

THEMATIC CLUSTER ON GOVERNANCE

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The Governance Cluster consisted of a Panel and ten thematic sessions. Throughout, the importance of good governance was recognised as the prerequisite for effective disaster reduction. Governance was at the heart of the Yokohama Review and it remains a significant component of disaster reduction programming if economic and social development is to be sustained. The Panel stressed the importance of participation by all stakeholders in actions implemented to reduce disaster risks. Legal and regulatory frameworks were needed to ensure that governments have the authority to act.

Equally, the establishment of national and regional platforms to promote disaster reduction is central to ensure multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multi-level approaches. Platforms need to have the commitment of governments, strong leadership and guaranteed resourcing. Advocacy is important to ensure that disaster reduction remains high on government agendas, particularly when it is competing with so many other priorities. → However, it is the poor and excluded that are often the most vulnerable to disaster risks. If the institutions and policy frameworks established for disaster reduction do not reflect and actively engage with those who are most vulnerable, then effectiveness will be diminished. Governance for disaster reduction should promote community resilience. Mainstreaming disaster reduction means working at the local level. Disasters affect communities, implying that the implementation of disaster reduction needs to be decentralised as much as possible and involve all stakeholders, particularly those whose vulnerability is greatest.

Among the thematic sessions were two that particularly stressed the importance of focusing on the poor and vulnerable. The session on accountable and transparent governance, prioritised accountability in decision-making and access to information and justice, promoting national co-operation in the process. The session on community-based disaster risk reduction made advocacy an important tool, while international co-operation between communities as an element of knowledge-sharing, was also given priority.

Another recurring theme was the integration of disaster risk reduction into development planning. This was recognised particularly by the International Financial Institutions that stressed the importance of the incorporation of natural hazards into the strategic planning process. National systems for disaster risk management were the focus of another session and the need to have in place strong and active institutions for disaster risk reduction was advocated, whether these related to policy frameworks, plans or legislative systems.

