

Towards a post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES TO DISASTERS



Summary and Closing Remarks of the Fifth Round

The fifth round of the online dialogue on the post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, entitled *“Integrating Disaster risk reduction (DRR), Climate change adaption (CCA) and Sustainable development”* ran from 3 to 8 December 2012 hosted in parallel with the 18th Conference of the Parties (COP18) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.. The round had 51 posts from participants from 18 countries across the three threads of discussion.

The purpose of this round was to enhance understanding of the linkage between DRR, CCA and Sustainable development, and thus strengthen the mainstreaming of both disaster risk reduction and adaptation into development planning and practices. This was done through 3 questions which anchored the 3 threads of the discussion as follows:

Changes in severity and frequency of extreme weather and climate events and consequent changes in behavior

These 15 posts from 7 countries were a lively reporting of specific changes in patterns of extreme climate and weather events.

Some debate ensued on whether this is normal climate variability or attributable to climate change. In Namibia human induced changes such as urbanization, deforestation, land use, and reservoir regulations were as much causal factors as climate change, the impacts being more severe because they had been absent for so long.

Bridging the knowledge gap and promoting awareness of the practical and operational aspects of climate variability and change science and DRR is needed. Improved preparedness and capacities of local communities and effective management of the climate variability these floods and drought represent will then enhance our capacities to adapt to climate change. Resilient building ‘solutions’ identified were rainwater harvesting, aquifer recharge, changes in type of crops or the plantation season, better planning of construction and water management, safe dwellings, sustainable livelihood sources.

Optimism underpinned recognition of good practice on communication of future uncertainties achieved through the cooperation of hydro met services, technical institutions and operational administrations in climate forecast applications in Bangladesh and regional climate outlook forums in the great Horn of Africa. Practical examples were given of no/low regrets options and scenario-based planning that works across of “range of possible futures”. Institutions need to become “adaptive” and able respond to new information about emerging risk covering both future hazards and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

Linking DRR and CCA in policy, programming and institutional partnership

This thread with 21 posts from 14 countries affirmed the importance of linking both DRR and CCA in the new framework and presents an insightful mix of country based experience and trends of such linkage, recognizing progress, analyzing causes for its slow pace yet striking an optimistic tone being inspired by innovative initiatives.

Both DRR and CCA share common goals of reducing vulnerability and building resilience. Steps to remove the institutional barriers to cooperation and coordination, recognizing these inherent synergies, reported were integrated structures for DRR and CCA in Pakistan and France, increased coordination in Indonesia and Bangladesh, with the latter having joint delegations in intergovernmental forums, and still limited cooperation in Fiji and Haiti.

Practical progress is reported in a) Bangladesh having common tools to deal with DRR/CCA in local and national planning processes, and NGOs bringing both sectors under one umbrella and doing common programming, b) at the provincial (West Bengal) level in India of integrating both into all aspects of economic and social development at local level c) in Algeria a multi institutional partnership study on vulnerability to climate change in Algiers, identifying actions to enhance adaptive capacities and build community resilience. d) DRR/CCA being enmeshed in existing arrangements for local development planning and funding, has met some success in some Lower Mekong basin countries, e) risk based approach by the Asian Development Bank in a CCA project in the Pacific. f) Community groups' autonomous action and building capacities for self-protection against disaster and climate risk in the UK.

Barriers to collaboration that were identified include a) each sector tending to work within its own institutional home and specialist community of practice resulting in dialogues held in parallel and work programs are developed separately b) occupying separate policy spheres, differences in concepts and perspectives despite the interaction and overlap on all levels c) many donors (and governments) allocate two different sets of funding sources to two different departments, reinforces the problem d) decentralization and autonomous functioning of districts, and the structural challenges of resource /power sharing and leadership e) having a composite assessment of the impacts of climate change and disaster risk, and the geographical areas and sectors most at risk due to different methodologies used by different institutions making such analysis , f) functioning of institutional systems at sub national or local government levels, lack of political authority, technical capacity and financial resources as critical issues for DRR CCA linkage, g) vulnerable people have little or influence over these arrangements in the absence of external development agencies, h) public policy and social action lags behind scientific knowledge.

The strong basis for integration is a) both are about behavioral changes and b) communities do not isolate the adverse impact of each in their day-to-day lives. Progress will be made by changing perceptions and altering incentives.

Some **recommendations** include a) DRR/CCA to be an integral component in each governmental development projects with feasibility studies of infrastructure projects assessing impact of climatic hazards, b) not treat DRR as a sector but build the case to redefine urban

development to include mitigation infrastructure, site development improvements and drainage, lower urban densities and move to scale through investments in finance, training and capacity building, c) framing policies and guidelines for cooperation, coordination, and action in finding realistic solutions and enabling local community action, otherwise it just “sits on a shelf”, d) improving livelihoods that are in harmony with environmental conservation and good natural resource management, can contribute to economic development that is sustainable, e) accelerate innovative local action, respectful of global implications which can create new mindsets, f) calls for countries of South and Central Asia to develop joint regional strategies on DRR and CCA and learn from each other.

It was suggested that the post 2015 Framework must do better with the adoption of a reasonable sequencing of triple win (reduce poverty with CCA activities combined with DRR) risk-balanced portfolio of projects that avail 'no/low regrets' approaches and scenario-based planning that works across of “range of possible futures”, and ensures effective and efficient delivery of results with active participation of stakeholders, prioritizing empowerment of children and women, and tackling issues of inclusive and responsive governance.

Learning lessons from mainstreaming DRR into development planning and sectors

The 13 posts from 8 countries emphasized that mainstreaming DRR is essential across development planning and sectors to reverse the wide ranging potential adverse consequences of disasters on agricultural production, fisheries, industries, water quality and supply, ecosystems, land management and the built environment; and avoid impacts on livelihoods and poverty, health and education, psychosocial well-being and gender relations.

There are challenges in mainstreaming to address a) what is “acceptable risk”, b) what each area is ready to invest to enhance resilience, c) how to balance the interests of diverse groups who are differentially impacted by risk. d) how to negotiate tradeoffs at trans-boundary and global levels e) develop and implement national coordination arrangements f). how to increase availability of and access to tools, and planning instruments g) deliver awareness raising and capacity building efforts h) scale up fragmented efforts and ensure consistency in their delivery i) sharing workable examples, and f) effectively using existing resources such as available handbooks on mainstreaming practices in specific sectors and manuals on safe construction techniques.

Getting mainstreaming right and a routine part of decision making in all sectors is a crucial element of the new framework, and whose practice will continue both during current HFA implementation and as well as long into the implementation of the new framework.

Many dialoguers share hopes that these online consultations motivate stakeholders, key planners and policy makers, to ponder over the issues” and act decisively to make a difference for the “future world we all want”.

Loy Rego
Facilitator, Online dialogue on Post 2015 DRR Framework