



2nd Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

7-8 November 2007

High-level Round Table 1

Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in National Policies and Programmes

Background Note

National governments and their administrative units in the provinces, districts and the local areas have a primary responsibility to protect people on their territory from the adverse effects of natural hazards. National governments are also responsible for creating an enabling environment to implement disaster risk reduction measures.

By adopting the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 *Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan in January 2005, the 168 Governments present recognized their critical role in working with other actors to reduce disaster risks at national and local levels.

The Hyogo Framework's first two Strategic Goals call for the "development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards" and for an "integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning". To ensure sustained commitments, the prioritization of disaster risk reduction in national policies is identified as a key step to reduce disaster losses and build resilience.

The first of the Hyogo Framework's five Priorities of Action is to "ensure that disaster risk reduction (DRR) becomes a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation". It details a set of related key activities including the:

- Establishment of institutional mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction (National Platforms) with designated responsibilities,
- Integration of risk reduction in various sectoral policies and planning,
- Adoption of risk related legislation,
- Decentralization of disaster-related responsibilities and resources,
- Implementation of measures to foster political commitment and community participation.

These actions are based on the understanding that “countries that develop policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction and that are able to develop and track progress through specific and measurable indicators have greater capacity to manage risks and to achieve widespread consensus for, engagement in and compliance with disaster risk reduction measures across all sectors of society“ (Hyogo Framework, paragraph 16). Successful accomplishment of these roles depends upon the participation and coordination of the widest possible range of stakeholders in a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder framework.

The Hyogo Framework further calls for the creation or strengthening of national integrated disaster risk mechanisms, and particularly refers to National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. These Platforms are to facilitate coordination among stakeholders, advocate and raise awareness on DRR and advance its integration in development policies. These functions are critical to build resilience to disasters, with responsibilities designated at national through local levels of any society. The coordination role of multiple sectors is an important one to ensure “a broad based dialogue at national and regional levels for promoting awareness among the relevant sectors.”

The High Level Round Table 1 would provide a platform and an opportunity to the national governments to present the initiatives taken by them in establishing legal and institutional mechanism for disaster risk reduction, setting up of national platforms for multi-stakeholder coordination and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in national policies and programmes.