



**Name of Event: [Roundtable] Managing Watersheds for Urban Resilience**

**Date of Event: May 12, 2011**

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**Panellists:**

- Ms Siththy Marina Mohamed, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management, Sri Lanka (Chair)
- Ms Shraddha Shridhar Jadhav, Hon Mayor of Mumbai, India
- Mr Marcelo Rivera Arancibia, Hon Mayor of Hualpén, Region of Bío-Bío, Chile
- Mr Aisea Tuidraki, Special Administrator Nadi, Sigatoka Town Councils, Fiji
- Mr Jean-Claude Eude, Director General, Loire River Basin Authority, France
- Mr Mark Smith, Director Water Programme, IUCN
- Mr Mahesh Narvekar, Chief Officer, Disaster Management Unit, Municipal Corporation of Great Mumbai

**1) Outline**

Urban areas are expanding globally and as people, infrastructures and industries become increasingly concentrated in cities, urban risk is expected to increase. Watersheds play an important role in supporting urban life and growth. They are important providers of ecosystem services (e.g. water and climate regulation) which mitigate the impacts of hazards. Urban expansion however has contributed to the significant degradation of watersheds through deforestation, wetland reclamation, river channel alteration and urban pollution. The discussions held in the roundtable raised awareness of applying sustainable watershed management for urban risk reduction and resilient development. It was pointed out that decision support tools, capacity building and appropriate policy and legal frameworks are needed to implement sustainable watershed management for urban resilience.

Challenges identified were lack of:

- Sustained financing
- knowledge, expertise and leadership
- policies at national level to support urban planners and local authorities
- long term commitment

## **2) Key messages, outcomes, recommendations**

- Well-managed, healthy watersheds provide a wide range of goods and services to both urban and rural populations and play a vital role in supporting urban life.
- Urban areas are dependent on watersheds, yet urban expansion and land use changes have contributed to watershed degradation, increasing urban exposure and vulnerabilities to water-related hazards.
- Risk-sensitive, sustainable watershed management balances resource needs amongst multiple users both upstream and downstream, and also reduces vulnerabilities and develops coping capacities to deal with potential disaster risks through mitigation and preventive actions.
- Ecosystem-based approaches in watershed management, such as reforestation, river or wetland restoration, and floodplain regulation, when combined appropriately with engineered infrastructure, can provide complementary solutions to help achieve urban development goals, as well as protect people and development investments against water-related disasters and climate change.
- Successful watershed management is based on stakeholder consultations across geographical, institutional and political boundaries and requires strong, long-term political, technical and financial commitments.

## **3) Conclusions**

Policy recommendations and key messages of the PEDRR policy brief were reminded by the chair of the roundtable:

- Ensure that policies and legal frameworks are in place to support, replicate and institutionalize the practice of risk-sensitive, sustainable watershed management, across political and institutional boundaries.
- Integrate sustainable watershed management as part of urban development planning and urban risk management.
- Enhance capacities to undertake risk-sensitive, sustainable watershed management planning in urban areas.
- Promote innovative approaches to overcome capacity limitations, such as fostering public-private sector partnerships.
- Support community and civil society involvement in watershed planning processes to build ownership and long-term support.