



# **The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020**

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# **Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020**

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## Executive Summary

Arab nations recognize the impacts of on-going environmental degradation, rapid unplanned urbanization, acute water scarcity, a changing demography and migration trends on achieving sustainable development goals for the region. Secondary risks associated with population displacement, disease outbreak, pandemic influenza, food insecurity, conflict and civil unrest pose multi-fold challenges to the region, on a larger scale than ever before. This recognition is coupled with the immediate responsibility to effectively manage and cope with frequent local and trans-boundary disasters that arise from changing geologies and increasing climate variations across the region.

It is clear that disasters have a direct impact on lives, infrastructure and livelihoods. It's equally important to recognize their medium to long term impacts; seen in the movement of people and livestock to other host areas with limited resources, the development of unsafe informal settlements in urban centres, limited availability and access to transport, health, education and other basic public services in hazard prone areas.

In accordance with its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals<sup>1</sup> and in line with the role identified for regional inter-governmental organizations in the Hyogo Framework for Action<sup>2</sup>, the League of Arab States has taken the lead in promoting the integration of disaster risk reduction measures in regional policies on sustainable development, climate change adaptation, environment and disaster management coordination mechanisms. Additionally, the need to articulate a strategic approach to protect Arab socio-economic development gains by enhancing the effectiveness of disaster risk management measures, the adoption of risk reduction strategies and climate change adaptation plans, has been prominently stated in recent regional forums.

In response, and as a follow-up to the 1<sup>st</sup> Arab Summit on Socio-Economic Development, the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the environment has adopted specific actions relating to disaster risk reduction through a significant decision on 24th May 2009 calling for the need to develop an *Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction* with a two-fold purpose:

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<sup>1</sup> Millennium Development Goals in the Arab States <http://arabstates.undp.org/subpage.php?spid=20>

<sup>2</sup> *Hyogo Framework for Action* 2005 - 2015; Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters <http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/intergover/official-doc/L-docs/Hyogo-framework-for-action-english.pdf>

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1. To outline a vision, strategic priorities and core areas of implementation for disaster risk reduction in the Arab region;
2. To enhance institutional and coordination mechanisms, and monitoring arrangements to support the implementation of the Strategy at the regional, national and local level through preparation of a Programme of Action.

The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction will complement existing and on-going efforts in disaster risk reduction by national institutions and regional technical organizations. Implementing partners of the Strategy will focus on multi-sectoral approaches to considerably reduce emerging risks across the Arab region by 2020, in line with the global priorities outlined by the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Deriving from the Hyogo Framework for Action's global priorities for disaster risk reduction, and based on the Arab Strategy's purpose, the below five corresponding key priorities are outlined to address disaster risk reduction efforts in the region:

1. Strengthen commitment for comprehensive disaster risk reduction across sectors
2. Develop capacities to identify, assess and monitor disaster risks
3. Build resilience through knowledge, advocacy, research and trainings
4. Improve accountability for disaster risk management at the sub national and local level
5. Integrate disaster risk reduction into emergency response, preparedness and recovery

The priorities imply an initial framework from which a set of core areas of implementation will be developed. These core areas of implementation will constitute a detailed Programme of Action, which will be developed according to the various capacities and needs of participating countries and regional specialized agencies, supported by development partners. The Programme of Action will be implemented over an initial phase to cover the period 2011 to 2015 and to be reassessed and reviewed in 2015 with the revision of the global Hyogo Framework for Action. Based on the 2015 review, the Arab region will assess its priorities to implement the ASDRR through a follow up Programme of Action until 2020. The expected outcome of the ASDRR is the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries across the Arab region. The League of Arab States will facilitate the development and finalization of the Programme of Action in 2011.

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All stakeholders will have a key role to play in the development and implementation of the Strategy, including the League of Arab States, national authorities, the United Nations system including its specialized agencies and the regional social and economic commissions, regional organizations, regional centres of excellence for disaster risk reduction, civil society organizations including Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, the private sector, international development partners and the media.

The development of the ASDRR has been led by the League of Arab States technical secretariat for the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the United Nations secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) with contributions from the UN secretariat and specialized agencies, Arab technical organizations, the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Society, and the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).

The ASDRR takes account of various regional strategies and programmes for disaster risk reduction already developed by the African Union, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of South East Asian Nations, the Euro-Mediterranean Programme for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Disasters (PPRD), and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) with the assistance of the United Nations, the World Bank, international development organizations and civil society<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> African Union/ NEPAD/ African Development Bank/ African Development Fund/ World Bank/ United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, [Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), 2004  
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, [Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, Emergency Response and Preparedness in the Asia-Pacific region](#), 2009 - 2015  
Association of South East Asian Nations, [Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response](#), Vientiane, 26 July 2005  
European Union, PPRD- South Programme, [Prevention, preparedness, response to natural and man made disasters South Programme](#)  
Organization of the Islamic Conference, [Draft Strategy on Management of Disaster Risks and Climate Change Implications in the Islamic World](#), 2010

# Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020

## 1. Background

Arab States not only share a common language, culture and historical heritage but also a number of regional and trans-boundary risks. Different parts of the Arab region are regularly exposed to geological hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides and tsunamis, in addition to weather related hazards such as floods, extreme temperature events, drought, sand storms, wildfires and cyclones. The 2003 earthquake in Algeria, the 2007 Cyclone Gunu in Oman, the 2008 floods in Hadramoot, Yemen and the 2009 floods in Morocco among others, serve as a few stark reminders of emerging risk and frequent disaster trends in the region<sup>4</sup>. Climate change impacts are likely to act as a risk multiplier with sea level rise, prolonged drought and desertification affecting large parts of the region<sup>5</sup>.

The 2010 Environment Outlook Report for the Arab Region points out that most of disaster losses in the Arab region were caused by drought, earthquakes, floods and storms. The report also states that more than 37 million Arab people were affected and more than 20 billion dollars were lost between 1980 and 2008 due to natural disasters<sup>6</sup>. Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, water scarcity, changing demography and migration trends are further amplifying levels of vulnerability among the Arab population. Secondary risks associated with population displacement, disease outbreak, pandemic influenza, conflict and civil unrest pose multi-fold challenges to the region, on a larger scale than ever before.

There is clear evidence that disasters have persistent, long-term impacts on poverty trends and human development<sup>7</sup>. As concluded at the 2009 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, urgent multi-sectoral action is necessary to reduce the risk of disasters, if we are to fulfil global poverty reduction targets, adapt to climate change and ensure the provision of better health outcomes from a rights based perspective, as outlined by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, World Bank, [Workshop Summary Report](#), *Regional Workshop on disaster risk reduction and climate change*, Cairo 21-23 Nov 2009

<sup>5</sup> UNDP, Arab Human Development Report Research paper series: [Mapping of climate change threats and human development impacts in the Arab region](#) 2010

<sup>6</sup> The Environment Outlook Report for the Arab Region 2010 <http://eoar.cedare.int>

<sup>7</sup> ISDR, [Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) 2009

<sup>8</sup> [2009 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: Chair's Summary](#)

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Responding to the alarming trend of disasters and in line with commitment to the achievement of the MDGs, Arab states adopted the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan 2005. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was later in 2005 endorsed by the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/195, as a ten-year global plan that reflects the intention and need to take a holistic approach in identifying and putting into action complex multidisciplinary disaster risk reduction measures.

States have the primary responsibility for their own socio-economic development, through the introduction of national development strategies and plans that include disaster risk reduction measures. Yet, an enabling international and regional environment is essential to support the development of knowledge, capacities, and resources required to build resilient nations and communities. In that respect, regional inter-governmental and technical organizations have a key role to play in fostering and enhancing regional mechanisms, resources and capacities that will contribute to stronger national capacities and progress in monitoring, assessing, and reducing disaster risks.

In the Arab region, the League of Arab States (LAS) supports and calls for the implementation of HFA at the regional and national levels and promotes the coordination of efforts towards implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

### **1.1 Context and Rationale**

Technical specialized organizations under the umbrella of the LAS such as the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT), the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) have consistently incorporated disaster risk reduction measures into their projects and technical assistance programmes covering various Arab countries. In addition, a Regional Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction Training and Research (RCDRR) was established in Cairo to strengthen capacities of Arab countries in reducing disaster risk.

Integration of disaster risk reduction concepts into environmental management and climate change adaptation policies came across clearly in the Arab region, perhaps for the first time, in the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, adopted by the Council of Arab

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Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) in its 19<sup>th</sup> session, 5-6 December 2007. The Declaration among other recommendations stresses the potential risks of climate change and calls for adaptation programmes to “include appropriate mechanisms for risk insurance, improvement in the management and efficiency of natural resources through the use of appropriate techniques and advanced monitoring, control and early warning systems, as well as adequate preparedness to confront disasters caused by climate change”.

A major achievement was also realized during the 20<sup>th</sup> session of CAMRE, held on 20-21 December 2008 during which CAMRE adopted a decision (No. 295) calling for increased cooperation and coordination with the ISDR thereby placing the follow-up to the implementation of the HFA as a permanent agenda item for CAMRE and its subsidiary body the “Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region”. CAMRE also urged Arab states to systematically report on progress in implementation of the HFA each biennium.

In 2008-09, Arab participation in the first biennial review of progress in implementation of the HFA led to the release of a regional synthesis report on *Progress in Implementation of the HFA for the Arab region*<sup>9</sup>. Deriving from initial findings presented in the report and discussed at a multi-stakeholder regional workshop in Jeddah, in its extra-ordinary session on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009, CAMRE adopted actions relating to disaster risk reduction as a follow-up to the 1st Arab Summit on Socio-Economic Development. In an important decision, member states approved the need to develop an *Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ASDRR)* and also called for the establishment of an *Arab regional platform for disaster risk reduction* (at the ministerial and multi-stakeholder level) to accelerate the implementation of the HFA at the regional, national and local level.

In addition, LAS has developed regional protocols and agreements on disaster and/or emergency management and response that include:

1. The Arab Cooperation Agreement in organization and facilitation of relief operations (approved by LAS Council in 1987, entered into force in 1990 and updated in 2009);
2. A draft Arab Protocol (2008) on cooperation for speedy and immediate response within Arab countries to transfer equipment and expertise in cases of disasters, crisis and emergencies;

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<sup>9</sup> League of Arab States, UNISDR [Executive Summary: Progress in reducing disaster risk and implementing Hyogo Framework for Action in the Arab region](#)



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3. Statutes for the Arab Centre to prevent risks from earthquakes and other natural disasters (adopted by the LAS Council in its session No 121 in 2004).

It is within this overall regional approach and institutional framework that the ASDRR will be defined and implemented.

### **1.2 Scope of the Strategy**

The ASDRR will focus on compounded risks to the Arab population resulting from natural and related human induced hazards. The Arab region is increasingly at risk from seismic activity, environmental degradation, declining ecosystems, lack of availability and access to water, the emerging impacts of climate change phenomena including sea level rise, extreme weather events such as recent cyclones, floods, prolonged drought and desertification. The result has been a steady increase in the associated and secondary risks of livelihood and food insecurity in rural areas, a changing demography and migration trends, rapid unplanned urbanization and infrastructure challenges, governance crises including civil conflict, disease outbreak and public health challenges.

In recognition of the multiple risks faced by different Arab countries and their varied progress in implementing disaster risk reduction actions, the ASDRR will provide a vision and broad range of strategic directions to enable the prioritized implementation of disaster risk reduction measures across the Arab states by 2020. The key priorities outlined by the ASDRR will imply an initial framework from which a set of core areas of implementation will be developed. These core areas of implementation will constitute a detailed Programme of Action, which will be implemented according to the various capacities and needs of national authorities/ agencies and regional specialized agencies supported by development and humanitarian partners.

The League of Arab States will facilitate the development and finalization of the Programme of Action during 2011. The Programme of Action will include institutional, financial and coordination mechanisms, and monitoring arrangements to support the prioritized implementation of the Strategy at the regional, national and local level through an initial phase until 2015. With the review of the global Hyogo Framework for Action in 2015, the Arab region will also review and re-assess its priorities to implement the ASDRR through a follow up Programme of Action until 2020.

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The ASDRR will build on the existing commitments of Arab countries as demonstrated in policies adopted by the League of Arab States and in the various regional strategies and programmes for disaster risk reduction already developed in Africa, Asia and Euro-Mediterranean regions and by the Organization of Islamic Conference, where Arab countries are actively engaged.

The ASDRR will also rely on substantial engagement and participation from existing national platforms, civil society partnerships and the work of national societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, through which much progress has been made at the local level.

## 2. Issues and gaps in the Arab region

### 2.1 The disaster problem

Over the last twenty-five years the region has faced 276 disaster events, killing nearly 100,000 affecting 10 million and rendering nearly 1.5 million people homeless<sup>10</sup>. The Arab region is historically at risk from seismic activity. The Jordan rift valley system extends from the Red Sea, through Palestine and moves north across the Dead Sea and Lebanon's Beqaa Valley. The belt puts a number of Arab countries at high risk from seismic activity and associated tectonic impacts. Approximately two-thirds of Jordan's population, the entire population of Lebanon and a large urban population in Syria (covering Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hams) live within 50 km east and west of the Dead Sea fault system<sup>11</sup>. Historically, the Maghreb countries – Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia - have been exposed to risk from seismic activity in Atlas Mountains region which saw the devastating earthquake of Algeria 2003 the left more than 3000 killed and caused economic damage of more than 5 billion dollars<sup>12</sup>.

Although the Arab region does not contribute more than 4.7% to the direct causes of global climate change phenomena, it will bear severe effects in the years to come. The region is particularly vulnerable given already scarce water resources, high levels of aridity and the

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<sup>10</sup> EM-DAT <http://www.emdat.be/database>

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, *Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab states: Building a DRR agenda for UNDP* (DRAFT 2010)

<sup>12</sup> Earthquake Hazard Mapping in the Maghreb Region, Benouar et al, 1996 [http://ares.tu.chiba-u.jp/~papers/paperI/EESD/EESD1996\\_Benouar.pdf](http://ares.tu.chiba-u.jp/~papers/paperI/EESD/EESD1996_Benouar.pdf)

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long coastal stretch threatened by rising sea levels<sup>13</sup>. In combination with the current demographic trends most parts of the region will experience severe migration pressures as a result of which the most vulnerable groups, especially women, are likely to be the most affected<sup>14</sup>.

An increase of up to 2 - 4°C in surface temperature is expected by the end of the 21st century as reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>15</sup>. In addition, this temperature increase will be coupled with a projected decrease in precipitation of between 0 and 20%. The region is expected to experience shorter winters, dryer and hotter summers, a higher rate of heat waves, increased weather variability and a more frequent occurrence of extreme weather events<sup>16</sup>.

Recent droughts in Jordan and Syria, during 2007-2010, were the worst recorded in many decades. The Arab region has a total area of about 14 million square kilometres of which more than 87% is classified as desert, with high levels of aridity and poor vegetation cover<sup>17</sup>. The mean precipitation levels across the region are projected to further decrease. This will aggravate the already scarce water resources in a region that accounts for 8 of the 10 most water stressed countries in the world. There is no doubt that the increasing scarcity of water and arable land resources threaten to leave the region highly vulnerable to food insecurity.

In addition, precipitation variability affects a number of countries, with an unanticipated increase in flood events. The recent floods in Yemen and Saudi Arabia during 2008-2010 are examples. The Yemen flood caused approximately US\$ 1.7 billion in total damages and losses, and estimated to have increased the poverty rate from 28 to 51%<sup>18</sup>.

Sea level rise, caused by a rise in global temperature, has the potential to cause loss in

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<sup>13</sup> League of Arab States, UNISDR, [Executive Summary: Progress in reducing disaster risk and implementing Hyogo Framework for Action in the Arab region](#)

<sup>14</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration: Addressing Vulnerabilities and Harnessing Opportunities*, 2009

<sup>15</sup> IPCC, The Fourth Assessment Report 2007

<sup>16</sup> Arab Forum for Environment and Development, [Arab Environment: Future Challenges 2008](#)

<sup>17</sup> Arab Water Council, Arab Countries Regional Report DRAFT 2009

<sup>18</sup> Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, World Bank, [Workshop Summary Report](#), *Regional Workshop on disaster risk reduction and climate change*, Cairo 21-23 Nov 2009

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significant portions of low-lying agricultural lands across the region. According to a UN-HABITAT report<sup>19</sup>, 18% of North African urban dwellers live in low elevation coastal zones with Alexandria, Algiers, Casablanca, Nouakchott and Tunis, areas that are particularly vulnerable to increase in sea levels.

The increasing risk of disasters is intimately connected to the process of development. Arab states recognize that we cannot prevent hazards from occurring, but we can – through collective actions – reduce the potential impact of hazards. Reducing disasters by understanding the underlying risk factors, building knowledge and capacities to assess hazards, risks and vulnerabilities will help protect development gains and strengthen the resilience of communities and nations to disaster impacts.

The 2009 Arab Human Development Report notes that the region faces severe challenges in protecting its population from environmental stress. Two trends appear significant, which together with lax development planning, have caused a drastic increase in vulnerability to natural hazards. These are represented by: an increase in population pressures and rapid urbanization. Presently, urban areas account for 56% of the total population of 320 million; this figure is projected to increase to 66% by 2020. The “urban explosion” witnessed in the Arab world has not just been evident in the massive growth of the region’s major cities, but small- and medium sized towns have also shown rapid levels of urbanization causing a stress on limited resources and crumbling infrastructure.

Clearly, relevant adaptation and mitigation strategies need to be researched, discussed and implemented at the sub regional level, through multi-sectoral partnerships.

### **2.2 Regional Progress in Implementation of HFA: Key Findings**

In follow up to UNISDR’s provision of a global online tool (the *HFA Monitor*<sup>20</sup>) in 2008, facilitation support extended by regional and international technical organizations and with interest expressed by national authorities, the LAS initiated a first review of progress (2007-09) in implementation of the HFA across Arab states. Regional progress was assessed

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<sup>19</sup> UN-HABITAT, [The State of African Cities 2008](#)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/hfa-monitoring/hfa-monitor/index.php>

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based on seven national reports and one thematic report<sup>21</sup> in addition to inputs received from LAS, its technical organizations, UN and international organizations working in the region<sup>22</sup>. As part of the HFA's second review of progress (2009 – 2011), national progress reports further contributed to the analysis of gaps and challenges faced with regard to risk reduction actions across the region<sup>23</sup>.

While the national reports provide a general overview of progress in risk reduction actions across the region, due to limitations in data and information from other countries in the region, it is important to recognize that the analysis presented does not necessarily reflect a comprehensive assessment of progress for the Arab region. However, it does provide a compelling overview of trends, gaps and challenges in disaster risk reduction efforts across parts of the Arab region.

According to information made available by the mentioned countries, overall progress has been reported on enhancing political and national commitment to risk reduction, development of institutional mechanisms, national platforms and strategies, enhancing early warning systems and building preparedness and response capacities. In most cases, countries report that increased political commitment does not necessarily translate into operational capacities or commitment of resources to effectively implement the strategies or integrate risk reduction into development plans. Countries witness relatively weak progress on education and public awareness as well as on the collection, availability and accessibility of data and information on risk and vulnerabilities, tools and methodologies for disaster risk reduction, multi-risk and multi-hazard approaches.

The Leagues of Arab States' various technical institutions, the United Nation's secretariats, specialized agencies, international organizations and civil society organizations in the region all provide crucial support to countries, through technical and grant assistance, capacity development, policy advisory services, research and tools development and advocacy for integration of disaster risk reduction in regional programmes and national policies on

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<sup>21</sup> Seven countries contributed national progress reports for the first HFA progress review (2007-09): Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen; Djibouti contributed a thematic review on drought risk reduction; and Egypt contributed an in-depth national review.

<sup>22</sup> Summarized in [Executive Summary: Progress in reducing disaster risk and implementing Hyogo Framework for Action in the Arab region](#), League of Arab States, UNISDR.

<sup>23</sup> As part of the second HFA progress review (2009-11), interim national progress reports in 2010 have been received from Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Yemen.

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education, climate change adaptation, flood risk management, drought assessment and risk mitigation.

A more detailed overview of regional progress and challenges in the implementation of the HFA is compiled in Annex 2.

### **3. Purpose, Expected Outcome and Key Priorities**

#### **3.1 Purpose**

The specific purpose of the ASDRR is two-fold:

1. To outline a vision, strategic priorities and core areas of implementation for disaster risk reduction in the Arab region;
2. To enhance institutional and coordination mechanisms and monitoring arrangements to support the implementation of the Strategy at the regional, national and local level through preparation of a Programme of Action.

The Strategy will build upon good practices and experiences from other regions, including experiences in the development, implementation and monitoring of regional strategies and frameworks for disaster risk reduction. It will form a critical contribution to the deliberations and conclusions of the 2011 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the national platform mechanisms across the Arab region.

#### **3.2 Expected Outcome**

The expected outcome of the ASDRR is the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries across the Arab region.

The strategic direction for implementation of disaster risk reduction actions in the Arab region will derive from the HFA's five key priorities for action:

Priority for Action 1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;

Priority for Action 2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning;

Priority for Action 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;

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Priority for Action 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors;

Priority for Action 5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response and recovery at all levels

### **3.3 Key Priorities**

Based on the HFA's strategic goals, its priorities for action, conclusions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, experiences of other regional institutions in formulating strategies on disaster risk reduction, and key findings from national HFA progress reports completed by Arab states and Arab regional progress report of 2009.

The ASDRR outlines a strategic direction for five key priorities as follows:

#### **3.3.1 Strengthen commitment for comprehensive disaster risk reduction across sectors**

- Include risk reduction considerations in national policies, plans and legal frameworks of all critical sectors relevant to achievement of the MDGs: reducing poverty, promoting livelihood diversification in peri-urban and rural centres, provision of universal primary education, addressing the vulnerability of women, children and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable groups, combating disease and public health challenges, promoting environmental sustainability, and ensuring partnerships for development;
- Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into development strategies while ensuring scientific capacities, resources, stakeholder involvement and public awareness in this regard;
- Ensure decentralization of dedicated and adequate resources, community participation and collaboration with civil society groups and the private sector during all planning and implementation efforts for disaster management and risk reduction.
- Ensure that national multi-sectoral platforms take account of underlying risk factors, while prioritizing high-risk areas and most vulnerable populations/ groups (especially in conflict zones and urban settlements);

#### **3.3.2 Develop capacities to identify, assess and monitor disaster risks**

- Ensure national and local multi-hazard risk assessments are periodically made available and include risk assessments for key sectors with specific regard to urban settlements;

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- Ensure capacities and systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities at the regional, national and local level;
- Ensure inclusion of gender disaggregated data for risk assessments;
- Intensify efforts to understand and assess the likely impacts of climate change in areas and sectors exposed to risk from climatic hazards;
- Establish regional early warning systems and networks to monitor multiple hazards affecting the region;
- Develop and maintain a regional roster of experts for disaster risk management and related areas

### **3.3.3 Build resilience through knowledge, advocacy, research and trainings**

- Ensure that relevant information on disaster risks and events is accessible and available at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems, regional databases, etc.) and especially in relevant local languages;
- Ensure use of up-to-date educational materials, curricula and approaches that account for emerging national and local risk contexts/ realities;
- Promote public awareness, advocacy campaigns/ activities to emphasize disaster risk reduction measures and disaster management practices among communities at risk (i.e. through online games; school, educational institutions and hospital preparedness drills; public dissemination of flyers on how to assess and strengthen the structural safety of key buildings, etc.);
- Establish regular opportunities for training and skills development for administrators, decision makers and community volunteers, while ensuring the participation of women;
- Secure flow of resources to support continual scientific research geared for devising solutions that can be especially implemented in the short – medium term.
- Develop standardized tools and commonly accepted indicators for tracking progress in risk reduction and demonstrating the cost-benefit ratio of investment in this area;

### **3.3.4 Improve accountability for disaster risk management at sub national and local level;**

- Ensure that sub national and local risk reduction strategies involve a long-term capacity development plan matched by dedicated and adequate allocation of budgets;
- Implement economic and productive sectoral policies and plans to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities and basic services (addressing tourism, shipping and ports, agriculture, industry, infrastructure especially for securing public health, among others);



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- Institute legislation and assessment procedures to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially large infrastructure projects;
- Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes;
- Analyse existing and emerging financial mechanisms for disaster reduction while identifying and developing the most adequate risk transfer and risk finance instruments;
- Ensure that disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes.

### **3.3.5 Integrate disaster risk reduction into emergency response, preparedness and recovery:**

- Establish strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster management that include risk reduction perspectives;
- Establish disaster preparedness plans, contingency plans, recovery and reconstruction plans at all administrative levels with the participation of women, the aged, children, IDPs and people with special needs;
- Establish emergency health support systems that offer free health care to victims and help address psychosocial (and other long term) health impacts of disasters;
- Ensure that national/ local financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place and well understood by all stakeholders to ensure effective response and recovery when required;
- Ensure that sub national and local coordination procedures are in place to exchange critical and timely information during hazard events and disasters, also with a view to undertake post-event reviews.
- Incorporate international quality standards in disaster response (SPHERE, IASC guidelines);
- Ensure institutional and surge capacities for conducting damage and loss assessments
- Address national trans-boundary cooperation on disaster response, preparedness and recovery among Arab states

## **4. Institutional, Financial and Coordination Arrangements**

Effective implementation of the strategy depends on institutional arrangements, capacities and resources made available at the global, regional, national and local level.

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The Chair's Summary of the 2009 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>24</sup> concluded that sustained financing for disaster risk reduction is of critical importance if risk reduction goals are to be realized by 2015. Proposals submitted by country representatives, international organizations and financing institutions at the Global Platform in 2009 included a variety of innovations including - incentives for retrofitting, introduction of risk transfer tools, adoption of risk-sensitive development financing, private sector involvement, debt swap to finance disaster reduction measures and linkages with adaptation financing, among others.

Institutional innovations proposed included more direct resourcing of local initiatives and groups that are effective in reducing risks, such as grassroots women's organizations. Globally, there is agreement that more explicit information is needed on the effectiveness and cost of specific measures and on the patterns of current investments in disaster risk reduction. There was support by many participants at the Global Platform to target the equivalent of 10% of humanitarian relief funds to disaster risk reduction work. Similarly, a 10% figure has been proposed as a target share of post-disaster reconstruction and recovery projects and national preparedness and response plans. Calls also were made for at least 1% of all national development funding and all development assistance funding to be allocated to risk reduction measures, with due regard for quality of impact.

In the Arab region, funding remains the main challenge that faces national and local authorities, civil society organizations and humanitarian workers implementing disaster risk reduction measures targeting communities at risk. In keeping with emerging global commitments, the League of Arab States encourages its member states to dedicate at least 1% of national development funding and development assistance towards disaster risk reduction measures.

Countries in the Arab region currently also have access to a range of existing regional financing mechanisms for socio-economic development in addition to dedicated national disaster relief and response budgets. Countries could also assess the possibility of utilizing the existing regional funds and mechanisms by allocating a dedicated budget for disaster risk reduction and recovery activities at the sub regional, national or local level within these Funds.

Development and humanitarian donor assistance plays an important part in developing sustainable measures for risk reduction at the national level across the Arab region. The

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/>

## **Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020**

League of Arab States encourages international development and humanitarian partners to intensify efforts in view of the expressed commitment of the Arab states.

The following stakeholders will have a key role to play in the development and implementation of the Strategy and its Programme of Action:

**The League of Arab States:** will focus on providing leadership and strategic guidance, facilitation, promoting implementation of the Strategy, monitoring progress and seeking support from regional and international development partners for coordination at the regional level.

**United Nations specialized agencies including regional social and economic commission/s:** will focus on interpreting the strategic guidance received for member states, incorporate the objectives of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in their programmes by developing relevant activities, regularly reporting progress on implementation and provide coordination and training support to sub-regional, national and local authorities, as relevant.

**Regional centres of excellence on Disaster Risk Reduction:** will support the implementation of the ASDRR through capacity development, training and research activities in collaboration with international partners and in response to national needs.

**National authorities:** will lead the process of developing disaster risk reduction capacities, national platforms and the integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development measures. National authorities will ensure the establishment of an enabling environment by adoption of timely and relevant legislation and policies at the national and sub national level.

**Civil society organizations,** including Red Cross and Red Crescent societies **and the Private sector:** will participate in the development of the ASDRR by collaborating with authorities at the local, national and regional level and provide coordination and implementation support and guidance in niche sectors/ as applicable.

**Media:** print, video and social media will work with all partners to widely disseminate key risk reduction messages, priorities and generate public awareness through open forums and by engaging relevant political and public entities in debates that highlight topical risk issues.

## **Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020**

**International development partners:** All the above-mentioned institutions and groups will work together to provide guidance to the international development and humanitarian community on provision of assistance and resources for disaster risk reduction. The development partners' assistance will be mainly targeted towards the key sectoral areas based on their comparative advantages. These include, but are not limited to the following areas: capacity development, trainings, knowledge management, risk assessments, integration of disaster risk reduction in the environment, health and education sectors, supporting the coordination and harmonization of disaster risk reduction tools at national and local levels, among others.

### **5. Monitoring the implementation of the Strategy**

Monitoring responsibilities for implementation of the Strategy will be delineated to mainly include functions performed by the League of Arab States, regional specialized agencies and national governments in implementing this Strategy.

Baseline indicators to monitor the ASDRR's implementation will be derived from the global HFA Progress Monitoring and Reporting Framework's indicators and will be included in the Programme of Action.

To facilitate effective monitoring of the implementation of the ASDRR Programme of Action, the League of Arab States, and in cooperation and partnership with UNISDR, will coordinate and follow-up the biennial HFA monitoring and progress reporting process by reviewing national multi-sectoral progress on disaster risk reduction, and submitting regional biennial progress report on the status of disaster risk reduction in the Arab region.

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