



**KOBE REPORT draft**  
**Report of Session 1.6, Thematic Cluster 1**

**Accountable and transparent governance—key to reduction of disasters  
for poor and excluded people**

**1. Summary of the session presentation**

The ActionAid presented a paper (attached) titled people-centred governance for people who are excluded and marginalised people. The main presentation argued that this is the poor people who suffers most from disasters—is a governance failure. They are generally excluded from the policy processes and most cases policies benefit the powerful—which is major factor of vulnerability of the poor people. In order reduce disasters, policies must benefit those who are most vulnerable. The paper argued that market centred 'good governance' can not guarantee protection of most vulnerable, rather increase. People-centred governance addresses issues of inequality, discrimination and exploitation.

A people centred governance was strongly argued with eight key policy recommendations: Participation; Accountability; Decentralisation; Freedom of and access to information; Legally-enforceable obligations; Access to justice; National cooperation and coordination; International cooperation and coordination.

**There was a case study presentation from Bangladesh showed how poor participation of the vulnerable people in flood embankment management increase disaster vulnerability. They case study also presented how citizen action and space for citizen to raise voices could lead changes in policy and practices that ensure the people's participation in the embankment management. The case study also highlighted the various tools used by the citizen action—which merits wider replication in other similar places.**

Government delegates and civil society participants from Asia, Africa, Latin America and small island states univocally agreed that the following key priorities are must to ensure disaster reduction for poor and excluded people.

- a) ensuring that most vulnerable people participate in the **accountability** and decision making process
- b) ensuring that people have access to the **information** they need on policies, rights and major decision to ensure meaningful participation.
- c) actively promoting locally appropriate measures for stronger **local governance** to ensure decision making is locally appropriate.
- d) ensure that policies and obligations for disaster reduction are **legally enforceable**
- e) ensure that **access to justice** safeguards the most vulnerable
- f) adopting and practicing **accountability** mechanism that enhance institutional performance in disaster reduction
- g) ensuring **national cooperation** among various actors in both disaster reduction and development
- h) ensuring effective institutional accountability agreements that promotes safety **outside a country's borders**

## **2. Suggested targets and indicators**

The session also discussed about the few examples of targets and indicators.

- Participation: that within 5 years, the design of new disaster reduction policies and initiatives involve systematic participation of people from different vulnerable groups.
- Decentralisation: local government authorities in all identified high risk areas should have the capacity, authority and resources to implement effective local disaster reduction measures within 10 years.
- Governments' obligations for disaster reduction and response are framed in legally enforceable policies by 2015

We propose that UNDP convene a working group to further develop the the ideas of governance for disaster reduction and establish a set of targets and indicators for monitoring progress. UNDP could then work with governments and other actors to define locally appropriate measures to translate those targets.

## **3. Contacts**

- Khurshid Alam, Policy Advisor, International Emergencies Team, ActionAid International.
- Key presenter: Roger Yates, Head International Emergencies Team, ActionAid International
- Case study presenter: Shashnaka Saadi, Theme Leader, Disaster reduction, ActionAid Bangladesh.