



**KOBE REPORT draft**  
**Report of Session 1.3, Thematic Cluster 1**

**Governance: Institutional and Policy  
Frameworks for Risk Reduction**

**1. Summary of the Session's Presentation and Discussion**

- Good governance is recognized as a pre-requisite for effective disaster risk reduction and, more broadly, for sustainable development. Although significant advances have been made in setting up national institutional and legislative systems for disaster risk management, there are a significant number of challenges which need to be addressed in order to achieve good governance for risk management.
- The session, consisting of seven presentations, focused on global and national experiences in promoting, setting up, monitoring and sustaining national institutions and systems for risk reduction. The session opened with a summary of findings on a recent UNDP study on Institutional and Legislative Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction. This was followed by presentations on national efforts in India, Fiji and the Latin America region, and respective work on the part of DFID, Japan, and the IDB to promote national policies, frameworks and systems for risk reduction as part of sustainable development.
- National systems for risk reduction involves the active participation of a wide range of actors including government, civil society, the private sector, media, the scientific community civil protection, development sectors and the community. All these entities, at various levels, need to be actively involved in the process as each has a unique role to play. Building national and legislative systems for risk reduction is not a linear process. Rather it is a series of backward and forward actions to reduce vulnerability, protect development assets and investments, and reduce disaster loss. Often the trigger for change is a disaster event.
- Some of the key factors and conditions for success include the need for a stable political environment, the presence of an explicit national disaster strategy, the adoption of multi-hazard approaches, multi-stakeholder engagement, south-south partnerships, private sector involvement, risk assessment data as the basis for stakeholder engagement dialogue, decentralized approaches, the incorporation of civil society building measures, participatory monitoring, integration of risk into development, financial instruments for disaster risk management, media involvement, sustained commitment on the part of policy makers, and a long-term perspective/time frame. Taking advantage of windows of opportunity, often created by a disaster, to make investments in prevention also contributes to the advancement of a more comprehensive approach to and to generating a demand for disaster risk management measures.
- Lessons learnt and Examples of Good Practices  
Creating a paradigm shift from a response oriented culture to one of prevention is possible, but takes time, vision, commitment and requires the creation of the relevant legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks to guide the process. Three possible options for setting up comprehensive disaster risk management structures involved amplifying existing organizations, creating new parallel organizations or building a network of key institutions -the approach will

depend upon the country. Successful efforts in making the shift from a reactive to a pro-active approach to risk reduction seem to work best within the context of governance and modernization of a state/country. The only way to look at risk reduction is through the lens of development, viable institutions, relevant legal frameworks, decentralized structures and the active engagement of civil society in the process.

## **2. Primary Issues**

- The major challenges to building effective legislative, institutional frameworks and systems for risk reduction relate to how to make disaster risk reduction a major policy issue. It is difficult to engage policy makers in a dialogue on reducing disasters and the social and economic benefits of investing in this when the benefits are not always obvious or immediate. The focus is still heavily weighted to disaster response and not on ex-ante risk management. When legislation does exist, progress towards enforcing laws and regulations for disaster risk reduction is often very slow.
- Reaching those most at risk is also difficult since they are often more focused on meeting the challenges of daily chronic risk, not disaster risk or sustainable development, and this perspective is difficult to modify. Civil society is often not engaged in risk management issues because they don't know how to get into the problem/topic and the enabling environment needed for this to occur is often not present.
- Sustained engagement takes time and requires a long-term perspective. Advocacy and political dialogue need to be framed in language that is appropriate, and efforts need to align national, intermediary and local levels. Need decision making amongst all the stakeholders and the relevant structures to facilitate this.
- Donors and development agencies need to make risk reduction a priority by making it an explicit part of their development programming and financing strategies. Efforts need to recognize the challenges and include innovative measures to address them, particularly those related to political and institutional resistance to move beyond response. The dilemma of rewarding countries that don't do much for risk reduction and not rewarding those that do needs to be put right. Donors need to work more and together on this issue and make maximum use of poverty reductions strategies.
- More attention needs to be given to the aspect of civil society participation. While many good examples and structures for civil society participation have been created, often they do not have a direct relationship to the national system. Civil society is not present in risk management because they can't get themselves into the problem or the topic. Lack of risk management formulas that address civil society concerns and needs contributes to their lack of engagement. It is fundamental to identify and understand the risk problem from their perspective. Civil society participation in risk management also requires more thinking in terms of what it means and how to meaningfully engage communities -often it is more lip service than reality.

## **3. Suggested targets and indicators to measure accomplishments**

Make the disaster reduction issue a policy issue.

Promote the concept and need for effective and understandable legal and institutional frameworks -it is the application of related standards and codes that will make a difference.

Focus on creation of cultures of prevention.

Encourage the regular collection of good data on disaster losses, impact and numbers affected and identifying who really bears the risk in the case of a disaster, and documentation on how disasters are failures of development- only with this information can a dialogue start to take place with the policy makers.

Along with policies and legislation, the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals need to be incorporated, and conceptual risk management frameworks are needed, e.g. Comprehensive Hazard and Risk Management (CHARM) to guide the process. These all need to be supported by the presence of the relevant organizational mechanisms to promote and oversee their implementation and the necessary programmatic schemes, including ones targeted at decentralization and community based disaster preparedness.

A target of 35% of annual budget for risk reduction purposes has been set in some countries.

#### **4. Partnerships**

The international community needs to work for this together and work within donor agencies for cross-sectoral communication.

Successful partnerships for risk reduction, e.g. UNDP/DFID in Albania, UNDP and the GOI, need to be promoted.

UNDP will seek to build strategic partnerships with global partners to share experiences and best practices and to coordinate at the global, regional and national levels.

#### **5. Any other relevant or brief comments.**

Much of the discussion with the audience focused on how to make disaster risk a priority more than chronic risk, issues related to community participation, and challenges related to sustaining participation and benefits once they have been created. Fiji, for the first time, now has a policy initiative on the part of government for the community to encourage more participation into development planning. There are many good examples of local participation that need to be documented. Sustainability requires a lot of different strategies and the flexibility to keep adapting to the circumstances. Community based disaster management or risk management program concepts will help to engage communities and sustaining their participation.

As long as we continue to see national systems and those that promote them and local systems and those that promote them as mutually exclusive, we will continue to be challenged. Both are important and the gaps between the two need to be bridged.

#### **6. Name, affiliation and contacts of presenters.**

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