



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

HFA



Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 - 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters

Every year, more than 200 million people are affected by droughts, floods, cyclones, earthquakes, wildfires, and other hazards. Increased population densities, environmental degradation, and global warming adding to poverty make the impacts of natural hazards worse.

The past few years have reminded us that natural hazards can affect anyone, anywhere. From the Indian Ocean tsunami to the South Asia earthquake, from the devastation caused by hurricanes and cyclones in the United States, the Caribbean and the Pacific, to heavy flooding across Europe and Asia, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives, and millions their livelihoods, to disasters caused by natural hazards.

While many know the human misery and crippling economic losses resulting from disasters, what few realize is that this devastation can be prevented through disaster risk reduction initiatives.

Governments around the world have committed to take action to reduce disaster risk, and have adopted a guideline to reduce vulnerabilities to natural hazards, called the Hyogo Framework for Action (Hyogo Framework). The Hyogo Framework assists the efforts of nations and communities to become more resilient to, and cope better with the hazards that threaten their development gains.

Collaboration is at the heart of the Hyogo Framework: disasters can affect everyone, and are therefore everybody's business. Disaster risk reduction should be part of every-day decision-making: from how people educate their children to how they plan their cities. Each decision can make us either more vulnerable, or more resilient.

"Time is running out. We have less than 8 years left to achieve the goals set in the Hyogo Framework for Action. While some progress has been made, the cruel reality is that – helped by short sighted policies and practices – the vulnerability of our societies continues to grow. I urge all Governments, and regional and local authorities, to make disaster risk reduction a real priority and to accelerate practical steps to make communities safer from disasters. This will mean the investment of human and financial resources – safety comes at a price. But what better investment could there be for our future? The cost of not protecting our communities will be much more terrible."

*John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for
Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief
Coordinator*



United Nations

www.unisdr.org/hfa

What is the Hyogo Framework for Action?

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) is the key instrument for implementing disaster risk reduction, adopted by the Member States of the United Nations. Its overarching goal is to build resilience of nations and communities to disasters, by achieving substantive reduction of disaster losses by 2015 - in lives, and in the social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and countries. The HFA offers five areas of priorities for action, guiding principles and practical means for achieving disaster resilience for vulnerable communities in the context of sustainable development.

Since the adoption of the HFA, many global, regional, national and local efforts have addressed disaster risk reduction more systematically, much however, remains to be done. The United Nations General Assembly has called for the implementation of HFA, reconfirmed the multi-stakeholder ISDR System and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction* to support and promote it. The General Assembly has encouraged Member States to establish multi-sectoral national platforms to coordinate disaster risk reduction in countries. Many regional bodies have formulated strategies at regional scale for disaster risk reduction in line with the HFA, in the Andean region, Central America, the Caribbean, Asia, Pacific, Africa and Europe. More than 100 Governments have designated official focal points for the follow-up and the implementation of the HFA (March 2007). Some have taken actions to mobilize political commitment and establish centres to promote regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction.



"Climate change is expected to cause more severe and more frequent natural hazards. As our cities and coasts grow more vulnerable, these hazards can lead to disasters that are far worse than those we have seen to date. We have a moral, social and economic obligation to build resilience by 2015. Implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action will also help us reach the Millennium Development Goals."

*Ban Ki-moon,
Secretary-General of the
United Nations*

Priorities for Action

1 Make Disaster Risk Reduction a Priority

Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Strong national and local commitment is required to save lives and livelihoods threatened by natural hazards. Natural hazards must be taken into account in public and private sector decision-making in the same way that environmental and social impact assessments are currently required. Countries must therefore develop or modify policies, laws, and organizational arrangements, as well as plans, programmes, and projects, to integrate disaster risk reduction. They must also allocate sufficient resources to support and maintain them. This includes:

- Creating effective, multi-sector national platforms to provide policy guidance and to coordinate activities;
- Integrating disaster risk reduction into development policies and planning, such as Poverty Reduction Strategies; and,
- Ensuring community participation, so that local needs are met.



Photo: IFRC

Collaboration is Key

Madagascar's National Platform for Disaster Reduction includes: Government departments, such as Education, Water, Transport and Communication, Agriculture and Livestock, Land, and the Office of the Prime Minister; NGOs; the media; the donor community; and the UN. It carries out disaster reduction training, and has enhanced disaster preparedness by constructing cyclone refuges. It is also finalizing Madagascar's Early Warning System and updating the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) to link disaster risk reduction with poverty reduction.

"Everyone has a responsibility for disaster risk reduction. Strong partnerships between government agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations are essential to truly develop a culture of risk reduction, and to integrate disaster risk reduction into policies and planning."

Mr. Jacky R. Randimbarison, National Platform Coordinator

*The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is replacing the Inter-Agency Task Force with its same mandate and open-ended participation by Member States
www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform

Priorities for Action

are outlined in the Hyogo Framework for Action to guide states, organizations, and other actors at all levels in designing their approach to disaster risk reduction:

2 Know the Risks and Take Action

Identify, assess, and monitor disaster risks - and enhance early warning.

To reduce their vulnerability to natural hazards, countries and communities must know the risks that they face, and take actions based on that knowledge. Understanding risk requires investment in scientific, technical, and institutional capabilities to observe, record, research, analyse, forecast, model and map natural hazards. Tools need to be developed and disseminated: statistical information about disaster events, risk maps, disaster vulnerability and risk indicators are essential.

Most importantly, countries need to use this knowledge to develop effective early warning systems, appropriately adapted to the unique circumstances of the people at risk. Early warning is widely accepted as a crucial component of disaster risk reduction. When effective early warning systems provide information about a hazard to a vulnerable population, and plans are in place to take action, thousands of lives can be saved.



Photo: La Habana, Cuba

Early Warning Saves Lives

Advance warnings mean the difference between life and death. Cuba is one of the best-prepared countries in the Caribbean for the hurricane season.

72 hours before a storm makes landfall, the national media issues alerts, and civil protection committees check evacuation plans. 48 hours before expected landfall, authorities target warnings for high-risk areas. Twelve hours before landfall, homes are secured, neighbourhoods are cleared of loose debris, and people are evacuated.

This early warning system has proven its effectiveness. During 2004, when Hurricane Charley hit, 70,000 houses were severely damaged and four people were killed. When Hurricane Ivan struck the following month, over 2 million people were evacuated. No one was killed.

3 Build Understanding and Awareness

Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.

Disasters can be reduced substantially if people are well informed about measures they can take to reduce vulnerability - and if they are motivated to act. Key activities to increase awareness of disaster prevention include:

- Providing relevant information on disaster risks and means of protection, especially for citizens in high-risk areas;
- Strengthening networks and promoting dialogue and cooperation among disaster experts, technical and scientific specialists, planners and other stakeholders;
- Including disaster risk reduction subject matter in formal, non-formal, and informal education and training activities;
- Developing or strengthening community-based disaster risk management programmes; and,
- Working with the media in disaster risk reduction awareness activities.



Photo: Claudia Castillo

Local Knowledge is Critical for Disaster Reduction

On the island of Simeulue, off the coast of Sumatra, from a population of 83,000 people, only seven people died in the Indian Ocean tsunami. On the nearby mainland, in Aceh, more than 100,000 people were killed.

The people of Simeulue have maintained their own local knowledge of earthquakes, which they call *smong*. Each generation teaches the early warning signs of natural hazards to the next.

"In 1907 a tsunami already happened here in Simeulue, and so our Grandmothers always gave us the following advice: if an earthquake comes, we must go and look at the beach: if the sea is at low tide the smong or tsunami will be coming and we must look for higher ground."
Mr. Darmili Bhupati, Simeulue Island

4 Reduce Risk

Reduce the underlying risk factors.

Vulnerability to natural hazards is increased in many ways, for example:

- Locating communities in hazard-prone areas, such as flood plains;
- Destroying forests and wetlands, thereby harming the capacity of the environment to withstand hazards;
- Building public facilities and housing unable to withstand the impacts of hazards; and,
- Not having social and financial safety mechanisms in place.

Countries can build resilience to disasters by investing in simple, well-known measures to reduce risk and vulnerability. Disasters can be reduced by applying relevant building standards to protect critical infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals and homes. Vulnerable buildings can be retrofitted to a higher degree of safety. Protecting precious ecosystems, such as coral reefs and mangrove forests, allow them to act as natural storm barriers. Effective insurance and micro-finance initiatives can help to transfer risks and provide additional resources.



Photo: Edward Parsons/IRIN, Pakistan, 2005

Building Resilience Protects Communities

Unsafe buildings and the lack or non-enforcement of building codes often cause more deaths than natural hazards themselves. In Bam, Iran, more than 30,000 people were killed, and another 30,000 injured, when an earthquake struck the city on 26 December 2003. A major factor contributing to the high death toll was that traditional mud brick buildings crumbled, suffocating the people inside. Practically all of the survivors were left homeless, as 85% of the city's buildings collapsed.

"The houses killed the people, not the earthquake."
Mr. Mohamed Rahimnejad,
Civil Engineer, Iran

5 Be Prepared and Ready to Act

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

Being prepared, including conducting risk assessments, before investing in development at all levels of society will enable people to become more resilient to natural hazards. Preparedness involves many types of activities, including:

- The development and regular testing of contingency plans;
- The establishment of emergency funds to support preparedness, response and recovery activities;
- The development of coordinated regional approaches for effective disaster response; and,
- Continuous dialogue between response agencies, planners and policy-makers, and development organizations.

Regular disaster preparedness exercises, including evacuation drills, also are key to ensuring rapid and effective disaster response.

Effective preparedness plans and organization also help to cope with the many small and medium-sized disasters that repeatedly occur in so many communities. Natural hazards cannot be prevented, but it is possible to reduce their impacts by reducing the vulnerability of people and their livelihoods.



Photo: IRIN, Kyrgyzstan, Landslide claimed

Disaster Preparedness Takes Practice

Japan prides itself in being well-prepared for earthquakes. On Disaster Prevention Day, held in Japan every year, many people all across the country participate in disaster preparedness drills, involving both emergency workers and the general public.

"It is extremely important for all of us to prepare for such an occasion [natural hazard]. Not only public institutions, but also each and every one of us must think about and manifest in our daily lives preparedness for disaster prevention. The government will do everything in its power to further develop Japan into a country with capacity to cope with disasters. However, at the same time, I ask that all of you do your utmost by predicting various damages that could occur and considering rescue efforts that will be required so that you will be well prepared for emergency situations."

Prime Minister of Japan, Junichiro Koizumi



Photo: Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Flooded houses south of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Who is responsible for implementing disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework?

Collaboration and cooperation are crucial to disaster risk reduction: states, regional organizations and institutions, and international organizations all have a role to play. Civil society, including volunteers and community-based organizations, the scientific community, the media, and the private sector, are all vital stakeholders. Following is an indication of the variety and diversity of actors and their core responsibilities.

States are responsible for:

- Developing national coordination mechanisms;
- Conducting baseline assessments on the status of disaster risk reduction;
- Publishing and updating summaries of national programmes;
- Reviewing national progress towards achieving the objectives and priorities of the Hyogo Framework;
- Working to implement relevant international legal instruments; and
- Integrating disaster risk reduction with climate change strategies.

Regional organizations are responsible for:

- Promoting regional programmes for disaster risk reduction;
- Undertaking and publishing regional and sub-regional baseline assessments;
- Coordinating reviews on progress toward implementing the Hyogo Framework in the region;
- Establishing regional collaborative centres; and
- Supporting the development of regional early warning mechanisms.

International organizations are responsible for:

- Encouraging the integration of disaster risk reduction into humanitarian and sustainable development programmes and frameworks;
- Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to assist disaster-prone developing countries with disaster risk reduction initiatives;
- Supporting data collection and forecasting, information exchange, and early warning systems;
- Supporting States' own efforts with coordinated international assistance; and,
- Strengthening disaster management training and capacity building.

The ISDR system is responsible for:

- Developing a matrix of roles and initiatives related to the Hyogo Framework;
- Facilitating the coordination of actions at the international and regional levels;
- Developing indicators of progress to assist States in tracking their progress towards implementation of the Hyogo Framework;
- Supporting national platforms and coordination mechanisms;
- Stimulating the exchange of best practices and lessons learned; and,
- Preparing reviews on progress toward achieving the Hyogo Framework objectives.

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)** was adopted, as a follow-up of the International Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) 1990-1999 by the Member States of the United Nations in 2000. This strategy aims to achieve substantive reduction of disaster losses and build resilient communities and nations, as an essential condition for sustainable development.

The **ISDR System** comprises numerous organizations, States and civil society worldwide working together to reduce disaster losses, in lives and in social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and nations, as set out in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

All countries are encouraged to establish **National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction** or other coordination mechanisms. At regional level, information sharing and coordination among existing bodies are promoted by the UN/ISDR secretariat and partners as Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. The international elements of the ISDR System are the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reaction and the UN/ISDR secretariat.

The international part of the ISDR System is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG), supported by a management oversight board appointed by him or her, to provide strategic guidance and coherence on disaster risk reduction within the United Nations System linked to the development, environmental, humanitarian and scientific areas.

The **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction** is the main global forum for Governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, the scientific, and academic communities. It is responsible for raising awareness and reiterates commitments, for sharing experience on implementation among stakeholders and Governments, addressing gaps, and for providing strategic guidance and coherence for implementing the Hyogo Framework. Thematic clusters, groups and platforms work on specific topics of the disaster risk reduction agenda, such as: climate change adaptation, education, urban risk, early warning, recovery and capacity development. The Global Platform will appoint a committee to advise on programmatic priorities and direction to the Global Platform.

The **UN/ISDR secretariat**, accountable to the UN USG, serves as a broker, catalyst, and focal point for disaster risk reduction within the United Nations and among the members of the ISDR System. It advocates for commitment to disaster risk reduction and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, and reports on progress.

ISDR System partners*:

- ActionAid International - www.actionaid.org
- Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) secretariat - www.acpsec.org
- African Development Bank (AfDB) - www.afdb.org
- Aga Khan Development Network - www.akdn.org
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) - www.adb.org
- Asian Disaster Reduction & Response Network (ADRRN) - www.adrrn.net
- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) - www.adpc.net
- Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) - www.adrc.or.jp
- Association of Caribbean States (ACS) - www.acs-aec.org
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - www.aseansec.org
- African Union Commission (AU) - www.africa-union.org
- CIS Interstate Council - www.emercom.on.ufanet.ru
- Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) - www.cdera.org
- Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) - www.cred.be
- Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central (CEPREDENAC) - www.cepredenac.org
- Comité Andino para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres (CAPRADE) - www.caprade.org
- Comunidad Andina de Naciones (CAN) - www.comunidadandina.org
- Council of Europe (CoE) - www.coe.int
- Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative (EMI) - www.earthquakesandmegacities.org
- Economic Cooperation Organization - www.ecosecretariat.org
- European Commission- Joint Research Centre (EC/JRC) - www.jrc.ec.eu.int
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - www.fao.org
- Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) - www.fire.uni-freiburg.de
- Group on Earth Observations (GEO) - earthobservations.org
- Ibero-American Association of Civil Defence and Civil Protection
- IGAD Climate Prediction & Applications Centre, Greater Horn of Africa (ICPAD) - www.igad.org, www.dmcn.org
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) - www.iadb.org
- International Consortium on Landslides (ICL) - icl.dpri.kyoto-u.ac.jp
- International Council for Science (ICSU) - www.icsu.org
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) - www.ifrc.org
- International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO) - www.icdo.org
- International Labour Organization (ILO) - www.ilo.org
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - www.itu.int
- Munich Re-insurance - www.munichre.com
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - Secretariat/AU - www.nepad.org
- ProVention Consortium - www.proventionconsortium.org
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) - <http://ochaonline.un.org>, www.reliefweb.int
- Organization of American States-Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (OAS-IACNDR) - www.oas.org/usde, www.paho.org/disasters
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) - www.saarc-sec.org
- South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) - www.sopac.org.fj
- Tearfund - www.tearfund.org
- United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) - www.uncrd.or.jp
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) - www.unccd.int
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - www.undp.org/bcpr/disred
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) - www.unescap.org
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - www.unesco.org
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - www.unep.org
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) - www.unitar.org, www.unosat.org
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) - www.unicef.org
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) - www.unhabitat.org
- United Nations Regional Economic Commissions for Africa (ECA) - www.uneca.org
- United Nations Regional Economic and Social Commissions for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) - www.eclac.cl
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - <http://unfccc.int>
- United Nations University (UNU) - www.unu.edu
- United Nations Volunteers (UNV) - www.unv.org
- World Bank (Hazard Risk Management) - www.worldbank.org
- The World Conservation Union (IUCN) - www.iucn.org
- World Economic Forum (WEF) - www.weforum.org
- World Food Programme (WFP) - www.wfp.org
- World Health Organization (WHO) - www.who.org
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO) - www.wmo.int/disasters

* Including former members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Secretariat, Geneva

Tel. : (+41) 22 917 8908/8907

Fax : (+41) 22 917 8964

isdr@un.org

www.unisdr.org

International Environment House II
7-9 Chemin de Balexert
CH 1219 Châtelaine
Geneva, Switzerland

Postal Address:

Palais des Nations, CH-1211

Geneva, Switzerland

Secretariat, Africa, Nairobi

isdr-africa@unep.org

www.unisdr.org/africa

Secretariat, The Americas, Panama

eird@eird.org

www.eird.org

Secretariat, Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok

isdr-bkk@un.org

www.unisdr.org/asiapacific

Secretariat, Central Asia, Dushanbe

tine.ramstad@undp.org

www.unisdr.org/asiapacific

Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning, Germany

isdr-ppew@un.org

www.unisdr.org/earlywarning.org

www.unisdr.org/hfa