



KOBE REPORT draft
Report of Session 1.8, Thematic Cluster 1

Dialogue on risks in mountainous regions

1. Summary

Switzerland has accumulated many experiences in the field of natural risks mitigation, and would like to transfer his knowledge for other countries according to six main messages:

A) INTEGRATED DISASTER REDUCTION APPROACH

Natural disasters are increasingly causing human suffering and hampering economic development. Countries in the south are particularly affected. An efficient and effective disaster risk reduction is urgently required. On country or community level the integrated disaster reduction approach:

- * addresses all hazards, vulnerabilities and risks
- * considers the disaster cycle
- * includes all stakeholders in the process
- * takes into account the principles of sustainability
- * is based on international solidarity

B) HAZARDS, VULNERABILITY AND RISKS

The risk concept considers an in-depth assessment of all prevailing hazards (natural, techno-logical) and of the respective vulnerabilities. Hazard maps and related products are indispensable instruments to visualize the conditions on the ground. The definition of protection goals is based on the existing risks and on an economic and socio-political evaluation of these risks (risk dialogue). Residual risks require special attention.

C) DISASTER REDUCTION MECHANISMS

An integrated disaster reduction approach equally addresses the three disaster reduction mechanisms of the disaster cycle: (1) prevention / mitigation (2) response (3) recovery. The implementation of preventive and preparedness measures to reduce hazards, vulnerabilities and risk, includes

- * Planning
(e.g. land-use planning, zoning, building codes)
- * Protective structures
(e.g. dikes and dams, retrofitting)
- * Preparedness
(e.g. early warning systems, emergency services)
- * Biological measures
(e.g. reforestation, eco-engineering)

D) ALL ACTORS INCLUDING AFFECTED PEOPLE

Disaster risk reduction is an important task which involves actors of many sectors and levels. Only a joint effort from local to national authorities, of private sector entities, particularly the insurance sector, civil society, regional organizations and international community and the public at large guarantees success. It is important that people affected by natural disasters commit into disaster risk reduction. A risk dialogue among all stakeholders including the affected populations increases the overall awareness.

E) SUSTAINABILITY OF EFFORTS

All activities in the field of disaster risk reduction obey the principles of sustainability. Measures are environmentally sound, consider societal preferences and are cost effective. Disaster risk reduction is also

part of the sustainable use of natural resources and of sustainable development, and therefore, is considered a cross-cutting issue.

F) SOLIDARITY

Natural disasters hit often unannounced and on such a scale that the local coping mechanisms are largely over-whelmed. External assistance, when required, to those affected during the disasters, in response and recovery is important. The support is based on locally generated knowledge about risks and its reduction as well as on internationally acquired understanding of disaster risk reduction. Therefore, the exchange of expertise, experience and lessons learnt on a regional and international level is necessary.

Risk reduction is a process through which the parameters of hazardous elements, i.e. magnitude and frequency and also vulnerability factors are addressed. Risk reduction is also a socio-political process where the risks from natural hazards are weighted against other risks or against opportunities. Disaster risk reduction is therefore the answer to the challenges on the way of sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

2. Primary Issues

- The reactions of the participants have shown that the Swiss experience is exportable and valuable for many other countries confronted with similar problems;
- Switzerland has a leadership role in promoting his integrated approach of how to manage the risks;
- Sustainability is a must, with balanced measures taking into account the economical, the social as well as the ecological aspects;
- Switzerland wants to give priority to prevention. In that sense, the systematic risk assessment is crucial.

The developing countries are interested to maintain and ensure future contacts with Switzerland, in order to take benefit of its strategic know-how and lessons learnt.

3. Suggested indicators to measure accomplishments

The integrated approach is based on the risk concept. It requires:

- The assessment of existing and future risks. This is an indispensable step for the planning of any risk reduction measure.

A balanced implementation of prevention, response and recovery mechanisms.

4. Existing indicators with reference

One of the indicators is the establishment of hazard maps, which constitute the basis for the determination of the risk. It is necessary to determine the socio-economic value of potentially affected persons and property.

5. Partnerships

The partnership has to include all possible stakeholders: the authorities, private economy, the research field, insurance companies, politicians as well as the whole population.

6. Additional sources of information

All presentations and extra information are gathered under: www.planat.ch

7. Name, affiliation and contact of person filling in the form

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