, risk transfer tools, risk-sensitive development, private sector involvement, debt swap to finance disaster reduction measures and linkages with adaptation financing; and
- Setting DRR targets: UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon called for a target to halve the losses of lives from disasters by 2015. Specific targets are also identified – reflecting the conference's deliberations – as catalysts for cutting deaths and economic losses brought on by disasters, including:
 - By 2010, establishment of clear national and international financial commitments to DRR, for example to allocate a minimum of 10 percent of all humanitarian and reconstruction funding, at least one percent of development funding, and at least 30 percent of climate change adaptation funding, to DRR;
 - By 2011, a global structural evaluation of all schools and hospitals, and by 2015 firm action plans for safer schools and hospitals developed and implemented in all disaster prone countries with DRR included in all school curricula by the same year;
 - By 2015, all major cities in disaster prone areas to include and enforce DRR measures in their building and land use codes.

The Chair's Summary also notes that, with the HFA approaching the halfway point of its term, the mid-term review must address strategic and fundamental matters concerning its implementation towards 2015 and beyond. It states that this will require leadership from governments, close involvement of civil society, including women and children, and support from UNISDR and ISDR partners. In a subsequent discussion on the Chair's Summary, many participants commented that the text does not sufficiently capture themes that were frequently discussed at the meeting, and requested that the summary place stronger emphasis on: local-level policy implementation; experience sharing and lessons learned; multi-stakeholder involvement, particularly of actors at the local level; indigenous communities' contributions; the use of local wisdom and traditional knowledge; regional-level actions and funding for regional policy frameworks; and multi-sectoral coordination.

Others stressed the importance of: integration between DRR and development policies; adequate education, training and capacity building programmes; need for technological support; effective EWS; making widely available climate related information; cross-national data sharing to improve weather forecasts; local platforms; microfinance and insurance; the needs of the most vulnerable, including disabled persons; scientific information and research funding; and short-term humanitarian responses to emergencies.

Still others called for references to: adequate insurance schemes; the special needs of small-island nations; private sector involvement; slow-onset disasters such as drought; the connection between disasters and livelihoods; and children's participants called for a stronger partnership between UNISDR and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change, and called for participants to work with their climate change negotiators to include DRR in their proposals for Copenhagen.

Others called for stronger inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral partnerships. Stressing the importance of local-level organizers, one participant stressed the need for stronger language in the summary to reflect this. Another proposed that DRR be incorporated into the MDGs, with some welcoming the inclusion of children and youth into ISDR processes. Some stressed the inclusion of preparedness for pandemics, forest protection and the risks posed by man-made disasters in Gaza and Iraq. The importance of DRR public-private partnerships in schools and hospitals was also emphasized, with other participants noting the role good governance plays in DRR.

One participant suggested that all countries develop emergency telecommunication plans that would assist in emergency mapping and noted that this could save lives.

Noting that issues of accountability have often been raised, one participant called for independent monitoring of HFA implementation that involves local actors to ensure stakeholder involvement, and suggested that the UNISDR Secretariat report on partnership activities in the ISDR system. A participant expressed concern that the process is not capitalizing on increased political will for DRR.

Another asked for UNISDR help in developing national platforms for DRR. One participant emphasized root causes of climate change and described mitigation efforts in developed countries as a form of DRR, while another objected to multiple references to climate change, noting that climate policy is negotiated in other processes.

Global Platform Chair Holmes said the UNISDR Secretariat would take all these views into consideration, adding that a new version of the Chair's Summary, reflecting comments from the floor, would be posted on the PreventionWeb Global Platform website in the coming week. He said that participants would then have a further two weeks to review and make further inputs before finalization of the text.