



Plenary Session 1:

National and Local Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies Paving the Way for Action by All

Issue Brief- Final DRAFT

1. Rationale

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 marks a crucial shift from managing disasters to managing risk. It also establishes resilience-building as a shared vision of the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, the Sendai Framework calls for strong political leadership, commitment, and involvement of all stakeholders at all levels to pursue a goal to “prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience”. **Pursuit of such a comprehensive goal, requires a strategic approach and a well-defined plan to ensure efforts are coordinated, while still being inclusive of whole-of-society, and to ensure resources are efficiently used across all sectors and by all stakeholders.** Reflecting this foundational requirement, Target E of the Sendai Framework calls to “substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020”.

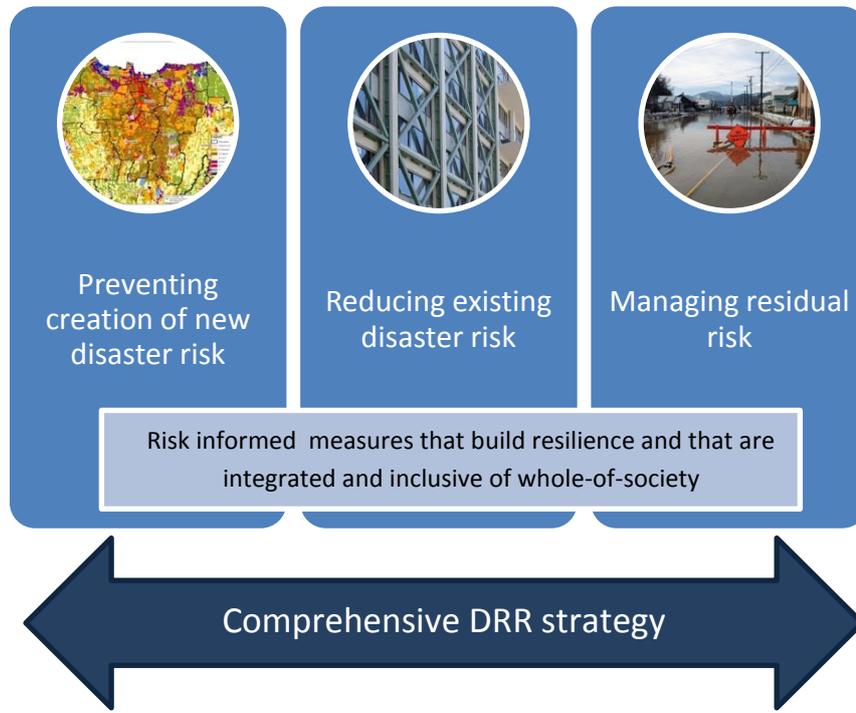
Disaster risk is a complex phenomenon with multiple interactions between different components of hazard, exposure and vulnerability, capacity, and underlying drivers that may lead to both direct and indirect impact of disasters. It is important to note that many aspects of ‘development’ are either the underlying driver of risk (i.e. poverty and inequality, climate change, lack of peace, weak institutions) or can become a source of risk (i.e. bad urban development planning, or vulnerable energy, water, health and education systems). Addressing these issues as objectives of development planning with a lens of disaster risk and climate change impact ensures long term resilience of societies and presents a compelling rationale for efficient use of the technical, political and financial resources to manage these challenges.

The Sendai Framework calls for legislation, policies and practices for disaster risk management including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation. The measures can also be distinguished as three categories of action:

- I. Preventing creation of new disaster risk through prospective disaster risk management activities which focus on addressing disaster risks that may develop in future if disaster risk reduction policies are not put in place, including measures to ensure new investments in development are considering disaster risk;
- II. Reducing existing disaster risk through corrective disaster risk management activities which are meant to remove or reduce disaster risks which are already present and which need to be managed and reduced now through structural or non-structural measures such as retrofitting of critical infrastructure or the relocation of exposed population or assets;
- III. Managing residual risk through compensatory disaster risk management activities which focus on building the environmental, health, social and economic resilience of individuals and societies in the face of anticipated residual risk. They include preparedness, response

and recovery activities, but also a mix of different financing instruments, such as national contingency funds, contingent credit, insurance and reinsurance and social safety nets¹.

Figure 1: Three categories of actions covered by DRR Strategy



2. State of Play, Current Opportunities and Entry Points

STATE OF THE PLAY

As of now, about a quarter of the countries around the world do not have any form of DRR strategy, policy, or legislation². While this status varies across regions, the common trend is that majority of the existing DRR legislations and strategies are focused on managing disasters through preparedness and response and do not include a comprehensive set of measures for disaster risk prevention and reduction.

Many of the existing **national** DRR strategies and plans are not actionable and have not been implemented due to weak disaster risk governance systems, a lack of dedicated financial resources, technical and institutional capacities, or accountability measures such as clear roles and responsibilities, targets, timelines and indicators. In most countries, where DRR and CCA strategies co-exist, they are often not well linked, contribute to silo thinking and place excessive demands on practitioners and local actors.

¹ Definitions of prospective, corrective, compensatory DRM are from the Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction, Seventy-first session of the UN General Assembly, 1 December 2016

² UNISDR research based on review of HFA progress and updates received from countries up to September 2016

The majority of **sub-national** governments still do not have any form of strategy or framework towards disaster risk reduction, and where-ever they exist, they are largely designed to address disaster response and preparedness. Based on the local HFA reports, most local governments in Europe demonstrate direct implementation of national disaster risk management strategies at the local level – with some level of variety. This picture is less homogenous in most other regions, where local governments implement DRR measures in the majority of instances through ad-hoc decisions at the local level. As a result, the implementation of risk management policies at local level has been either inconsistent, or resulted in overlaps and blurred lines of responsibilities and accountability.

What is a DRR Strategy?

A DRR strategy is basically a road map to get from a starting point to a destination point. The starting point is defined by a common understanding of the prevalent disaster risk and the evaluation of the current DRR system and its capacities. The destination point is defined by the disaster risk reduction goals and targets that are decided by a high-level authority at national or local level, or a multi-stakeholder mechanism in consultation with the populations at risk.

National and local DRR strategies need to be guided by and aligned with the development objectives and priorities of the country or the locality. They are designed for the context of the society and environment as defined by relevant hazards, high priority risks and the socio-economic setting. The selection of risk reduction targets and the balance of different types of measures will be situation-specific, and vary not only with the environmental, physical, social, cultural and economic conditions, but will also depend on the risk perception and risk tolerance of the society. A DRR strategy, or the road map, may take variety of formats depending on the context of the country or sub-national governments. It may be one comprehensive strategy document or a system of strategies across sectors and stakeholder with one overarching document linking them.

The Sendai Framework provides guidance on updating and developing national and local DRR strategies that are common and relevant to all countries and societies. its four priorities of action and guiding principles provide clear recommendations on the approach and requirements of DRR strategies. Based on this guidance, and recognizing that disaster risk governance is seen as the system of institutions, mechanisms, policy and legal frameworks and other arrangements to guide, coordinate and oversee disaster risk reduction³, the following elements have been identified as the core requirements for successful DRR strategies:

- Be based on legislative or regulatory frameworks to mainstream and integrate disaster risk reduction within and across all sectors;
- Have a governance mechanism that is transparent and inclusive for effective and efficient management of disaster risk;
- Promote policy coherence and compliance notably with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, and between national and local level;
- Guide public and private sectors with clear roles and responsibilities for whole-of-society;
- Have clear time frames, targets and indicators;

³ Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group (OIEWG) on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction, December 2016

- Be based on a comprehensive assessment of disaster risk from all hazards as well as evaluation of technical, financial and administrative disaster risk management capacity at the local and national level to inform the DRM measures;
- Have explicit objectives and measures aimed at preventing the creation of risk, reducing existing risk, and strengthening economic, social, health and environmental resilience;

While a DRR Strategy is an input element, it leads to disaster risk reduction as an outcome only if it is implemented. The global indicators defined by the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group (OIEWG)⁴ for measuring progress towards Target E addresses this critical nuance by requiring the counting of only DRR strategies that are adopted and implemented. See the text of Target E indicators:

Global target E: Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.

- E-1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- E-2 Percentage of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies.

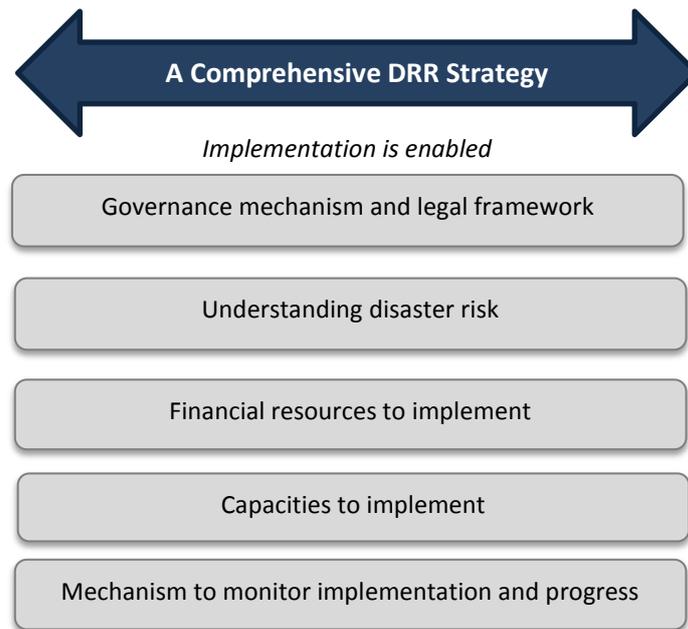
To ensure the DRR strategies can be implemented successfully, five critical enabling elements have been identified based on country experiences and consultations (Figure 2):

- i. Strong governance mechanism and legal frameworks to manage the process of developing a DRR strategy and enabling implementation
- ii. Comprehensive understanding of disaster risk and coping capacities to inform the DRM measures
- iii. Sufficient and stable financial resources dedicated to implement the strategy
- iv. Technical and institutional implementation capacities
- v. Strengthened mechanisms to follow-up, periodically assess and publicly report on progress

These five elements are the focus of discussion at the Global Platform for DRR 2017 at Plenary 1: National and Local Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies Pave the Way for Action by All.

⁴ Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction, December 2016

Figure 2: Enabling elements that ensure DRR Strategies can be implemented



ENABLING ELEMENTS: CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ENTRY POINTS

1. **Strong governance mechanism and legal framework to manage the process of developing DRR strategy and enable implementation and progress**

Disaster risk governance in a country includes a system of institutions, mechanisms, policies and legal frameworks at community, local, and national level. Effectiveness of strategies in reducing disaster risk is contingent upon strong governance mechanism that guides the public and private sector to address disaster risk, promotes and provides incentives for actions by persons, households, communities and businesses, and enhances mechanisms for implementation including legal frameworks, financial resources, accountability and transparency measures including public awareness raising, reporting requirements, compliance and redress mechanism.

Aligned with the disaster risk governance of the country, DRR strategies also require an inclusive and transparent governance mechanism. Establishing a coordination mechanism or identifying and enhancing an existing one such as developing planning mechanism is the first and most important step required for managing the process of developing DRR strategies and monitoring implementation of it. In many countries and some sub-national governments a coordination mechanism focused on DRR issues has been established and is called National Platform for DRR or Local Platform for DRR. This DRR platforms may need to be enhanced to include actors from development and climate change adaptation as well as private sector, science and technology, and civil society representatives.

The requirements for an effective governance mechanism include:

- Legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks that formally provide the official mandate and authorities for the development and implementation of national DRR strategies and action plans

- The institutional mechanism responsible for the management of disaster risk is formally established and led at the highest levels of governance nationally and sub-nationally reflecting the governments' commitment to DRR
- The mechanism functions as a platform to convene, engage, coordinate, and monitors across ministries, between levels of government, and across public and private sectors
- The mechanism has an inclusive composition with representatives from key line ministries, civil society with special representation from minorities and vulnerable groups including women, scientific and technical institutions, private sector, media
- The mechanism has sufficient interlinkages and representatives from development and climate change adaptation, and other relevant sectors. This is especially critical if the DRR platform is embedded in the development governance platform
- The mechanism functions to develop a shared vision of risks and risk reduction goals among all stakeholders, and enables them to understand their shared vision of risk
- The mechanism functions to identify and agree on specific roles and responsibilities, create incentives, and clarify accountability to manage disaster risk
- The mechanism has a transparent and whole-of-society approach ensuring effective two-way communication between governments and all stakeholders including the general public
- The mechanism has a dedicated staff with sufficient human and financial capacities to support ongoing functions of the platform

2. Comprehensive understanding of disaster risk and coping capacities⁵ to inform the DRM measures

Understanding disaster risk including underlying risk factors and risk sources, interlinkages between various vulnerabilities, direct and indirect impacts, and existing capacities is a requirement to ensure the targets of DRR strategy are relevant and DRM measures are effective in reducing risk by addressing pertinent issues.

Risk assessments and evaluation of current capacities in disaster risk management system provide a scientific, evidence-base for evaluating and prioritizing risks and DRM measures.

DRR strategies need information on risk and DRM capacities that is relevant and accessible to support decision such as:

- Setting goals and targets (i.e. reducing mortality from a certain earthquake scenario by x% in 10 years adjusted for population growth or selecting an acceptable

⁵ From OIEWG terminology: **Capacity** is the combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organization, community or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience. Capacity may include infrastructure, institutions, human knowledge and skills, and collective attributes such as social relationships, leadership and management.

Coping capacity is the ability of people, organizations and systems, using available skills and resources, to manage adverse conditions, risk or disasters. The capacity to cope requires continuing awareness, resources and good management, both in normal times as well as during disasters or adverse conditions. Coping capacities contribute to the reduction of disaster risks.

economic impact level from frequent floods and ensuring it is maintained despite urban expansion)

- Designing and prioritizing the most effective types of DRM measures that target a specific source of risk or address identified gaps in coping capacities and resilience in relation to the risk levels (i.e. updating and enforcing building codes and regulating construction practice of critical infrastructure or retrofitting highly vulnerable health facilities, enhancing early warning and evacuation plans, or enforcing social safety nets, preventing and reducing the risk of disaster displacement)
- Guiding disaster risk financial management (i.e. estimating risk in monetary terms allows prioritizing DRM measures based on cost-benefit analysis or designing disaster risk retention and transfer measures)
- Designing public education and awareness measures

Risk Assessments

In most countries, updates to national and/or local risk assessments are needed to include all relevant hazards, to ensure asset exposure data is up to date and all environmental, social and economic consequences are captured, and to ensure the risk assessment provides all critical information necessary for developing a DRR strategy.

Given the multifaceted character of disaster risk, causes and interlinked impact at all government levels, across sectors and communities, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is recommended for conducting risk assessment that serves the DRR strategy.

It is recommended to establish a national system for understanding disaster risk that would act as the central repository of all publicly available risk information. This national system would lead the implementation and updates of disaster risk assessment for use in disaster risk management, including for risk-informed disaster risk reduction strategies and development plans. Depending on the country's governance mechanism, this central system can include a network of local level centers. The understanding disaster risk system would be embedded in the existing multi-stakeholder governance mechanism and lead by national and/or local governments to ensure legitimacy and ownership of risk information by decision-makers. It is important for the national and local systems to be connected and mutually reinforcing to reduce cost by benefiting from available data and analysis at all levels and by avoiding any duplication.

The understanding disaster risk system would be the foundation of a long term and ongoing process of conducting risk assessments serving a wide range of stakeholders. This is especially important to save cost and avoid any duplications during DRR strategy implementation stage when more refined risk assessments might be needed for implementation of some measures (i.e. update to building codes, or engineering design of infrastructures or planning for timely and safe evacuations).

Multi-hazard risk assessments are costly at national and local level but long term benefits of DRR and risk informed development significantly outweigh the upfront cost of conducting risk assessments. In fact, for most of DRM measures that benefit from a risk assessment the financial cost of conducting risk assessment is marginal to the total cost of the investment.

Evaluating DRM System and Capacities

The process of evaluating DRR systems and prioritizing investment in DRR must be nationally or locally driven, consensual, inclusive and context specific in view of prevailing risks in the country or the region of attention. The process of evaluation and prioritization must be given sufficient time for all stakeholders to have full participation by sharing their perception of strengths, weaknesses and gaps using the Sendai Framework as a comprehensive analytical framework. The evaluation cannot be externally driven by international experts. The evaluation and prioritization process must be based on a common understanding of risk at national and local level. In particular a good understanding of the vulnerability of key socio-economic and environmental sectors to natural and technological and health hazards must be well understood to develop a targeted country specific national strategy.

3. Sufficient and stable financial resources dedicated to implement the strategy

It seems evident that without dedicated financial resources the implementation of DRR strategies would not be feasible. However, a review of practices during the HFA era indicates limited budgets were allocated to disaster risk management beyond narrow emergency management functions. Accordingly, many DRR strategies were not implemented.

Financial resources should mirror the diversity of DRM measures needed to manage risk by covering the three categories of DRM measures:

- Preventing creation of new risk through risk-informed development, ensuring that all public and private investments are risk-sensitive.
- Reducing existing risk, which may, for example, require significant investments to existing structures and infrastructure.
- Managing residual risk through enhanced preparedness and recovery planning, improved social resilience to restore livelihoods and enable durable solutions to affected persons, and financial resilience through the use of both a) financial instruments to retain and transfer risk, and b) macro-economic tools.

Considering the significant amount of investments in new development in the coming decades, especially in developing countries, and the acknowledged sustainable development goals (SDG) the necessity of integrating DRR into wider development work is clear. Mirroring that fact, integrating DRR financing into development budgeting would also provide a better potential for funding all categories of DRM measures especially for the prevention of new risk and reduction of existing risk.

The recommendations in a recent OECD report⁶ to its members and non-members focus on the establishment of a financial strategy led by the Ministry of Finance or equivalent. It also recommends assessments of financial vulnerabilities, conducting comprehensive risk assessments, the development of risk transfer markets and careful management of the financial impacts from disasters, although it falls short of explicit language that calls on members and partners to ensure that all investment is 'risk-informed'. This is a critical point as the 'infrastructure that is now being damaged by disasters was once the result of public or private investment decisions.'⁷ The issue of public and private investment and disaster risk is critical as this is the 'heavy-lifting' of risk reduction

⁶ OECD Recommendation on Disaster Risk Financing Strategy, 2017

⁷ Sendai Framework Issue Brief on Public Investment in Disaster Risk Reduction, Page 1.

and it is through investment that the public and private sectors either create new risk or reduce risk. A national strategy for financing disaster risk reduction that covers all categories of DRM measures might be a better recommendation. Main elements of such strategy could include a variety of activities and provisions:

- Baseline reviews/gap analysis of existing national and local public investment and financing capacities for disaster risk reduction and risk-informed development (for example through public expenditure reviews). This includes a diagnosis analysis of bottle necks and challenges that have led to little progress on DRR financing
- Assessment of risk levels and cost-effectiveness of DRM measures are used to facilitate dialogue among public and private stakeholders on risk sensitive investments
- Implications of DRR investment needs on financial resources and move towards a “solution-driven” approach to dedicate budget to DRR both through development and dedicated DRR budget to manage the limited resources and capacities effectively
- Methods, guidelines and procedures to promote risk-sensitive public policy and investment
- Develop the systematic tracking of budgets assigned to DRR spending, including where projects have additional ‘risk-related’ expenditure requirements
- Financial incentives for government agencies and private sector to include DRM principles in their short to long term strategic plans
- Mechanism to monitor fiscal expenditures in different categories of DRM measures and estimates of risk reduction outcome from such investments over time to inform and update the strategy and budgeting

4. Technical and institutional implementation capacities

Besides financial resources, implementation of a DRR strategy requires variety of engineering and scientific expertise as well as political, leadership and management capacities at all levels and across all actors. It is important to distinguish between the capacity that is required for implementation of measures in a DRR strategy versus the coping capacity of the society to cope with disaster once it hits.

An important early step in the process of developing DRR strategies is to evaluate the existing DRR system including implementation capacities such as technical and institutional capacities. The implementation capacity requirements at local and national levels need to be translated into capacity development measures, both technical and institutional, as part of the DRR strategy.

Capacity development measures would be context based, interlinked to the other DRM measures, locally driven, and inclusive of all stakeholders and sectors, while benefiting from existing technical and institutional capacities specially in the private sector and academia. Capacity development is a long term and gradual process that similar to all the other measures of DRR strategy, it requires ownership, clarity on roles and responsibilities, and monitoring and evaluation and learning. External resources targeted at developing specific capacities can be a

significant support in accelerating the capacity development specially in science and engineering field.

5. Strengthened mechanisms to follow-up, periodically assess and publicly report on progress

Once a national or local DRR strategy is finalized and adapted, the implementation by various stakeholders starts. Having effective national and local accountability mechanisms for reporting and follow-up with responsible entities is critical to assess and manage any obstacles to achieving the expected risk-informed results. The Sendai Framework discusses accountability in various sections and most specifically under Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance and paragraph 27 (e).

The multi-stakeholder governance mechanism such as a national or local platform is the most appropriate system to continue with the task of following up with government entities and stakeholders to monitor (a) implementation of DRM measures and (b) achievement of risk reduction goals and targets. Both aspects of monitoring require contribution and collaboration among all sectors and stakeholders, are resource intensive and should be managed efficiently.

DRR strategies should be equipped to integrate SDG and CC goals with a set of national and local level disaster risk management indicators (input, output, or outcome). In order to maintain the synergies for aggregating progress reports, the indicators must be selected carefully to ensure enough local indicators meaningfully roll-up into relevant national indicators, which in turn can be meaningfully rolled-up in the required global level indicators for reporting on Sendai Framework⁸.

The follow up mechanisms need to be empowered with:

- Political ownership at the highest level of the country or sub-national government
- Legislative or policy mandate to oversee public and private stakeholder's actions
- Common understanding and acceptance of its monitoring role across all governmental entities and stakeholders
- Engagement, coordination, and consultation capacities as a multi-stakeholder mechanism. These capacities would have already been developed throughout the process of developing national or local DRR strategies
- Innovative methods to have two way communication and feedback mechanism s from civil society and general public
- Information management mechanism to collect data and reports, consolidate and analyze, and prepare reports for local to national to global levels
- Staff capacity to manage the process including communication with actors, data and reports collection and evaluation
- The connection and interlinkages with disaster loss data collection systems and national statistics office

DRR-CCA-Development coherence: A common thread of opportunity

⁸ Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction

A common thread visible in all five enabling elements of a DRR Strategy is the opportunity provided by the existing legal, political and institutional mechanisms as well as financial and technical capacities in the development system. Comprehensive disaster risk reduction needs to align with identified SDG and CCA goals, and an integrated development process is required to best prevent the creation of new risk and to do the heavy lifting in reducing existing risk through structural and non-structural measures.

Coherence and strategic coordination between development planning, DRR strategies, and climate change adaptation allows efficient use of all resources by investing in tools that can be commonly used (i.e. multi-hazard risk assessments) and design measures that consider both disaster risk and long term climate change patterns (i.e. flood protection dykes that are designed for a longer-term climate scenarios).

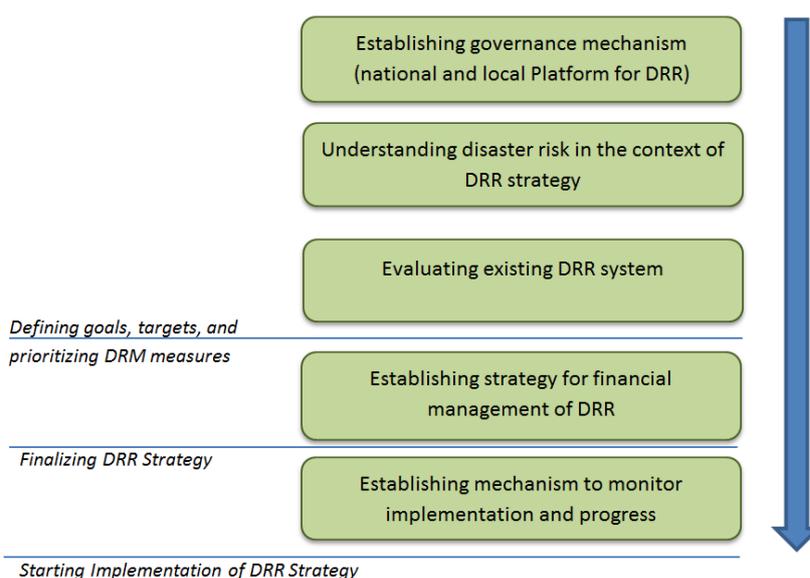
National strategies are especially strong instruments to guide budgeting and finances including bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding mechanisms and galvanizing political support of government, public and private sector to key issues. National DRR strategies are being developed at the same time that countries are developing National Adaptation Plans (NAP's), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 's) which some have adaptation measures too and, in some countries, national strategies for sustainable development. Seeking coherence among these strategies is an opportunity not to be missed.

Common approach to develop DRR strategies

The review of many existing comprehensive DRR strategies and interviews with key actors involved have revealed a common set of logical steps as the best approach for updating or developing DRR strategies. These steps are outlined in Figure 3.

These steps would take different format and sequence depending on the context of the country and would be built on already existing building blocks.

Figure 3: Common steps for the process of developing DRR strategies



3. Way forward

Recognizing all that is outlined in previous sections of this issue brief, five fundamental societal shifts are required for effectively moving forward in the development and implementation of national and local DRR strategies:

1. ***Cohherence with Development*** –Leaders at all levels of government, community and stakeholders, and across all private and public sectors must reach beyond their sectoral silos to create a coherent DRR mechanism that ensures existing risk is meaningfully mitigated and future development is conducted in a risk-sensitive manner that avoids or prevents the creation of new risk.
2. ***Whole of Society Responsibility*** - All members of society must participate in a cultural shift that acknowledges individual responsibility for understanding their disaster risk and the role(s) played in managing it. Involvement of civil society in developing national and local DRR strategies will ensure relevant measures are included in the strategy.
3. ***Financial Commitment*** - Leaders at all levels of governance, must develop and implement a strategy for the funding all aspects of disaster risk management, including the mitigation of existing risk, and the proactive management of the costs associated with residual risk (e.g. through retention, transfer, or hybridized planning).
4. ***Accountability*** – Government leaders at national and sub-national levels must regularly report to constituents on their assessment of risk and the progress made toward 1) preventing new disaster risk; 2) minimizing existing disaster risk; and, 3) managing residual disaster risk.
5. ***Comprehensive Understanding of Disaster Risk***- Reliable information on current hazard and risk levels as well as an understanding of what has caused creation of present risk is critical to ensure design, implementation, enforcement, and monitoring of DRM measures in the way forward.