



04 Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in the Americas



UNISDR and GS/OAS Regional Study

Reflection and Analysis Surrounding the Commitments and Initiatives to Support the Implementation of the HFA from a Regional Perspective

A contribution to the preparatory process for carrying out the 1st Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the discussions for the 2nd Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Commissioned by UNISDR Americas and the Department of Sustainable Development of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States

Introduction

1. This document uses the HFA reference for organizing the presentation of regional trends, progress, gaps, challenges and opportunities related to HFA and the Inter-American Strategic Plan for Policy on Vulnerability Reduction, Risk Management and Disaster Response, IASP, implementation. The document recognizes the acquired commitments by sovereign states of the UN, OAS and sub-regional intergovernmental organizations in relation to convergence and support for their implementation. It has been prepared under the GS/OAS-mandated work as the principle partner in the hemisphere with the UNISDR and towards supporting the implementation of the HFA priorities and strategic objectives and the IASP.

Context

2. In short, there is convergence, duplication, and divergence surrounding disaster risk reduction policies, programs and projects undertaken by political and technical entities in the Americas. They form part of the underlying risk factors referred to collectively as a culture of disasters by design through development actions. Overall there is progress that varies by sector in DRR but for the most part there are no goals, measurable levels of achievement or coordination between sectors or with CCA; overall there is no momentum for DRR through development. With the HFA and IASP as a backdrop, focal point for implementation and acquired commitment, some regional, sub-regional and national initiatives now focus on vulnerability reduction (reducing the underlying risk factors) as the priority action. If the presentation of DRR does not become part and parcel of the

development process there appears to be little prospect for a country to diminish risk to natural hazard events so as to reverse the trends of increased economic loss and impacted populations and environmental resources while continuing to reduce loss of life. DRR simply cannot successfully compete as a special issue along side other special interests.

3. The HFA and IASP differ yet complement each other in their breadth and depth. It is not surprising that the HFA is less specific yet less broad than the IASP. When both HFA and IASP are compared with the emerging approaches at the sub-regional levels, it is clear that in the scope of inter-governmental interplay, the sub-region holds a key position to at once touch directly national policy and practice while at the same time helping to shape sovereign state participation in broader inter-governmental initiatives. And the regional and sub-regional intergovernmental political organizations have exhibited less a propensity to consider or address DRR as a sector, and more ability to convene development sectors to discuss disaster risk reduction issues.

Expected Outcome

4. For most countries participating in sub-regional intergovernmental DRR agencies and political working committees the trend is reduction of loss of life, but the numbers of people impacted and the economic and environmental assets lost continue to rise. In those countries where federal governments (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, and the USA), the same trends generally hold true. Changing and evolving approaches to DRR, particularly at the sub-regional level, call for more highly focused efforts on reducing the loss and exposure as part of initiatives using development actions.

Way Forward

5. The UNISDR and OAS Systems should undertake collaborative efforts to support reporting on the Expected Outcome through the Regional Platform, which can become the convening mechanism, the process and the reporting forum for high level technical consultations with broad participation from government, international development community, business and civil society for benchmarking, monitoring and reporting, shared data base generation, meeting calendar, legal agreement review, clustering of HFA and IASP components to improve DRR and EM, and DRR-CCA initiative review.

SG 1

6. HFA National Platforms are growing slowly with debate and criticism as to DRR approaches and a lack of coordination with national and specific sector development plans, and a gap in HFA implementation reporting that overly depends on the author of the national report. HFA National Platforms and CCA National Committees are evolving in isolation of one another while perceptions as to the convergence and divergence of DRR and CCA protocols, funding mechanisms and implementation are discussed at several levels. Roles, responsibilities and plans of action often proceed with little consultation and consensus although they are sponsored by the same sovereign states. The onus is on individual governments to assure coordinated compliance with the global, hemispheric and sub-regional commitments and mandates to which they are a party.

Way Forward

7. The Regional Platform should establish a dialogue with stakeholders at the highest technical level to review draft reports on implementation of HFA and IASP and strengthening their implementation, review agreements on emergency management, review DRR in development initiatives, and review specific sector initiatives.

SG 2

8. Countries are taking a broader and deeper look at the convergence and divergence of actions in preparing for and responding to emergency situations and the underlying causes and response to natural hazard risk in development, institutional settings and the emergency management vs. reduction initiatives in development. This all is far too broad for effective capacity building under present assigned institutional responsibilities, and owners and operators of vulnerable economic and social infrastructure have little incentive to staff for action because of lack of responsibility and accountability, pressure on budgets, and the lack of a mission statement appropriating the DRR process as their own. Thematic DRR platforms have not prompted a formal call for addressing these two constraints, and sector political response has been modest if not mute. Also under examination is loss-driven and index-driven access to capital mechanisms. There is no reason to believe or hope that IFI, bilateral and NGO support of stand alone, specialized DRR agencies and programs will offer the proper mechanisms or capacity building required for comprehensive national natural hazard assessment, monitoring, and alert initiatives, and risk reduction initiatives through sectors.

Way Forward

9. Institutional agendas for emergency management and risk reduction must assign priority actions to actors who are present and participating. Where strengthening institutions, mechanisms and capacities at the national level are dependent on external funds, international actors must lay aside avoidance of inclusive sub-regional initiatives and join emerging risk management initiatives at all levels, particularly those related to capacity building and local multi-sector development activities.

SG 3

10. Risk reduction is an increasing visible issue in reconstruction policies, programs and projects, often at the instigation if not insistence of IFIs and international donor, humanitarian assistance and community development institutions. They have set up dialogues and shared experiences, but often outside of the development context. IFIs now report post-disaster reconstruction and DRR grants and lending as a significant part of their portfolio, yet there is no clear understanding of the qualitative and quantitative participation of reconstruction projects in national economies. In the end IFI and donor-driven DRR initiatives may have a demonstrable impact on new economic and social infrastructure risk reduction long before there takes place any substantive risk reduction of existing economic and social infrastructure.

Way Forward

11. The processes and products coming out of post-disaster reconstruction efforts must be immediately put to use by and for development operations in IFIs, bilaterals, NGOs, national governments and their ministries, business and civil society. Additional DRR guidance for development and reconstruction should be more conditioned as to the specific hazard risk reduction context.

PA 1

12. Considerable advances have been made to deal with emergency management issues, but making disaster risk reduction a development priority through national, sector and community initiatives is less visible. Risk transfer is being more widely discussed across emergency management-development institution lines, but it too is being pursued without concurrently addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability. The task of investment in disaster risk reduction challenges international and national institutions alike as they must make risk management part of development efforts and avoid using natural hazard risk reduction as a stand alone special interest issue.

Way Forward

13. The initiatives directly involving sector actors are demonstrating the most efficient and effective means of decentralizing responsibilities, building capacity, providing for dedicated and adequate resources at all levels, implementing successful DRR actions at the local level, fomenting policy and legal frameworks including provisions for civil society participation, and building towards multi-sector HFA National Platform participation and more comprehensive HFA and IASP implementation reporting.

PA 2

14. There is increasing capacity for integrated natural hazard phenomena monitoring, early warning and alerts, particularly through community based vulnerability assessment and capacity initiatives focusing on, or evolving from, integrated community development programs. But progress on sub-regional and national systems is coming about principally through post-disaster investment in geologic hazard assessment, and climate research including atmospheric and hydrologic hazard assessment supporting climate change adaptation programs. In general neither governments nor their supporters see nor accept natural hazard information as a public good while generation of much information is often dependent on specific donor and lender financed DRR initiatives. Yet there is no prospect that such activities will ever cover the demand for hazard, vulnerability and risk assessment information once economic and social sectors take on their responsibility for preparing their individual risk management strategies. Almost without exception, no sector has carried out mandated vulnerability and risk assessments of economic and social infrastructure. Presently international vulnerability indexing initiatives using GIS and available national data will help shape future risk management decisions.

Way Forward

15. Only the economic and social development sectors themselves should and can prepare the vulnerability and risk assessments needed to make their development decisions. This is particularly needed in dealing with community involvement and atmospheric and hydrologic information, and is particularly urgent related to water resource management including trans-boundary, ground and surface water issues related to agriculture, energy, mining, recreation, transportation, and drinking water consumption.

PA 3

16. The gap between acquired commitments and DRR implementation is a reflection of the risk management views of society. When DRR and education are discussed, the analysis, conclusions and recommendations as to reducing risk are usually quite general, and rarely include those who actually make decisions about living vulnerable lives. There is no specificity as to the population or societal group, locale or geopolitical setting, goal or objective except for the rather robust area of primary and secondary school curriculum, community-level emergency preparedness and response, and community vulnerability and capacity assessment.

Way Forward

17. All sectors and relevant settlement organizations must themselves constitute the constituency for the broad public awareness campaign for risk reduction, and access and use hazard information to determine vulnerability and risk as part of their ongoing development function. National and sub-regional DRR education and capacity building strategies emphasis must be put on individual disciplines as a requirement as part of their curricula and practicum. Emergency management as a discipline must continue to develop and expand its education and research endeavors. International programs of all types should support the education of multidisciplinary sector teams on DRR issues.

PA 4

18. Transformation from an emergency management to a development focused approach to DRR is insipient and difficult to carry forward at the national level as it call into play poverty, gender and highly vulnerable populations targeted in MDG, administrative decentralization, land use management, governance and corruption. The international community now recognizes that repetitive disasters and the underlying risk factors make continued effective emergency management questionable as multiple declarations note continuing vulnerability. DRR schemes at all levels are built along side other special interest and development programs. Financial risk transfer schemes are emerging to protect national fiscal solvency, but vulnerability reduction is a secondary objective.

Way Forward

19. With the direct involvement of IFIs, bilaterals and NGOs and other agencies of the international development community, risk reduction to natural hazard events must be redefined through development processes including policies, planning, programs and practice. Economic and social sector units in inter-governmental organizations and agencies must demand, support and participate in all facets of natural hazard analysis, vulnerability assessment and risk management. Regional and sub-regional inter-governmental organizations should support legislation, policy and operations reform as needed at the national and sub-national level. For international development assistance policies, programs and projects, the focus must shift from a reference to mainstreaming risk management in development to identifying and making visible the risk to natural hazards present in development actions throughout the sectors so as to reduce vulnerability in accordance with the Expected Outcome of the HFA.

PA 5

20. Emergency management is the longest standing and most developed disaster risk reduction initiative in the Americas. In most countries there is increasing national institutional capacity to respond to emergencies with international support. The advances in lessening the loss of life in the region are a manifestation of this progress, support and global concern. Given the anticipated needs to deal with now increasing numbers of affected populations, the international humanitarian assistance community is revising its placement of emergency management in the broader disaster risk reduction spectrum. It is calling for more collaboration where there are repetitive disaster declarations and/or where in the foreseeable future countries will be unable to mount sufficient national capacity to lessen the need for issuing appeals for international assistance.

Way Forward

21. Follow through with the acquired commitments dealing with:
 - a. Full institutional participation as mandated in existing forums,
 - b. Agreement on formal emergency mechanisms,
 - c. As part of the Regional Platform process priorities and initiatives related to emergency management in its varying aspects, and
 - d. Sub-regional and regional technical recommendations as inputs for political discussions on emergency management.

22. Specialized emergency management entities should demand of each sector at all planning and operational levels the relevant vulnerability and risk information of its infrastructure and associated personnel with priority on critical facilities and life lines.

Closing

23. In summary, disaster risk reduction in the Americas must become primarily a development demand-driven activity where the existing information, knowledge and expertise are sought and applied by populations for their economic and social infrastructure, even as the supply of information, knowledge and expertise is expanded and supported for emergency preparedness and response.

Key Words and Phrases

bilaterals (donor country aid agencies work directly with recipient countries or through executing agencies)
civil society
clusters
communities of practice
critical facilities
disasters by design
gender
labor unions
life safety and functionality
life lines
poverty
public good
repetitive losses
social networks
social trust funds
sovereign state
water resource management

Acronyms

ACS - Association of Caribbean States
 APF – Adaptation Policy Framework
 CCA – climate change adaptation
 CAN - Comunidad Andina de Naciones
 CAPRA – Central America Probabilistic Risk Assessment
 CAPRADE - Comité Andino para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres
 CARICOM - Caribbean Community and Common Market
 Cartagena Declaration
 CDERA - Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency
 CEPREDENAC - Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central
 CHS - Committee on Hemispheric Security
 COGSS - Coalition for Global School Safety and Disaster Prevention Education
 DRR - Disaster risk reduction
 EDUPLANHemisferico
 EM – emergency management
 GIS - geographic information system
 HFA - Hyogo Framework for Action
 IACNDR - Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction
 IASP - Inter-American Strategic Plan for Policy on Vulnerability Reduction, Risk Management and Disaster Response
 IFI – International Finance Institution
 IGO - Intergovernmental organization
 INDM - Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation
 INEE - International Network for Emergency Education
 Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Emergency Situations

LAC – Latin America and the Caribbean
MDG -Millennium Develop Goals
MERCOSUR – Mercado Común del Sur
NDO - National development organizations
NGO - Non-governmental organizations
NOFP - National Operational Focal Points
OAS - Organization of American States
PADF – Pan American Development Foundation
PAHO - Pan American Health Organization
ProVention Consortium
REDLAC - Risk, Emergency and Disasters Task Force of the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee
SEDI - Secretaria Ejecutiva para Desarrollo Integral
SICA - Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana
UNISDR - United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VCA – vulnerability and capacity assessment