Thematic Discussion Paper Cluster 5

"PREPAREDNESS FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE"

Discussion papers have been prepared for the five thematic clusters of the WCDR. The papers have been developed by the Lead Agencies for each cluster with the support of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF) and the ISDR secretariat.

The objective of these papers is to orient and guide the discussions in the five clusters toward the goals of the Conference. The papers provide a vehicle for coordinating the interests of the key stakeholders and will form the basis for the subsequent summarising of the thematic clusters.

Session organizers and participants in the thematic discussion are invited to draw on the papers to ensure the output of the sessions and panels at Hyogo-Kobe provide the technical assessment and guidance to complement and support the priorities identified at the intergovernmental level and to advance the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

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1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with situating the need for improved preparedness within the overall disaster risk management agenda. It takes stock of critical issues relevant to the organization and maintenance of effective preparedness systems. It takes account of recent trends and experiences in different disaster settings. It draws on a cross-section of good practices and crucial processes including integrated planning and community-level engagement. It identifies gaps and weaknesses that need to be addressed particularly in terms of strengthening national and regional-level preparedness capabilities and related funding issues. The paper's final section cites conclusions that can encourage future action and identifies potential targets to help measure trends in the coming decade.

Concerted action on the reduction of risk, including strong preparedness systems, is widely acknowledged as being critical to protecting lives and livelihoods, and minimizing the need for disaster relief. An effective preparedness system – *pre-disaster activities, including an overall strategy, policies, and institutional and management structures, that are geared to helping at-risk communities safeguard their lives and assets by being alert to hazards and taking appropriate action in the face of an imminent threat or the actual onset of a disaster* – is one of the fundamental principles of disaster risk management that was echoed in the Yokohama Strategy.

Trends over recent decades show that the lives and livelihoods of rapidly growing numbers of people are at risk for a combination of reasons.

- A high proportion of people, estimated to be 75% of the world's population, live in hazard-affected areas. Many reside in rapidly expanding and unplanned urban concentrations in known seismic locations and coastal areas.
- Increasing levels of vulnerability to hazards, particularly in low-income and under-developed regions where poverty, inappropriate or failed development processes, the increasing prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS, and the absence of political will or accountable governance, push millions into survival practices that further compounds their exposure to risk and exacerbates pressure on the environment.
- The incidence and severity of disasters are on the rise. Some, such as drought, floods, tropical storms and the occurrence of other hydrometeorological hazards are associated with climatic conditions, which are widely observed to be changing. Other disasters rooted in human behaviour such as industrial and technological accidents, and insufficiently considered development models further erode the earth's ecological balance.
- There is inadequate support for holistic and systemic approaches to disaster and risk management processes as well as a generalized failure to take account of their global and local character of disaster agents and the interactive nature of the relationships.
- There has been relatively limited investment in helping communities confronted by the threat of natural hazards and other risk factors to strengthen their resilience to disasters including, in particular, preparedness systems that build on local knowledge and coping mechanisms.
- Many disaster-prone countries are unable to capitalize adequately on technological advances and an impressive reservoir of knowledge and experience that could, if applied appropriately, greatly improve preparedness systems. This is often linked to insufficient

funds, or the misuse of resources, particularly in relation to public awareness, education programmes and response preparedness mechanisms.

- The lack of adequate national and international support has also hindered the consolidation and further development of national and regional preparedness capabilities that should be available to assist in the event of a disaster.

There is broad consensus on the importance of preparedness as an integrated and crucial element of disaster risk management frameworks. There are a number of individual examples of well-established and highly regarded national programmes dedicated to the comprehensive responsibilities of civil protection or disaster management responsibilities. However, it is equally clear historically, that the need for effective preparedness systems has only received intermittent attention in many other countries and from international institutions or through concerted organizational concerns. More recently, and in the light of lessons from several disasters, the value of preparedness is being re-emphasized. This has contributed to a growing body of evidence – based on life and death experiences – that demonstrates the value of investing in integrated and effective preparedness systems and capabilities at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Well-substantiated findings from settings as diverse as Bangladesh, Cuba, Ethiopia and Mozambique demonstrate that disaster losses can be significantly reduced in effective preparedness systems, including strong early warning and related mechanisms, are in place. Similarly, experience shows that regional entities can play a key role in fostering information and knowledge exchange that, in several instances, has been instrumental in enhancing preparedness systems. Noteworthy initiatives in this respect include the work of organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Comité Permanent Inter Etats de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS), and the Southern African Development Community in Africa (SADC); the Association of South East Asian Nations in Asia (ASEAN); the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission the Pacific (SOPAC); the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de Desastres Naturales en América Central (CEPREDENAC) in Latin America; and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) in the Caribbean.

However, notwithstanding some worthwhile gains in the field of disaster preparedness in the last decade, the international community has much to accomplish to reach a satisfactory level of preparedness and disaster risk management. The lack of preparedness is an acute problem in many settings, and particularly in large municipalities, where millions of people are at risk. The lack of common and appropriate standards, for example, is a significant weakness. Approaches to disaster risk management, including disaster preparedness, vary considerably. However, minimum requirements should be met regardless of the context.

It is also apparent that the level of commitment to, and resources available for, preparedness is inadequate at the national and international level. Indeed, the paucity of financial data on preparedness activities is an indicator of the low level of attention generally accorded to this critical issue. Paradoxically, it is still much easier to mobilize support for post-disaster relief efforts than for preparedness and mitigation activities that would avoid or minimize the loss of life and the destruction of vital assets and infrastructure that is often critical for a country's economy. In other

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words, the rhetoric on preparedness is not matched by a commensurate commitment at the local or global level.

The recent 2004 hurricane, typhoon, cyclone and monsoon seasons were the latest reminder that the loss of life and reversal of development gains is largely the outcome of the way in which different societies are structured and organized and the level of commitment and resources devoted to disaster preparedness. Other factors that strengthen or weaken a community's resilience to disasters include the level of awareness of the role played by natural hazards and other threats to the well-being and survival of populations at-risk.

Much has been achieved in recent decades in mobilizing attention to the changing nature of risk and the measures needed to address underlying factors. However, it is equally clear that, for the most part, disasters continue to be perceived as aberrant phenomena and are often treated as peripheral issues that generate headlines only in the wake of calamitous events. Disasters rarely result in a detailed examination of vulnerability, the risk factors involved, and the extent to which preparedness mechanisms proved useful. This has profound implications for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

In general, disasters do not result in changes in the level of external funding available for the type of development and preparedness processes that would mitigate the effects of hazards or strengthen resilience to disasters. There is inadequate appreciation of, and attention to, the interactive and dynamic nature of the relationship between the causes and impacts of disasters and resultant processes that often produce heightened vulnerability and exposure to other risk factors including social turmoil and political violence

The pursuit of an anecdotal or piecemeal approach rather than confronting, in a determined and synergistic manner, the systemic changes that need to be addressed will, invariably, continue to spell disaster for millions in the coming decade. It is critically important that preparedness activities are designed and developed within the context of a strategic disaster risk management framework that promotes synergies with mitigation, prevention and recovery activities. It is equally important that commitment matches rhetoric and that the global community takes collective responsibility for disaster risk management, including preparedness, and is able to mobilize its constituencies to meet the challenges ahead.

2. Findings of the Yokohama Review

The review of the *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World* highlights a number of critical issues that need to be addressed to minimize the loss of life and economic assets when disasters occur. These are considered below, and in some cases are illustrated by examples in which efforts are being pursued to augment people's preparedness and in so doing to reduce their exposure to risk.

A well-functioning national disaster management capability, that incorporates all relevant government and civil society actors, is fundamental to an effective preparedness system. It needs to be backed by appropriate legislation. It needs to have clearly defined institutional arrangements, decision-makers, and networks so that all requisite resources and skills are readily available and easily mobilized at the time of imminent crisis. The experience of Cuba is illustrative. It shows that a combination of strong political will, preparedness measures that are sustainable on a low-cost budget, a high level of public awareness, and a clearly defined and supported disaster management system, is instrumental to effectively addressing hazardous events and avoiding actual disasters.

Experiences from different countries demonstrate that it is of critical importance to re-orient disaster management structures to include, build on, and benefit from community-based preparedness mechanisms. It is equally important to acknowledge the positive roles that women often play in mobilizing their households and wider community to prepare for, and work against, disasters. The example of the Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai is well known and illustrates the important role that women often play in motivating others to strengthen their resilience to disasters.

Community-based structures are most effective when the relationship between different actors is based on trust and transparent interactions. In many settings, communities are the bedrock of strong monitoring, warning and evacuation systems. Robust awareness-raising programmes, coupled with community participation in risk identification, are instrumental to rapid and cost-effective response initiatives. The engagement of the wider public in hazard mapping and related activities helps promote a culture of preparedness and prevention. One of the key lessons of the past ten years is that the value of bottom-up community-based preparedness mechanisms needs to be more widely acknowledged and supported in a manner that takes account of local realities and perceptions of risk. In Mozambique, dedicated support has been provided to community and district level officials who have been identified as the key players in preparedness and mitigation work. The Department of Natural Disaster Relief Coordination has undertaken risk analysis and formulated profiles of all ten provinces as part of Mozambique's overall preparedness programme.

The Yokohama review concluded that a critical challenge is better management of information on preparedness including more integrated and coherent support to information facilities and services. Numerous centers and programme initiatives have developed innovative and easily accessible capabilities for global early warning information on natural hazards by consolidating vast amounts of information from multiple specialized sources. With such volumes of information available, it is equally important to address the challenge of building or improving systems that compile and synthesize risk data so that the end products are more user-friendly and accessible to decision-makers and practitioners, in various sectors, at the central as well as at community levels of involvement.

One recent initiative by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), operating under the auspices of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), is the Humanitarian Early Warning Web Service or *HEWSweb*. It is designed to address the need for improved preparedness action. This web service displays the latest forecasts, alerts and reports on droughts, floods, tropical storms, locust infestations, El Nino, earthquakes and volcanic activity with dedicated pages for each of these natural hazards. Similarly, but built around a specific global concern with particularly strong

regional interests, the International Research Centre for the El Niño Phenomenon (CIIFEN) gathers and disseminates data, information and modeling projections to enhance preparedness and contingency planning across a number of relevant sectors.

More strategic and better-coordinated mechanisms at different levels of the international system are critical factors in strengthening preparedness for effective response. Such mechanisms are vital for the development of stronger partnerships between different sets of actors and to facilitate exchange of information and cross-fertilization of skills and knowledge. Recent years have witnessed a surge of individual and collective initiatives by various UN departments, specialized and operational agencies as well as other entities to strengthen risk management institutions so they are better prepared and able to respond to disasters. This has often been undertaken with essential support provided by bilateral agencies and other partners.

Examples of coordinated initiatives within the United Nations include an IASC group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning that is led by UNICEF and WFP. It is concerned with the development of common inter-agency standards and the coordinated provision of technical assistance to disaster-prone countries on preparedness issues including contingency planning. One recent development has been the introduction of an Early Warning – Early Action report that represents a concerted effort to systematize early warning and emergency preparedness analysis and is presented quarterly to the relevant IASC constituencies.

The core purpose of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system is to facilitate effective coordination between a disaster site, the affected country's capital, and international-level initiatives that come into play in the wake of a calamity. As part of its preparedness programme, UNDAC provides training geared to the deployment of experienced disaster personnel on international response missions. It also nurtures greater complementarities between national and international response capabilities by jointly reviewing national preparedness systems to determine ways in which synergy between national and international level responders can be maximized in the face of a disaster.

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group's (INSARAG) preparedness activities, including regional training courses, are focused on building more effective contacts between earthquake-affected countries and international responders. This collaboration has evolved in order to avoid ambiguous requests for assistance and to promote more effective use of deployed assets. INSARAG has developed various methodological tools and standards for international urban search and rescue assistance that contributed to the adoption in 2002 of UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance.

Important strides have been made by various regional entities to facilitate partnerships, exchange experiences, and to mainstream risk reduction, including preparedness, into development programmes. CDERA, for example, has focused on strengthening the response capabilities of its state members. The reduction of vulnerability at the community level is a key element of the Comprehensive Hazard and Risk Management (CHARM) programme of SOPAC's Community Risk Programme for Pacific island states.

Similar examples of developing wider perceptions and expanding professional relationships about preparedness are also evident in some countries. The Russian Ministry of Civil Defense, Emergencies and Natural Disasters (EMERCOM) and Emergency Management Australia (EMA) have taken important initiatives to advance their respective preparedness programmes. South Africa's comprehensive national disaster management law enacted in 2003 and the subsequent implementation programme are explicit and far-reaching in their assignment of new risk identification and preparedness responsibilities to local authorities.

One of the strong messages emerging from the Yokohama review is the crucial importance of joint and collaborative preparedness planning that is informed by a risk reduction perspective and brings together humanitarian emergency managers and their development counterparts. Such joint planning is more the exception than the norm and is highly dependent on the vision, skills and political commitment of those in positions of authority.

From a preparedness perspective, such joint action is essential for "forward" and "backward" linkages among the various functional roles and responsibilities in disaster and risk management. It is important that disaster preparedness initiatives are focused not only on measures needed to respond in the immediate aftermath of a catastrophic event but are equally attuned to the type of analysis and interventions needed for sustainable rehabilitation and recovery programmes. It is critical that there be a common analysis of risk and that this informs the development of an overall policy framework for dealing with the potential for and actual occurrence of disasters.

It is equally important that lessons identified in the wake of a disaster and response efforts are incorporated into preparedness and mitigation programmes to effectively reduce future risks. An agreed policy framework should provide guidance and benchmarks to measure the impact of preparedness and other disaster-related interventions including those of government and non-government agencies, civil society groups and private enterprise. It is of particular importance that the actions and contingency plans of those responsible for communications and other essential infrastructure and utilities are constantly reviewed.

Recent experience in southern Africa point to the further importance of humanitarian and development agencies joining forces to address a combination of fundamental, but also overlapping issues. By way of example, existing physical and socio-economic vulnerability, environmental degradation, and food security are all compounded further by the widespread consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and by the increased exposure to the threats posed by natural hazards.

Growing awareness of the strategic importance of well-functioning preparedness systems has not, regrettably, been matched by a concurrent commitment to strengthen investment - from local, national or donor resources – in such capabilities and processes. The absence of adequate financial and technical support represents a major obstacle to better preparedness systems. In considering the number of lives lost, from a humanitarian perspective alone, it is unethical to await a disaster before providing help, given the well-substantiated case that preparedness is one of the most significant factors in saving lives and reducing losses. From an economic and development perspective, it is a cruel irony that significant amounts of funds only become available when a disaster results in widespread damage even though a much lower level of funding, wisely invested, would have helped minimize losses.

3. Guidance for future action and implementation

This section presents information on means to support the implementation of the priorities considered for action related to each of the primary sections of Thematic Cluster 5 emanating from the document, *Framework of Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters"*. It highlights matters that pertain to joint planning, critical issues and investment for effective preparedness.

3.1 Joint Preparedness Planning

Preparedness that is part of a larger disaster risk management framework has been the declared and accepted doctrine for some time. However, it is all too apparent that many preparedness plans are not adequately informed by a risk reduction perspective and are developed in isolation from initiatives and processes geared to addressing underlying risk factors. Frequently, as preparedness planning does not routinely address matters of environmental degradation, many disasters result in adverse consequences that were not anticipated – but which could have been. This is particularly significant in the context of hydrometeorological hazards and climate-related risks.

It is also apparent that preparedness planning is only of value if there are the means and the mechanisms to transform them into programmes and activities that reflect, and respond to, the particularities and cultural realities of disaster prone countries and communities. This necessitates a sound understanding of the dynamics that come into play when a threat materializes with disastrous consequences. In other words, the knock-on effects of disasters need to be anticipated and addressed in preparedness plans.

The key to effective preparedness at the national level is the pursuit of a holistic approach that incorporates all relevant entities, disciplines, sectors and constituencies. It should include a clearly defined risk reduction strategy that is focused on eradicating vulnerability and exposure to hazards that have been appropriately identified. Preparedness systems should be highly influenced by, and influential in the design of, the many measures needed to ensure a rapid and effective disaster-response capability.

A good preparedness system will include clear decision-making authority with appropriate political support. Public education and grassroots sensitivity to hazards and their potential consequences should be prioritised. It is equally important to ensure sound risk analysis, monitoring, early warning, and evacuation procedures. Other key elements include a well-established coordination mechanism and operations centre and the availability of appropriate skills including expertise in damage assessment and data management. Preparedness systems should also include procedures for the evaluation of the response to disasters and subsequent recovery activities, all of which should be informed by a risk reduction ethos.

It is critically important that preparedness planning is undertaken as a joint and collaborative endeavour between those engaged in emergency response activities and those involved in longer-term disaster risk reduction and development processes. It has long been recognized that development models should provide the scaffolding for disaster prevention and preparedness

activities and that risk analysis be used as one of the criteria to test the sustainability of socio-economic development processes.

However, it is not often that relief and development actors work together to promote development processes that reduce risk and to design preparedness and response activities that contribute to the reduction of vulnerability including exposure to hazards. Advances in this regard require that this pattern be altered and more policy incentives be invoked so that there may be a wider appreciation of shared concerns and common interests in the future.

Preparedness planning also must take account of globalizing trends in relation to risk. Planners and decision-makers must be sensitive to the way in which the global economy affects livelihoods and migration patterns and the implications of this for disaster-prone environments and the people who live there. Planners need to be equally sensitive to the nature, pace and implications of climate change and the way in which this is reconfiguring risk patterns and trends, locally and globally. From this perspective, there is an urgent need to identify parameters of national and regional capabilities and how these relate to preparedness action at the global level.

Additionally, but of no less significance, it is incumbent on preparedness planners to take account of the special conditions that exist in armed conflict situations where the reach of the government or *de facto* authorities is limited. As in other settings, it is important that planners take account of the multi-dimensional nature of risks, community-level coping mechanisms, and the combination of factors that perpetuate or exacerbate vulnerability and the dynamics that feed particular crises. Efforts to facilitate and promote preparedness measures in such settings pose particular challenges and point to the importance of a holistic approach to disaster risk factors as well as improved regional preparedness mechanisms.

There is growing recognition, within international community circles, of the need to strengthen UN and other institutional arrangements concerned with disaster risk management. It is within this context that ISDR, OCHA and UNDP have recently commissioned a study to assess the relevance and effectiveness of UN support to disaster risk management. The ultimate aim of the study is to facilitate the identification of measures that can strengthen the ability of the UN to operate as a *system.* It is anticipated that the study's findings will assist in the formulation of a common strategic vision, agenda, and related institutional framework so that the UN is better situated to support preparedness and other action at the national, regional and global level to address current and evolving disaster risk factors.

3.2 Critical Issues in Effective Preparedness

There have been a number of advances in recent years in disaster risk management that can, in part, be attributed to more systematic approaches to preparedness, especially at the level of communities. Enhanced preparedness at national and international levels also represents laudable and worthy achievements. However, these gains must be understood within the context of an ever-growing number of people exposed to hazards, and the evolving nature of risks. These issues pose new and unavoidable challenges in the years ahead.

All countries and regions merit tailored preparedness systems that build on prior experience while simultaneously keeping an eye on the future and the potential of new and unanticipated threats. There needs to be a better understanding of the multi-faceted nature of preparedness systems and

how this relates to humanitarian and development agendas. There is an equally important need for common standards, as well as indicators and guidelines on a range of preparedness-specific issues.

Some of the most pivotal issues confronting decision-makers concerned with disaster risk management include the task of translating the concept of shared responsibilities into concrete partnerships and programmes. It is essential that preparedness activities are integral to risk reduction and disaster management processes at all levels of the international system. This entails a clearer understanding of the linkages and synergies that are necessary among the various actors, and related interventions, at the global, regional and national levels. It will also require a sound and recurrent analysis of the many internal and external factors that contribute to vulnerability so that preparedness measures contribute to the resilience of high-risk communities.

Progress also needs to be made in the clarification and implementation of existing international laws, rules and principles to improve and facilitate the provision and receipt of international assistance including search and rescue teams. It is equally important to improve the coordination, quality, and accountability of international relief efforts. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is leading global efforts to identify the core principles applicable to international disaster response operations through its International Disaster Response Laws programme and related guidelines for their effective implementation. Agreement on core principles should facilitate the development of more streamlined arrangements and protocols that will facilitate more speedy and appropriate support in the immediate aftermath of disasters. A significant element of this initiative is the necessity of all countries taking steps to ensure appropriate legislative and disaster management arrangements to address the special circumstances that arise, including multiple offers of external support, when a disaster unfolds.

Other priority issues that need to be addressed include the level and type of support provided by the UN and other international-level actors to national and regional authorities to improve their knowledge and skills in relation to such core tasks as contingency planning so that it is routinely and appropriately updated. An important and related concern in this regard is the need for national, regional and international level institutions to define and develop common standards, including effectiveness and accountability criteria, that will facilitate the development of stronger and more reliable capabilities, foster networks, and promote a shared vision of preparedness.

Scientific and technological advances, including in the information management and dissemination field, have played a significant role in improving preparedness capabilities. In other professional areas of interest, too, there should be similar, and even expanded, use of information management and communications technology to facilitate specific preparedness tasks. Experience has demonstrated how crucial advanced technologies can be in such areas as risk assessment, early warning and information dissemination.

Given the danger of information overload, and its potential for delayed decision-making, it is equally crucial that that there is continued investment in more systematic data and information exchange. This entails the more effective use of existing resources and websites on preparedness and risk reduction, in order to minimize duplication and to foster stronger partnerships and exchange of experiences. In this connection, it is also important that there is expanded dialogue and more partnerships established between the private and public sectors, as well as with academic and research institutes.

3.3 Investment in Preparedness

It is widely acknowledged that investing in preparedness is beneficial on several counts. It saves lives and it reduces other potential disaster impacts. These, in turn, reduce the costs of development and post-disaster recovery expenditures. However, the lack of adequate external assistance and other types of support for preparedness are major constraints that remain to be addressed on an urgent basis. Some of the pertinent issues in this connection include the need to address the relatively low level of awareness of the importance of preparedness outside relief and risk reduction circles. In addition, risk reduction, including preparedness, is still perceived as merely "another", or supplemental issue, rather than being fully mainstreamed into disaster risk management and related development processes.

A key challenge in the future includes integrating preparedness activities into an agreed disaster risk management agenda and acknowledging that failure to do so will jeopardize the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This, in turn, will necessitate agreed institutional arrangements and proactive collaboration between relief and development actors – within the international assistance and practitioner communities – to achieve consensus on preparedness priorities and the mobilization of respective resources. In this regard, and to ensure sustained commitments, it is important to develop mechanisms that facilitate greater accountability, including transparent abilities to track the allocation of resources and to measure the impact of different preparedness activities.

4. Conclusions

4.1 National and Regional Authorities

It is widely acknowledged that risk is on the increase while, simultaneously, the nature of risk is changing. It is also well known that marginalized and low-income communities are growing in number and are the most vulnerable to threats. At the same time it is apparent that improved knowledge, expertise, and technologies can strengthen preparedness and significantly reduce human and other losses associated with disasters.

However, too often, evident problems remain with the lack of political commitment, a lack of national priority or evidence of only limited public understanding and support. Other persistent challenges are seen among the many competing concerns of decision makers, or planners for whom preparedness and risk reduction are not a priority. The lack of adequate human, material, technical and financial resources remain another drawback. Unquestionably, there are urgent needs to overcome these political, financial, and other obstacles that inhibit the development of preparedness systems that effectively address the needs and characteristics of societies and communities in hazard-affected and disaster-prone areas.

The absence of effective preparedness programmes that address local, municipal, national and regional realities in disaster risk management systems, essentially means a failure of political vision and commitment that significantly impedes the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, a critical priority for the near future is to dismantle the artificial distinction and barriers that exist between relief and development actors. This needs to be done in the common interest of strengthening preparedness mechanisms, within disaster and risk management capabilities, so that the multifaceted and changing nature of risk is addressed. The extent to which preparedness

systems are mainstreamed into different sectors, key services and socio-economic processes will constitute a key indicator of success.

In terms of targeted actions and indicators, it is encouraged that, as may be considered appropriate, national and regional authorities can proceed to:

- Undertake a review of existing national legislative and policy frameworks pertaining to preparedness responsibilities and capabilities, by the end of 2006.
- Develop, or modify as appropriate, legislative and policy frameworks to help ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to preparedness as part of a broader disaster risk management strategy, by the end of 2007.
- Conduct a review of existing regional preparedness mechanisms, including their legislative, policy and operational frameworks, with a view to identifying best practices and potential common standards for wider dissemination and mainstreaming, by the end of 2006.
- Generate a programme of periodic reviews to assess progress and constraints in the realization of clearly established targets and relevance of stated objectives, by the end of 2008.

4.2 International Community

Critical targets for the international community, including multilateral and bilateral institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector committed to disaster risk management, include the development of stronger, more cohesive, flexible, and innovative networks and mechanisms. These need to foster productive partnerships geared to strengthening and expanding preparedness capabilities and systems.

In terms of future action by the international community it is encouraged that relevant institutions may pursue efforts to:

- Support and sustain commitments to the development of enhanced legislation and policy frameworks for preparedness capabilities and related activities by national and regional authorities in the context of expanded disaster risk management agendas;
- Enhance international coordination and collaboration between humanitarian and development organizations, at all levels of the international system, in the area of preparedness, with due consideration to existing mechanisms such as the IASC and the ISDR;
- Advocate for more systematic and stronger investment in preparedness and related disaster risk management activities, including improved transparency and accountability in the allocation and use of resources, as a critical element in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- Establish rigorous, commonly expected and inclusive post-disaster review audits, conducted in collaboration with all concerned authorities to identify lessons and areas which need to be strengthened, and to facilitate continued enhancement of preparedness systems;
- Continue to enhance UN system disaster preparedness capabilities including support to regional and national level entities; and

- Support innovative information sharing and related management capabilities while simultaneously strengthening the effectiveness of specialized preparedness entities such as the IASC Sub-Working Group on Contingency Planning and Preparedness.

Acknowledgement