



World Conference on Disaster Reduction
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KOBE REPORT (draft)

THEMATIC PANEL 1

“GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR RISK REDUCTION”

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1. Summary of the Panel

The panel presented the positions of a cross-section of stakeholders on governance and institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction.

The panel discussions were opened by the Chair, Her Excellency G. J. Mtshali of South Africa for whom governance was at the heart of risk reduction which was required if social and economic development was to be sustained. H.E. Mtshali described the advances made in South Africa.

The panel rapporteur, Mr. K. Westgate gave a brief outline of the discussion paper for the thematic cluster focusing on suggested targets for 2015.

Mr. Keiichi Tango of Japan stressed the importance of legal and regulatory frameworks for disaster reduction and the need for an integrated approach with strong political commitment.

Ms. Irmgard Schwaetzer of Germany focused the importance of national disaster reduction platforms, stating the importance in governance of the relationship between governments and civil society. Thus, a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach is needed.

Mr. Martin Owor of Uganda gave support to the importance of advocacy in disaster reduction at all levels because often disaster reduction has to compete with other national priorities

Mr. Kurshid Alam of Action Aid promoted people-centred governance as a critical component of successful disaster reduction, addressing as it does some of the basic issues underlying disaster vulnerability – inequality, discrimination and exploitation.

From the floor Mr. Robert Leigh of UNV raised the issue of volunteerism in supporting community resilience and stated that good governance promotes volunteerism. Mr. Loy Rego of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) felt that often national governments intervene too little too late and the ADPC had established a regional consultative committee which brings together the heads of national agencies. An intervention from the Philippines was concerned as to whether overpopulation contributed to disasters and the way they were responded to, while a representative from Tear Fund was critical of what appeared to be vision without actions that were accountable.

Mr. Owor raised the issue of sectoral institutions re-focusing their resources because of the cross-cutting nature of disaster reduction while a representative of the International risk Governance Council recommended that the conference outcomes document should reflect factors that contribute to good governance.

Ms. Schwaetzer suggested that the establishment of regional platforms would promote horizontal co-ordination while the representative of the Earthquake and Megacities Initiative stressed that mainstreaming really meant working at local level where, certainly in an urban context, the responsibility lies for the delivery of many services. Decentralisation was crucial for effective implementation.

2. Primary Issues

- Good governance is a prerequisite for effective disaster reduction.
- National and regional platforms for disaster reduction can assist the effectiveness of disaster reduction processes by allowing for strong interaction between governments and civil society.
- People-centred governance placed the emphasis on the vulnerable and promotes accountability and participation.
- Legal and regulatory frameworks are an important component of disaster reduction programmes.
- Advocacy for disaster reduction is necessary to ensure that it remains high on government agendas.

3. Lessons Learned, Good Practice, Institutionalised Experience

Some of the lessons learned from the panel discussions related to the importance of ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders, all sectors and disciplines and all levels. Among the good practice raised was the establishment of national platforms that were accepted by government (with strong government commitment), that had strong leadership and that were effectively resourced. Institutionalised experience from countries such as Japan, South Africa and Uganda stressed the importance of advocacy and of working at the local level, while focusing on the vulnerable, where governance was people-centred would assist the achievement of risk reduction goals.

4. Suggested Indicators to Measure Accomplishments

The thematic paper for the governance cluster identified a number of suggested targets for the year 2015:

Political Commitment and Elevating Disaster Risk Reduction As a Policy Priority

- All new and revised global agreements consider disaster and risk issues and make appropriate recommendations.
- Every country has planned national follow-up to the WSSD Plan of Implementation and every least developed country (LDC) has included disaster risk reduction in its National Adaptation Plan of Action on climate change.
- Every country and regional entity has adopted a policy and strategic plan for disaster risk management and has integrated disaster risk reduction explicitly into its other mainstream sectoral policies and programmes.

Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

- Every country has updated its disaster risk management legislation.
- Relevant codes and standards are updated and published accompanied by effective systems to ensure compliance.
- The citizen's fundamental right to the highest possible standard of security and protection against hazards is incorporated into legal or constitutional frameworks.

Institutional Frameworks and Structures

- Every country has reviewed and updated its institutional framework for disaster risk reduction to incorporate all relevant stakeholders at all levels, with roles, responsibilities and resources clearly identified and allocated.
- Formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of official institutional arrangements are in place with transparent procedures and findings that are made public on a regular basis.

Multi-stakeholder Participation

- The rights of all groups in society to participate in disaster risk reduction decision-making, policy setting, planning and implementation are explicitly recognized in policy, legal and institutional provisions, and the ways and means of such participation are defined.
- The right to information about hazards and risks and the effectiveness of measures taken to address them is set out in policy and law, and systems are in place to facilitate public access.
- Every country has an independent, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral national platform for disaster risk reduction that is recognized and supported by government.

Capacities for Disaster Risk reduction

- All formal planning processes of governments and other actors are amended to include hazard-vulnerability-risk analyses as mandatory components in appraisal and approval.
- All significant disaster risk reduction initiatives are thoroughly and independently evaluated, and the findings made public.
- Capacities in disaster reduction are assessed and reported upon by all stakeholder groups as a matter of course in project, programme and national-level reporting and evaluation procedures.
- Achievements in disaster reduction are reported in national MDG reports.

Financial Resources for Disaster Risk Reduction

- All actors identify resources they provide for disaster risk reduction in their institutional and programme budgets in both development and humanitarian sectors, and report regularly on their use.
- All donor assistance and lending programmes, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), include a full analysis of disaster risks and make specific provisions for their mitigation.

5. Existing Indicators

- Multi-layer disaster risk management institutions, including policy frameworks, legal and regulatory frameworks, plans, structures and mechanisms in place in countries.
- National and regional platforms established that are multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multi-level.
- Disaster risks are reduced over time together with the vulnerability of populations.

6. Partnerships

Indicative partnerships include those between governments and civil society, those between sectors and stakeholders, those between vulnerable communities and local government and those between donors and national governments in relation to capacity and resources.

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