



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

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Reduction*

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Mission

The ISDR aims at building disaster resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development, with the goal of reducing human, social, economic and environmental losses due to natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters.

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Excellencies, dear participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Salvano Briceño, Director of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) secretariat apologises for his absence today due to prior commitments and has asked me to convey the following message on his behalf:

More than 600 million people live in the 50 LDCs, half of which have been identified as highly vulnerable to natural hazards. 32 are located in Africa. Natural hazards continue to cause heavy losses to capital assets and are particularly severe and lasting in LDCs. In addition, as we know, poverty continues to rise in Central Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and remains a problem in South Asia. There is a close correlation between disasters, poverty and the environment and despite this poverty reduction strategies still do not make an explicit reference to disaster vulnerability, as a contributing factor to aggravating poverty.

To address these challenges, the third Action Programme for Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010, adopted in 2001, specifically requests action by development partners in view of giving priority attention to these countries in the substantive programme and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the ISDR.

I would like to stress the strong linkages between the Programme of Action for LDCs and the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, which was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 18-22 January 2005). The Hyogo Framework for Action is the ten-year action plan providing a guiding framework to address disaster risk reduction issues through concrete actions at all levels for the next decade. The link to the Action Programme for LDCs is also referred to the annex of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The Hyogo Framework outlines 5 priorities for action in the next 10 years: 1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation; 2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning; 3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; 4. Reduce the underlying risk factors; and 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

National progress of the HFA implementation

The emphasis of the Hyogo Framework on the focus for national implementation and follow-up, with the primary responsibility of States, requires, as a corollary, the development of strong participatory and collaborative ties with civil society and authorities at national and local levels, involving all development sectors (health, education, agriculture, tourism, etc.); national disaster management systems, business sector and academic, scientific and technical support organizations.

The Hyogo Framework specifically calls for the establishment or strengthening of national platforms for disaster reduction, anchored to existing national systems, to review, coordinate, guide and support the national commitments. The pursuit of that national ownership requirement has already stimulated tangible follow-up. Initiatives

are underway in many countries, including LDC countries such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, and Uganda, which have strengthened or created national platforms for risk reduction in the context of sustainable development institutional systems. For example, Bangladesh published its Corporate Plan 2005-2009: A Framework for Action, which lays out a national vision to “reduce the vulnerability of the people, especially the poor, to effects of natural, environmental and human induced hazards”. Another good example is the policy developed by Uganda to mainstream disaster risk into its Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and prioritised disaster risk management amongst its development efforts. Comoros has been finalizing its contingency plan for disasters.

Interactions and collaboration among national platforms are increasing, assisted by ISDR partners. For example, in Africa, the African Union Commission hosted a forum of national platforms of African countries in the context of the Africa Regional Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction, facilitated by the ISDR Africa Unit in Nairobi. The forum agreed to meeting regularly to share information and experience with the objective of monitoring and influencing national implementation of the Hyogo Framework.

A special case for vulnerability: Small Island Developing States

Small island nations are located among the most vulnerable regions in the world, in particular in relation to the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards such as tropical cyclones and floods. Rising sea levels also threaten low-lying countries such as the Maldives, Kiribati and Tuvalu, which are also LDCs. While some islands may have relatively high incomes compared with other developing countries, their capacity to cope with disaster risks is limited. Often reliant on fishing and tourism for survival, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is particularly vulnerable to disasters that can wipe out entire industries.

According to the Maldives authorities, the impact of the recent tsunami has set back development by two decades. While the archipelago was largely spared in terms of lives lost – the official death toll stands at just over 80 people – the land itself and its infrastructure was severely damaged and as a result a third of the country's population have been severely affected, including many who were displaced by the disaster.

Preceding the Kobe, Hyogo Conference by a week, the International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (Port-Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005) placed disaster risk reduction high on the agenda. Participants recognised their common vulnerability and committed to strengthen disaster management networks by capitalising on existing knowledge and resources.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that LDCs, and SIDS required priority and urgent attention within the action put in place to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, in order for the objectives set out in the Programme for Action for the LDCs are to be achieved. The ISDR is active promoting a heightened attention to disaster risk reduction and is working with partners to provide enhanced support to countries to enhance their resilience to natural hazards. Examples of such efforts include the recently established ACP Disaster Facility as well as a proposal for a

Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery by the World Bank as an integral part of the ISDR system.

Disaster risk concerns every person, every community, and every nation; indeed, disaster impacts are slowing down development and their impact and actions in one region can have an impact on risks in another, and vice versa. Without taking into consideration the need to reduce risk and vulnerability, the world simply cannot hope to move forward in its quest for sustainable development and reduction of poverty.

At the ISDR secretariat, we stand ready to cooperate with Governments to facilitate the implementation of the Hyogo Framework to ensure that risk and vulnerability to natural hazards are addressed effectively by all development investments.

Thank you very much.
