

Component 3. Advocacy for Mainstreaming Risk Management in Urban Governance

“The stresses and strains of rapid urbanization are nowhere more apparent than in the local areas in developing countries.... This human inflow into local areas needs to be set against the continuing deterioration of conditions of shelter and the difficulties of providing social services in expanding human settlements in urban areas.... Urban infrastructure is itself vulnerable to natural hazards. People in urban areas are more dependent on increasingly sophisticated but also often poorly maintained infrastructure.... Physical conditions within cities tend to further intensify the effects of hazards emanating from natural phenomena.... Urban generated pollutants in the atmosphere contribute to high levels of harmful ozone, smog...”

Living with Risk, UNISDR

3.1. The nature of the problem

Almost all cities selected as demonstration cities of the PROMISE program had impacts from the recent hydro-meteorological disaster events. Many other cities have shown vulnerability to various natural disasters, such as floods, cyclones, landslides etc. Recent examples include typhoon Xangsane in Viet Nam, cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh, cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, and typhoon Frank in the Philippines. Such events were responsible for the destruction of houses and property, infrastructure and lifeline facilities, and loss of lives. The reasons for such damage and losses are lack of preparedness measures, failure of early warning mechanism, structurally weaker buildings, and the location of such buildings and infrastructure within hazard-prone areas. The other significant factor seen is institutional vulnerability, a common factor that is connected with all the reasons mentioned above.

We can learn a few good lessons from the recent events. Vulnerabilities (commonly differentiated as physical, institutional, material, socio-economic etc.) are much higher in urban areas, particularly in the secondary and tertiary cities, due to a lack of resources to introduce risk management interventions, insufficient regulation, and a poor risk management framework. On the other hand, secondary cities are growing faster than capital cities as they have more room for expansion in terms of physical space and investment opportunities. If this trend is continued and the progression of high

vulnerability is extended to such new and expanding urban areas, we may anticipate even higher future losses and economic impacts due to disasters.

As per the mandates provided, Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible for many regulatory and service functions such as land use planning, issuance of building permits, health and sanitation, disposal of solid waste, safety and emergency response etc. But due to limited capacity and lack of resources, the local government sector has difficulties in executing control, undertaking vulnerability reduction interventions, or improving the quality of delivery of services. On the other hand, although much has been discussed about the compliance to various construction guidelines and building codes and so on, what has been observed in most cases is that the buildings which were subject to destruction are not engineered buildings and do not follow any standards in design or construction. Most of them are owner-built structures, and owners did not seek engineering inputs in either design or construction processes. The infrastructure in smaller cities also is not designed to consider the potential impact of disaster events.

In addition, the Local Authorities (LAs) need to build the capacity of emergency services to support the National Agencies to have a better integrated emergency response system within the respective country. Provision of mandates, building the capacity of local government sector for integrating risk management interventions in to routine practices in the process of building permit as well as in land use planning, etc are some of the priority needs. Most of the relevant ministries understand the importance of mainstreaming the risk reduction discipline in the local government sector and in the process of delegating certain functions of DRR in to local authorities. But it should be a gradual process and it need to be done following a clear strategy for decentralization like in any other important sector.

3.1.1. Why governance needs to link with natural disaster risk management

Good or better governance is recognized as key for sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. The failures of urban planning and development, building regulation, and environmental control can be described as governance failures. The concept of governance refers to the "complex set of values, norms, processes, and institutions by which society manages its economic, political and social affairs and development and resolves conflict, formally and informally. It involves the state, but also civil society and the private sector".

Governance is a broader notion than government, with its principal elements of the constitution, legislature, executive and judiciary. Governance involves the interaction between these formal institutions and those of civil society and the private sector. Governance refers to the exercise of economic, social, political and administrative authority to manage the country's affairs at all levels. It is the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority, influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life, economic and social development. Simply put, governance is all about decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).

Governance decision making has three components – economic, political and administrative. The UNDP refers to these components as the three legs of governance (UNDP, 2004):

1. Economic governance includes the decision-making process that affects a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life.
2. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policies, including national disaster reduction policy and planning.
3. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation and requires the existence of well-functioning organizations at the central and local levels. In the case of disaster risk reduction, it requires functioning enforcement of building codes, land-use planning, environmental risk and human vulnerability monitoring and safety standards.

Where the economic, political and administrative aspects of governance are concerned, many local government institutions have relevant authority vested on them and enjoy a considerable amount of independent decision-making powers to deal with specific functions. However, disaster risk management functions may not be listed among such assigned mandates in many countries. Disaster risk reduction means tackling development challenges that lead to the accumulation of hazard and human vulnerability that prefigure disaster. While disasters destroy development gains, development processes themselves play a role in driving disaster risk. Within their respective government structures, there may be a need to integrate the risk management principles in the abovementioned aspects of governance to deal with these issues. It is worthwhile to mention that some leaders of local government units have identified creative ways of integrating DRM within the wasted functions realizing the importance of safety and security of fellow citizens.

3.1.2. Where mainstreaming is needed

There are attempts by many governments to institutionalize the better governance principles in government institutions. Governments are trying this in a top-down approach, with a few attempts to do the same with a bottom-up approach and by a simultaneous top-down/bottom-up approach. This will largely be dependent on the country's ability to convince those who are in power, as well as those who will keep them in power, of the relevance of governance principles. The failure of those who are in power will be reflected as: development losses (that may or may not be due to disaster events), slowness in implementation, and result in the increase in vulnerability of their population. Similarly, if those who will elect the city governments into power do not understand the core elements of vulnerability, their relationship with governance structure and their ability to propose a change to governance structure, then they will remain vulnerable.

Advocacy should target both groups and success will depend on the level of awareness build on various issues. The main areas of concern to the issue of vulnerability are:

- Institutional set up
- Legal provisions

- Control mechanisms in place (such as building code)
- Planning solutions (such as Land use planning)
- Health and sanitation aspects
- Preservation of environment and conservation
- Recreation, welfare and safety of population.

Unfortunately, most of the local governments are not involved in disaster risk management directly, or are indirectly dealing with such aspects through the integration of various risk minimization interventions within their responsibilities. In many cases, it is due to the following reasons:

- a) Inadequate capacity and knowledge of local government officials (elected representatives as well as local government officials).

Most of the decentralized, local government staff of line agencies are on transferable service. They have limited opportunities to know in detail what actions are most important in reducing vulnerability and disaster risk. They always experience new challenges with each new workplace, and the hazard environment also changes with workstation. The training or awareness programs conducted by central authorities cover mainly themes such as administrative or financial regulations, are meant to help in career prospects, and are generic in nature. The elected representatives who will come to power for a specific term (is in most cases is from three to five years) have more interest in solving other essential problems, and less interest in accommodating risk reduction solutions in their priorities. Both groups need special attention to advocate for a safer habitat within their administration; they need to be educated on the link between risk-reducing, proactive interventions and development.

- b) Lack of mandatory provisions and regulatory authority wasted on them and difficulties to undertake changes without the assistance of central authorities.

In many Asian countries, disaster management is handled by national-level institutions (such as a department or ministry). It is our observation that the activities and functional responsibilities of such institutions are rarely decentralized, or the authority of such institutions has not been adequately delegated to lower levels of governments. This needs to be viewed as a barrier for achieving the disaster resilience at community and local levels. From the positive side, local government institutions in a few countries are successfully handling certain elements of risk management such as emergency health services, fire services, ambulance services etc. Since many countries are now looking at possibilities for decentralization of functions from the center, there is a window of opportunity to integrate disaster risk reduction into the mandate of the local government sector.

- c) Resource constraints including financial, man-power, equipment.

Resources are main inputs for vulnerability reduction and it can be generated from within or through external assistance. However, many governments have a policy that local governments are not allowed to seek financial assistance from external institutions without going through the central authorities. This is a disadvantage for local bodies with limited opportunities for resource generation. Even if it is possible to get external assistance, many city-level stakeholders have not got enough resources, or only a few local bodies seek assistance from NGOs, the private sector etc. And while corporate

social responsibility is found in developed countries, it is still new for developing countries in Asia.

- d) Lack of information or difficulty to obtain such information such as hazard maps, vulnerability and risk maps.

The information related to hazard environment is needed for city development planning, land use regulation, environmental conservation, infrastructure planning, as well as the implementation of vulnerability reduction programs. Unfortunately, city authorities have difficulty in generating such hazard and risk information. Either they do not have access to the information available with source agencies, or they have difficulty in getting the services of institutions or individuals capable of generating such information, or they lack the resources to obtain services, or there is simply the unavailability of maps on topography, contour/elevation, land use, etc. Some cities have well-developed information systems but they do not know how such data can be used to reduce disaster impacts on city dwellers.

- e) No or limited involvement of at-risk communities in taking decisions related to their own vulnerability.

At-risk communities are not involved in decision-making on city development in many cases, although public services are also meant to improve the standard of living of city dwellers. They can voluntarily undertake safety solutions if such needs are inculcated deeply in their minds. One has to take risk management actions not only to satisfy the legal requirements but for one's own safety as well. Encouraging the local communities to observe risk management practices to avoid disasters, at least by moving away from hazard-prone areas or by making buildings stronger, is essential for making the urban areas safer from hazard events.

3.1.3. Developing a conceptual framework and identifying target audience for advocacy for mainstreaming DRR in local government sector

To integrate disaster risk management into local-level planning and programming would require organized action or series of actions, involving national-level ministries and implementing local government institutions to influence people, policies, regulations, practices and systems for enforcement, in order to bring about necessary changes. It is about influencing those in power to act, and convincing implementing institutions to adopt and bring in the changes necessary to the existing system of governance.

The major role in mainstreaming the risk management in local governance should be played by the decision makers and they will essentially become a primary target for advocacy initiatives. The advocacy initiatives targeting the elected representatives and local government officials can be connected with policy changes or improvements such as:

- Setting up local government level disaster management committees
- Adopting new by-laws, revision of building permit procedures, safer construction practices etc.
- Change of regulations (adaptation of zoning ordinances, regulations for urban land use planning, regulations for issue of building permits, tax laws etc.)

- Change of construction practices (for dwellings, road pavements, construction procedures for school buildings, hospitals and other critical facilities, allocation of unsafe land for recreation purposes etc.)
- Improvement of local emergency response capacities
- Capacity building and fund allocation (allocation of a part of the required funds from annual budget, government grants, special projects for risk reduction, etc.)
- Regular programs for awareness creation (city-level disaster safety days, school programs, health programs, simulations and drills)

There is a need for creating awareness among the beneficiaries or the at-risk communities to establish an environment conducive to accept changes mentioned above. They should appreciate the changes and understand the circumstances better so that the advocates can mobilize the community as a pressure group capable of demanding for risk reduction and accountability. Such awareness programs and advocacy campaign should target individuals who can be champions and change agents among decision- and policy-makers, bureaucrats, community members, NGOs, CBOs, media, academia etc. Champions can reach their peers and organize their own awareness programs in turn.

3.2. Demonstration Projects

PROMISE has two demonstration projects in order to push the advocacy, one in the Philippines and the other in Sri Lanka, two countries with very different local governance processes. Each project's objective is to develop a strategy or guideline for mainstreaming risk reduction into local governance, and begin the advocacy through appropriate activities.

3.2.1. Philippines

The Comprehensive Development Plan is the principal document from which the local development investment programming proceeds. It is a planning document that seeks to address the multi-sectoral concerns of the LGU (social, economic, infrastructure, environment and institutional, including their respective sub-sectors) and embodies the LGU's vision, policies and strategies for development, programs, projects and legislative measures to ensure their implementation. The CDP also establishes relationships between and among the various development sectors and sub-sectors to bring about effective horizontal linkages, including those between the city/municipality and the province, and among the other component LGUs of the province.

Objectives:

- 1) Provision of participatory approaches to DRM within the framework of the Rationalized Planning System and the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 001 series of 2007 (Synchronizing and Harmonizing Local Planning, Investment Programming, Revenue Administration, and Budgeting and Expenditure Management);
- 2) Identification of opportunities for interface and strengthening of linkages between the LGUs and national government agencies concerned with DRM;

- 3) Identification of potential Interventions, roles, responsibilities of LGUs in terms of long term disaster risk management and development of a road map for operationalization of the process.
- 4) Identification of opportunities and complementation of efforts on DRM between the LGUs and the Province and among the component LGUs of a province.

Outputs:

- Terminal Report: "Consultation on Integrating Disaster Risk Management into the Local Planning System: Focus on the Comprehensive Planning Process," conducted by the Department of the Interior and Local Government, December 2007; found at: <http://www.adpc.net/v2007/Programs/UDRM/PROMISE/PROGRAM%20COMPONENTS/Component3/Terminal%20Report%20Mainstreaming%20DRM%20Workshop.pdf>
- Final Report (*under development*)

3.2.2. Sri Lanka

Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible for land use planning, issue of building permits, city expansion etc. Due to limited capacity in the local government sector it is not possible for LAs to execute control in such interventions or advice on improving the quality. Although much has been discussed about the compliance to guidelines and building codes, what has been observed in most cases is that the buildings which were subject to destruction had no engineering inputs during the design or construction process. In addition, LAs need to build the capacity of emergency services to support the National Agencies to have a better integrated emergency response system within the country.

Objectives:

- 1) Setting up a Joint Committee. It is suggested that a Joint Committee to be set up for Mainstreaming DRM in Local Government sector involving senior members representing both ministries and relevant institutions in order to:
 - Remove any misunderstanding between the ministries handling the subject of disaster management and the ministries handling the subject of Local government,
 - Create a better understanding of functional responsibilities of different organizations in the mainstreaming process and
 - Develop necessary policy guidelines and action plan for implementation
- 2) Setting up Technical Advisory committees. It is recommended to form Technical Advisory Committees for specialized areas such as:
 - risk based land use planning
 - safer building and construction
 - setting up institutional arrangements within local authorities
- 3) Identification of capacity-building needs. The Ministry recognizes that it is very important to build the capacity of the stakeholders involved in the mainstreaming process. The target group for capacity-building is the elected bodies and the local government officials. Community members, NGOs, CBOs can be included

in public awareness campaigns. Capacity-building can be entrusted to the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance (SLILG), to integrate the same in their regular training programs or as special training programs. The DMC will also organize special training programs, seminars etc. for local government sector officials. Regional institutions specializing in DRR mainstreaming such as UN-ISDR and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center can also provide technical assistance and capacity building.

Output:

- Steering committee comprising representatives of LA, Senior Official of Local Government, and Planning Institutions.
- Guidelines (*in progress*)
- National strategy (*in progress*)
- Policy directions (*in progress*)

3.3. ADPC Regional Consultative Council

ADPC annually convenes a Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) meeting where all the national disaster management focal points meet and discuss important matters related to risk management at regional and national levels. In the RCC meeting held in Dhaka in 2003, the RCC has had a special session on Urban Disaster Risk Management and the meeting has focused on urban vulnerability and need for developing city-based mechanisms to handle the risk in future.

Mr. Arambepola attended the 6th meeting of RCC on 9 to 11 November 2006 in Kunming, People's Republic of China, and presented PROMISE in the meeting. The presentation focused on the advocacy for mainstreaming risk management activities in the local government sector. The outcome of the participation in the meeting was to develop advocacy campaigns for partner countries, and was materialized as the two demonstration projects under this component.

The 7th Annual Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee for Disaster Management was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 8-10 May 2008. The theme was *rights-based, community-led disaster risk management*. The event was co-hosted with the Government of Sri Lanka with support from the Government of Australia. The meeting had sessions on lessons learned from recent disasters, progress made on the implementation of the RCC Program on Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development (RCC MDRD), the ongoing global campaign on Hospitals Safe from Disasters, and on progress on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Both advocacy demonstration projects gave presentations at the event. Copies of the presentation are annexed to this report.