KOBE REPORT draft
Report of Session 5.2, Thematic Cluster 5

Humanitarian Preparedness: Lessons Learned and Challenges

1. Summary of the session

This segment presented some of the lessons learned, best practices, systems and tools developed as well as challenges in emergency preparedness. Furthermore, the session proposed a few recommendations for future action by the various stakeholders on the community, national, regional and global levels.

The objective is to provide different angles to EPR, to share experiences, identify models as well as constraints, and eventually lead to some recommendations.

EPR is an area that in recent years, and particularly in relation to responses to the major humanitarian emergencies of the late Nineties, has seen significant efforts in particular by humanitarian actors in terms of revisiting and improving formats, approaches and mechanisms.

From a humanitarian stand point, activities in EPR range from early warning, to contingency planning, IM and Information preparedness, crisis management, and response activities.

It is a knowledge and competence technical area which is in constant development, as we are aware of the fact that response capacities are always limited, that systems are imperfect, that our ability to fully anticipate emergencies is likewise often constrained. This leads to a continuous effort to improve systems, services and structures at the agency and interagency level, as well as in relation to national governments, local communities, and donors.

Panel speakers include WFP, the IASC SWG (WFP-UNICEF), IFRC, NSET (National Society for Earthquake Technology), ACDM (ASEAN committee on Disaster Management), OCHA and ECHO, in representation of donors.

The **IASC** emphasized the added value in partnership and stressed the need to foster standards in emergency preparedness and response. There is abundance of information on early warning available. The challenge faced lies in how to utilize this information to ensure that (a) the information trickles down to the community level, and (b) that early warning is translated to early action on all levels.

WFP introduced HEWSweb (humanitarian early warning service), a new inter-agency early warning tool which was recently launched. HEWSweb is a new early warning website presenting the latest forecasts, warnings and alerts on potential drought, floods, tropical storms, locust infestation, El Nino, earthquakes and volcanic activity. Most of the warning information is real-time. The service brings together under one web platform the vast amount of warning information available from technical institutions on each type of natural hazard.

WFP also presented some of the preparedness and early warning tools developed by the organization (including the global natural hazards calendar, early warning executive brief on countries of concern, global risk ranking map).

WFP highlighted the following challenges:
▪ Accountability: from an organisational point of view, the starting point for reducing disaster risk is at home.

- Comprehensive Approach: consistent effort in a comprehensive institutional approach that encompasses a strategy and framework, policy, programming, financial investments, human resources.
- Action: Better understanding of translating preparedness into management action.

WFP identified the following recommendations for priority action:
- Building on what exists, strengthen overall capacity of the United Nations specialised agencies in emergency preparedness and response (Support current UN systems and tools, Lessons & Best practices, Development of frameworks, strategies, tools, dialogue & exchange, donor support: resources)
- Work on developing international standards for humanitarian emergency preparedness (i.e. sphere project).
- Develop systems for accountability in emergency preparedness (donors, agencies, etc)

The **Kenyan Red Cross** (KRC) emphasized the need to focus on communities when addressing preparedness and early warning. International response should augment and support this structure. KRC's work focuses on community-based programmes and the strengthening of the capacities of the poorest households, particularly women headed households.

One of the concerns expressed is how relief operations tend to break social networks supporting those affected by natural disasters.

Some of the KRC achievements in Kenya include:
- The building of gradual trust in weather forecasts and early warnings by the community.
- Building on national and local knowledge and national and local structures
- Realization that simple mitigation and other risk reduction measures at village level raises awareness and increases resilience
- Red Cross/Crescent disaster plan part of government plan. Risk reduction included in disaster plan and development.
- Disaster committees composed of government, non-government, national and international agencies with partners at all levels - national, provincial, district, municipal level
- Training of Disaster Management Teams at local level carried out.
- Traditional early warning systems established on village level.

Some of the challenges faced include:
- Level of Poverty
- Modern early warning system-appropriate technology: looking to ways to better disseminate early warning information from more technical bodies such as FEWS and WFP to communities.
- Inequity in distribution of resources
- Illiteracy
- Frequency and Magnitude of Disasters
- Extreme weather conditions
- Insecurity

The highlights of the KRC recommendations include:
- Governments and international organisations commit resources to Community Based Organisations(CBO) to enhance resilience through DPR at the community level
- Improve ability of Individuals and Communities to cope with hazards through promotion of the Community Based Disaster Management Committees
- To scale up community response by creating partnership with governments, local, National, International in advocating for changes in policy and practice at all levels

ASEAN: The recent tsunami disaster presented challenges and momentum to improve coordination beyond the committee in terms of accelerating the formulation of ASEAN regional framework and the implementation of ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management.

Components of the ASEAN state of preparedness being examined include: regular assessments, emergency response mechanism, emergency response planning, early warning system, coordination, information management, resource mobilization (given that

95% of disasters are localized and small scale, ASEAN's challenge is how to mobilize resources before disasters), Training and exercises, and regional and international linkages.

Challenges include:
- There are preparedness initiatives going on in the ASEAN region. There is an unprecedented momentum and there is a framework set forward by ASEAN. The challenge is to pull them together to improve the state of disaster preparedness at national and regional level in the ASEAN region.
- Resources are usually made available in large scale emergencies. Hoewver, the challenge is in making available funds and resources for smaller and localized disasters.

Recommendations:
1. Learning from the recent tsunami, facilitate exchange of preparedness good practices among regional outfits
2. Drawing on existing initiatives and capacities, to assign a working group to draft a PRIMER containing basic elements and processes involved in Emergency Response Preparedness
3. To device and promote interagency contingency planning as a framework for preparedness at various levels

OCHA: It is important to recognize the fact that the primary responsibility for natural disaster response rests with the country itself.   International response should be seen as complementary to the national response.

UN OCHA established a regional office in Kobe in 1999 to enhance contact and collaboration with governments, UN agencies on regional and country level and regional institutions involved in disaster management work.

OCHA, in cooperation with key stakeholders in disaster management initiated a process to define a better and more consistent way of to address the challenges of disaster reduction and response preparedness.

As a result of this cooperation the promotion of a Total Disaster Risk Management Approach was agreed upon. The TDRM approach applies to all parts of the disaster cycle as it focus on the link between the various phases from response, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction, mitigation prevention and preparedness. The TDRM approach has been promoted through a series of international and regional workshops co-organised by partners such as ADRC, ADPC, ASEAN Foundation, donors and UN agencies.

Recommendations:
1. The common challenge of creating more disaster resilient societies calls for multi-agency, multi-level and multi-sectoral cooperation in disaster preparedness. A prerequisite for this is the building of trust and collaboration in disaster preparedness between all stakeholders in disaster management on national, regional and international level. The UN has a responsibility to promote this, in close collaboration with national and regional stakeholders.
2. Preparedness plans must be developed and exercised to ensure smooth integration between national and international response. Regional and international accepted standards and guidelines in disaster response such as the INSARAG guidelines should be promoted and exercised on national and regional level.
3. UN support to governments should focus on all part of the disaster cycle and the window of opportunities that a disaster normally opens should be used to promote a stronger integrated disaster risk management approach to ensure we are not bringing local communities back into the same vulnerable position again and again. We must in this work recognize existing local capacity and build upon that.

ECHO
Emerging Tools:
- ECHO has started to finance development of GDAS through thematic funding decision with OCHA (€420.000) in March 2004.
- GDAS combines existing disaster information management systems under one umbrella.

- GDAS encompasses natural, technological and environmental disasters (so far an earthquake and a tropical storm alert tool have been created, see http://dma.jrc.it/Services/GDAS)
- Open to the public, automatic e-mail/SMS alerts around the clock. GDAS test site sent red alert 90 min after the 26/12 earthquake
- GDAS needs to be further expanded and supported by disaster-prone countries.

Emerging Policies:
- Humanitarian trends require strengthening preparedness and response capacity of humanitarian organizations:
- « Institutional « preparedness of mandated international organizations becomes fourth pillar of ECHO´s DR strategy, complementing DIPECHO´s bottom-up approach
- Examples of emerging policies:
    - HEWsweb as an example of new EW tool
    - Global Disaster Alert System (OCHA)
    - Stockpiling of essential drugs and preparedness plans for country officies (UNICEF)
    - Health Action in Crisis (WHO)
- ECHO attempts to integrate DR language into the new financial instruments discussed at Commission level

Conclusions:
- Early warning systems are increasingly available, but
    - the performance of those systems needs to be further enhanced
    - the link from early warning to early action needs to be improved
- Disaster preparedness has climbed up the political agenda, but
    - Preparedness is still too much an issue for the humanitarian community.
    - Development players´ commitment to disaster preparedness is only lukewarm (with notable exceptions in some regions)
- Stronger advocacy is necessary, both with disaster prone states and with development donors to mainstream preparedness into development cooperation

Recommendations for humanitarian donors include:
- More preparedness
- Better mainstreaming in relief programmes
- Reinforce adovocacy towards development donors
- Upgrade response capacity of mandated international organizations
- More consistency in early warning actions

Nepal Society for Earthquake Technology

Challenges:
- Program coverage – very small
    - Need to replicate to each municipality, each community and each individual level
    - Only thousands are covered – need to reach to millions
- Need regional cooperation
    - For better sharing of knowledge and experiences

Lessons Learned:
- Address preparedness at all levels (central government to individual level)
- Address preparedness at all sectors
- Preparedness is awareness in action
- Preparedness is translation of knowledge into action
- Preparedness Can be achieved !

2. Primary Issues Addressed by the Session:

➢ More can be achieved through partnership: Many organizations, bodies and governments work in the field of preparedness and early warning. Need to work on how

we can do this better through partnerships for cross-fertilization purposes, share experiences, lessons learned and best practices. Individual agencies and bodies can achieve their organizational goals better through partnership than on their own.

➢ The quality and level of preparedness various from country to country on both the governmental and non-governmental levels. This stresses the need to ensure that standards in emergency preparedness and response are fostered to ensure that communities have the same level of defence to natural hazards regardless of whether they are from a developed or developing country.

➢ Earl warning to early action?

➢ Need to prioritize and put the community at the forefront in preparedness and early warning. Need to create ownership of these tools on the community/ village levels. Furthermore, need to build on national and local knowledge and national and local structures. International involvement/ assistance should be to support and augment these structures, not replace them.

➢ Capitalize on the existence of regional structures and bodies to foster regional EPR.

➢ Need to clarify the different institutional actors and for a for follow-up (IASC, ISDR)

3. Suggested Targeted and indicators to measure accomplishments

➢ Testing the possibility of developing standards in emergency preparedness and response (EPR) on the local, regional and international levels.

➢ Clarification of roles and responsibilities for follow-up action (IASC, ISDR, individual agencies)

➢ Increase donors support to EPR activities

➢ Definition of models/prototypes of programme interventions/partnerships with communities and governments to foster EPR

➢ Review/reassessment of regional structures and capacities

4. Partnerships

Some initial examples:

➢ The **IASC** SWG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning is one example of good partnership on the UN/IASC level which needs to be fostered and encouraged further. HEWSweb as well as their quarterly early warning to early action report are highlights of some of their achievements in this area.

➢ **ASEAN** Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) comprises of national disaster management agencies of 10 ASEAN Member Countries and has been creating and maintaining the momentum to promote disaster management regional cooperation.

5. Name of Presenters:

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