

Towards a post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES TO DISASTERS

Summary and Closing Remarks of the Third Round

The third round of online dialogue focused on the role of the most vulnerable. It was held in parallel to the International Day on Disaster Risk Reduction under the theme: “Women and Girls – the (in)Visible Force of Resilience” on 13th October.

How to make women and girls the visible force of resilience?

UNISDR secretariat offered to use the *Step up for Disaster Risk Reduction* site <http://www.unisdr.org/2012/iddr> to add the online participant voice to the International Day celebration. Inputs enriched the so-called *Step Up Initiative* and allowed to pool together experiences to be used as reflection when we move forward towards the post-2015 agenda. “The theme really captured people’s imaginations and there is no doubt that governments, cities, civil society groups, NGOs and UN agencies have all made use of it to promote better appreciation of the role that women and girls play in building disaster resilience and why we need to continue encouraging them to become involved” to quote UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström in a news item that I invite you to read at <http://www.unisdr.org/archive/29823>. This news summarizes the impacts of the *Step Up Initiative*.

Many dialoguers share various experiences directly on the online dialogue on how women have been a force in various stages of disaster management cycle, from preparedness to emergency such as shelter management, psychosocial care and first aid, grassroots support to resettlement and overall cooperation in design, decision making and planning for disasters. Those examples illustrate well how grassroots women are change makers in resilience initiatives and leaders in creating safe community.

Proposals for priorities and actions needed for current and future HFA were also made such as:

- Effective participation in decision making in activities to reduce risks.
- Greater access to quality of education and technical training. This entails that gender equality and equity are prerequisite and community’s assets for resilience and sustainable development.
- Establishment of mechanism for increasing resilience of the poor and most vulnerable.
- Introduction of sustainable development for youth supplement through intervention and education.
- Social inclusion as a key factor to benefit to adaptation and sustainability.
- Inclusion of Governments level laws and policies.
- Proper attention toward the poor and rural women with special care to their cultural norms.

It was suggested to gather further evidence through research on the causes of women’s vulnerability in disasters with regard to the specific characterization and culture of each country and on their role in planning for disaster risk reduction activities, decision making and implementation. Also, research on psychological assistance to families, neighbors and those in need after the disaster, transfer of knowledge amongst women themselves are needed.

How are groups with special needs best recognized and their knowledge harnessed for their participation in the different priority area for resilience?

By answering to the second question, dialoguers commented and shared ideas for the future, post-2015, discussed opportunities to build the resilience of those who need it most.

Various contributions recognized that “groups with special needs” are women, children, elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities and the poor. Those groups with special needs best recognized are members of communities who are generally likely to be the worst-hit in case of disasters because of their deprived access to resources such as social networks, influence, transportation, information, skills (including literacy) and employment, personal mobility, secure housing, control over decision-making, land and other economic resources and dependence upon others. This needs to be applicable to slum dwellers and rural settlements.

Harnessing these group capacities, knowledge, and special skills is feasible and measurable if there are state-level disaster risk reduction systems, approaches, and clear gender equity policy to ensure that the national platforms are explicitly sensitive to gender. Since disaster risk reduction is a cross cutting theme, community resilience needs to be integrated in each sector of economy. Projects of livelihood, education, health, water and sanitation or any developmental programs can harness the disaster risk reduction integrated approach towards community resilience. Gender sensitivity is suggested to be part of all structural and non-structural mitigation measures, all the disaster risk management plans, contingency plans, response plan and all laws, departmental projects and planning. Interaction between those with special needs will pioneer the path to discovering and harnessing the potential in them.

The participation of marginalized communities in disaster risk management should start with the issue of general accessibility, which should be part of national laws, and disaster laws. The principle of human equality constitutes a basis for human rights. Participatory method, bottom-up approach, role of religious institutions, and role of educational institutions, strong applicable laws and accountability can support their empowerment and participation in awareness raising, risk assessment, decision making. Social and cultural values have great role in this regard.

To the question who is responsible to make this happened, dialoguers tent to conclude that all the segments of the society are responsible for attaining the desirable results. But the main responsible stakeholders are governments, NGOs, communities, religious institutions, media and different legal/social forums. One participant refer to the *Universal design* - quote “design or accommodation of the main solution as regards the physical conditions so that the normal function of the undertaking can be used by as many people as possible”. Public and private undertakings that offer goods and services to the general public should be obliged to ensure that universal design is applied to the normal functions of the undertaking.

The two proposals for top three issues to be addressed in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction are as follows:

1. Building climate-responsive livelihood centered capacity
2. Providing a regular source of income such as micro-finance
3. Building social coherence

and

1. Poverty (rural population specially)
2. Laws and accountability at state level
3. Governance and basic human rights