



Section 3

Assess progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework and guide the ISDR system

(Agenda item 5-8)

Introduction to reporting on progress

On the morning session of Thursday, 7 June 2007, Mr. Holmes, Chair of the first session of the Global Platform, explained that the session would address agenda item 5 on assessment of progress and gaps in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, and that it would consider an introduction on the reporting process, a global overview of implementation, a review of progress in different regions, and progress on implementation in thematic areas or activity.

Sálvano Briceño, Director of the ISDR secretariat, explained that the Hyogo Framework mandated the secretariat of the ISDR system to monitor the progress of the framework's implementation and to provide guidance as appropriate. He mentioned that a matrix describing the distribution of responsibilities had been elaborated and was available on the secretariat's website. He added that the secretariat is in the process of developing indicators which would initially be of a generic nature and would gradually evolve into more detailed format. Another function of the secretariat includes the assembling of information on hazards, vulnerabilities and impacts, identification of gaps for implementation as well as reporting this information to the General Assembly.

Mr. Briceño mentioned that the draft report on the Hyogo Framework implementation progress (ISDR/GP/2007/3) would be revised to reflect the Global Platform's discussions, and that key conclusions would be presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2007. He described the reporting process and said that 70 per cent of those who had been contacted had responded with a report. In some cases, the reporting process had stimulated significant internal dialogue at the country level, and the secretariat was working on developing further the reporting process with a view to develop capacities at the country level. He also said that the ISDR secretariat recommended making these reports¹⁵ widely accessible as they are a valuable tool to identify progress and gaps and to promote disaster risk reduction.

Regional and global overview of implementation – progress and gaps

The Chair opened the floor for discussion on regional activities. The representative of the African Union stated that countries in his region were in the process of establishing a regional strategy and programme of action with specific objectives, as well as reviewing their national strategies, with the regional strategy and programme of action as reference. He mentioned that their first consultative meeting had been held in April 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya and that the recommendations of this meeting had been endorsed by African ministers¹⁶.

The representative of the Organization of American States described some of the most important activities carried out at the regional level, namely, reporting, promoting the establishment of national platforms, establishment of networks and the elaboration of case studies, guidelines and materials. A matrix based on reports by 25 countries had been developed; he also mentioned that efforts in promoting the elaboration of reports frequently led to the establishment of national platforms¹⁷.

The representative of the Asia and the Pacific region pointed out the need for establishing a strong regional platform as well as for creating cross-regional exchanges. She also mentioned that multi-hazard frameworks, including tsunami detection systems, needed to be financed and further developed. Finally, she underlined the importance of indicators and particularly the inclusion of disaster risk reduction into the planning and development of indicators for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals¹⁸.

The representative of the Council of Europe highlighted several challenges among which the introduction of disaster risk reduction into development planning and the coordination at regional, national and local level were emphasized. He also mentioned that the council was focusing on the interaction between scientists and policymakers¹⁹.

The representative of the West Asia and North African region described the activities on disaster risk reduction carried out at the regional level and underlined the importance of regional coordination. He announced the opening of the ISDR outreach office in Cairo and stressed the need for further financial support²⁰.

15 National Progress Reports on the Implementation of the HFA will be made available at PreventionWeb at: <http://www.preventionweb.net/hfareports>

16 ISDR/GP/2007/Inf.4

17 ISDR/GP/2007/Inf.7

18 ISDR/GP/2007/Inf.5

19 ISDR/GP/2007/Inf.6

20 ISDR/GP/2007/Inf.8

A representative of the ISDR secretariat presented the findings of the “Disaster Risk Reduction: 2007 Global Review”²¹. He noted that the report was based on 82 national and six regional reports. He mentioned that loss of life seemed to be decreasing, while economic loss seemed to be rapidly rising. In the case of climatic risks, developing countries seemed to suffer greater loss of life while economic loss was predominant in developed countries. He mentioned that, in the case of earthquakes, the linkages between development and loss of life were less clear as mortality rates were more unpredictable. He underlined the impact of numerous small disaster events that affect extensive areas, these being the most “development erosive”.

Regarding the priorities of the Hyogo Framework, he noted that there existed political momentum at national and regional levels; however, there was little involvement of development sectors and lack of financial resources supporting institutions; insufficient implementation of legislation was also a problem. He pointed out that there was weak coordination with hydrological and meteorological centres, which are tasked to provide basic information for decision making. Much of the work seemed to concentrate on preparedness and response, with less effort on the development perspective. Insufficient work had been undertaken to integrate disaster risk reduction into development and poverty reduction planning. In this regard, he said that civil society needed to be more organized. He also stated that efforts and resources devoted to climate change needed to be integrated into disaster risk reduction and development planning in order for them to be effective.

ISDR system action 2008-2009 to advance the implementation of the Hyogo Framework

The Chair, Mr. Holmes, introduced agenda item 6, and briefly described the historical background of the ISDR system up to the establishment of the Global Platform. He emphasized the good work carried out by many parties to develop the system, particularly through the ISDR Support Group²² and the Reference Group²³ and mentioned that the Global Platform is the fruit of these efforts.

The UNDP Assistant Administrator, Ms. Kathleen Cravero, announced that the draft Joint Planning Framework, a key basis for the enhanced UN Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, would be completed by late 2007. She said that the document would include efforts to support better reporting on disaster risk reduction progress. The agencies represented in the ISDR Management Oversight Board²⁴ have already committed to the process, as have the agencies represented on the Reference Group, and additional key agencies have also expressed interest in joining²⁵. Among other things, this work planning process will address the concerns highlighted in the interventions of Heads of Delegations, and by other participants, calling for investment in risk reduction to be substantially increased.

A joint statement of support and intent prepared by the members of the ISDR Management Oversight Board was read on their behalf by the representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This emphasized that urgent action was needed at every level of society to move the risk reduction agenda forward, and it assured the session of their commitment to support the ISDR system, strengthen its impact, and broaden its reach among a new circle of partners, through raising the profile of disaster risk reduction, strengthening advocacy with key decision makers, mainstreaming risk reduction in the development agenda, and harnessing the expertise of a multiplicity of actors.

James Lee Witt, former head of the United States of America Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), presented an account of experiences with United States disaster risk reduction policies and projects, providing examples of the success of community engagement and involvement of the private sector in raising public awareness about the need for preparedness and community level empowerment.

21 ISDR/GP/2007/3

22 The ISDR Support Group has open membership to Governments that have a special interest in supporting the ISDR secretariat and the ISDR system. It evolved from a donor support group and it is not a formal part of the ISDR system. It was chaired by Switzerland until June 2007, at which point Argentina took over as Chair.

23 The Reference Group members were UNDP, OCHA, UNESCO, WMO, UNEP, UNICEF, World Bank, ProVention Consortium, IFRC, ISDR secretariat, Government of Switzerland (as Chair of ISDR Support Group), African Union Commission, ActionAid, and InterAmerican Development Bank.

24 Current members are UNDP (representing the UN Development Group), OCHA, WMO, UNEP, IFRC, World Bank.

25 FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO.

Finally, the Chair summarized his impressions of the first Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. He recalled that the session's aims were to raise awareness on reducing disaster risk, share experiences and learn from good practice, assess progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework, reiterate commitments to its implementation, and identify actions to accelerate national and local implementation.

He tabled a draft Chair's Summary of the session for discussion, noting that he would also keep it open for written feedback in the week following the session. The draft summary was opened for discussion, and then following interventions by participants, Mr. Holmes closed the session.

Chair's Summary

First Session, Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 5-7 June 2007

The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction met in session for the first time in Geneva, 5-7 June 2007 as a global forum of stakeholders concerned with reducing disaster risks, with participants from Governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific and academic communities. The session's aims were to raise awareness on reducing disaster risk, share experience and learn from good practice, assess progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action, reiterate commitments to its implementation, and identify actions to accelerate national and local implementation.

This is the Chair's summary of the session, grouped under three broad topics. Participants had an opportunity to comment on a first draft, but it is not a report agreed by the participants and it has no status beyond that of the Chair's own assessment of the key views expressed during the session.

Supporting country efforts

1. Participants expressed considerable concern about the growing risk of disasters, especially in highly vulnerable regions, and about the relatively slow progress being made to address the problem and to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. We are not on track to achieve the Hyogo Framework's sought-after outcome of a substantial reduction in disaster losses by 2015. The need for action is more urgent than ever.
2. Many countries face a steep learning curve to build their basic institutional capacities, to develop or revise legislation and policy frameworks, to provide budgets, and to implement national platforms and action plans. Other countries, however, have made considerable progress and have a wealth of experience; they are encouraged to help significantly by sharing their knowledge and best practices, particularly on legislation and institution building, and by donating expertise and funds. The ISDR system should support the achievement of a target number of national platforms for disaster risk reduction.
3. Investment in risk reduction needs to be substantially increased. National and local government budgets should adopt targets such as a certain percentage of sector budgets. International funding should be better coordinated and tracked to ensure that development projects do not inadvertently increase risks, as well as to monitor the volume of investment in risk reduction and to measure the performance of investments in reducing risks. Governments and donors should give consideration to establishing funding targets for community-level implementation and special mechanisms to channel funding directly to at-risk poor communities and local authorities. Donors should develop common practices of good donorship for risk reduction, including making long-term commitments such as investing target percentages of humanitarian budgets.
4. Countries need to quickly establish systems to monitor and report on their risk profiles and on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, including best practice codes, verifiable indicators, benchmarks and targets, in order to guide action and improve accountability for results. As one example, some nations have committed to achieving zero mortality in schools by 2015. Stakeholders at regional and international levels should similarly establish systems of accountability for their activities.
5. The private sector should recognize their key role in the creation and reduction of disaster risks, and should be engaged and challenged by governments and civil society to provide better financial tools to manage disaster risks, and to contribute to risk reduction through participation in public policy debate and in public-private partnerships.
6. Some progress is being made to integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development and poverty reduction frameworks and mechanisms and into environmental management tools. This is a long-term task. ISDR system partners should seek innovative ways to increase the involvement and commitment of development and environmental stakeholders, including civil society and community actors. They should also develop practical tools, for example to screen for high-risk factors and to implement multi-hazard approaches.

7. Focus and selection is necessary. International efforts should concentrate on countries that are particularly prone to natural hazards. Mainstreaming efforts should target sectors, communities and groups that are particularly vulnerable, such as infrastructure, health and education sectors, and low-income and other marginal groups.

Programme focus

8. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency or intensity of extreme weather events. ISDR system partners should actively disseminate and apply relevant disaster reduction tools to support adaptation to climate change, with special attention to countries identified to be most vulnerable, and should work closely with climate change policymakers to develop synergies between the Hyogo Framework for Action and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change processes, especially concerning national implementation. They should also encourage NGO and other civil society organizations to link their risk reduction and adaptation activities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and ISDR system should collaborate on the preparation of a special report on adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.
9. Many cities and urban areas are crucibles of growing disaster risk, but few have active risk reduction or risk management plans. Half of the world's population live in cities, and many cities are highly vulnerable to earthquakes and storms. Some cities and local authorities have implemented risk reduction programmes, for example for seismic risk assessments and in urban development plans. These need to be documented and widely publicized by the ISDR system. All cities and local authorities should create and implement a disaster risk reduction plan, including multi-sectoral disaster preparedness plans with strong civil society participation.
10. There is a great need for advocacy and education, with clear and consistent messages, to stimulate awareness and active support by political leaders, managers, professional groups, and the general public. Partners in the ISDR system should strengthen their advocacy and educational activities. They should actively contribute to the multi-sectoral implementation of the 2008-2009 ISDR world disaster reduction campaign on safe hospitals that builds on the education and safe schools campaign of 2006-2007. A critical assessment of the economic and social costs and benefits of different risk reduction measures should be undertaken, drawing on ISDR partner networks, in order to provide decision makers with compelling evidence for investing in disaster risk reduction.
11. Women have played important roles in building a culture of disaster prevention, especially at community level, but this is not well recognized and their potential to reduce risks is largely untapped. Moreover, women and girls are disproportionately affected by disasters. ISDR system partners should undertake awareness-raising and action to address gender factors in disaster risk and in particular should actively promote women's participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction.
12. A core challenge in disaster risk reduction is to scale-up proven practices, so that they are applied to all vulnerable people and situations, nationwide, and world wide. Governments, donors, technical and professional communities, non-governmental organizations, and grassroots organizations should cooperate to build the new level of systematic approaches that are needed. Regional cooperation and multi-stakeholder voluntary guidelines and codes of practice can play a major role in this task.
13. Scaled-up action needs to be based on a strong foundation of scientific and technical data and knowledge on patterns and trends in hazards and vulnerabilities and a well-tested set of risk reduction methodologies and practical actions. ISDR system partners should collaborate to build these foundations including through research and formal scientific and technical advisory and assessment processes.

ISDR system development

14. The ISDR system should continue to be developed as a multi-stakeholder vehicle for promoting and catalysing widespread engagement and partnerships in disaster risk reduction and for achieving commitment and international coordination and guidance to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. Some have described it as a global movement. More effort should be made to engage development partners and other key constituencies, such as the private sector, local authorities, and communities.

15. An important task is to develop the ISDR system's regional mechanisms and thematic capacities to stimulate greater contribution to disaster risk reduction, and to provide better guidance and support for national and local actors. Thematic networks and civil society networks should be encouraged and linked together to achieve rapid global exchange of ideas, viewpoints and good practices.
16. ISDR system partners need to lead the way by making commitments and by planning and implementing coherent joint activities to support risk reduction by governments and others. The Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction should be used to support ISDR system joint work. Given the increased recognition of the need for disaster risk reduction by UN Member States, support should be given to the secretariat from the UN regular budget, and not only from extra-budgetary sources.
17. This first Global Platform has proved to be a valuable mechanism to advance understanding, share experience, assess progress and renew commitments. It should be convened every two years, and should focus on particular themes each session. The next session should formally review progress on addressing the gaps and challenges identified at this Global Platform, including on setting and achieving specific targets.
18. The Chair and the secretariat will actively follow-up on the views expressed at the session through existing mechanisms, including by reporting to the General Assembly and supporting UN Member States as required. They will continue to strengthen the ISDR system, by coordinating further action on the following elements: an advisory mechanism to steer the ISDR system in the next inter-sessional period; the joint planning framework; the scientific and technical advisory mechanism; and the enhancement of regional and thematic processes and mechanisms. The ISDR secretariat will continue its effort to develop and disseminate information and guidance materials requested by governments and other ISDR system partners.