

identifying  
policy and  
legal and  
insitutional  
arrangements  
for disaster risk  
management

2



## Chapter Brief

### Introduction

Introduction to the disaster risk management framework; essential tools for institutionalizing it.

### Key Words

Context  
Institutional Framework  
Legal Arrangements  
Policy  
Stakeholders

### Concepts of Policy and Legal and Institutional Arrangements for Disaster Risk Management

Policy, Legal Arrangements and Institutional Framework  
Policy Formulation  
Legal Arrangements  
Institutional Framework  
What is the Conducive Environment for Establishing an Appropriate Risk Management Framework?

### Process for the Implementation of the Disaster Risk Management Program

Key Factors  
Collaborations, Stakeholders, Partners and Coalitions  
Implementation is a Long Term Process  
Examples of long-term efforts to implement disaster risk reduction policies:  
Leadership and Good Governance  
Multi-sector and multi-level cooperation  
Regional and international partnerships  
Monitoring and Evaluation  
Process  
4 steps

### Case Studies

China. Long term commitment to formulation of policy  
Japan. Acting with great determination  
Bangladesh. Moving from disaster response to a more comprehensive Approach  
Vietnam. Policy and Institutional Framework spanning from central to local level  
The Philippines. Putting power in the hands of people -The better option for city development and risk management, Naga city experience



Lessons Learned

Discussion Questions

Challenges

References

A master list of references is given in Appendix 2

Resources

A list of resources to help the reader

A master list of resources is given in Appendix 3



## Chapter Brief

- Policies, institutional frameworks and legal arrangements comprise the disaster risk management framework
- For a disaster risk management program to succeed, the participation of all stakeholders is crucial
- Circumstances encourage or force policies to be made in order to address inadequacies in any part of existing risk management mechanisms
- In some countries disasters have triggered the formulation of policies and disaster risk management systems which have become turning points for improvements in disaster risk management
- National governments play a vital role in establishing a disaster risk management framework that applies to all government levels, non-government organizations and institutions and all sectors
- Legal arrangements establish basic guidelines for governmental and non-governmental actions related to disaster risk management. The legal arrangements can establish the institutional framework by defining authorities, responsibilities and roles of officials and organizations
- Institutional frameworks define the relationships and locations of the organizations and institutions assigned with disaster risk reduction responsibilities.
- Disaster risk reduction policies should establish collaborations, partnerships, coalitions and stakeholders
- Implementation of disaster risk reduction policies involves the participation of many individuals, organizations and institutions



# Introduction

The three pillars of disaster risk management framework are policies, institutional frameworks and legal arrangements. They combine to form mechanisms necessary to implement and maintain disaster risk reduction actions at all levels, national, provincial, district and community. Each element of this integrated framework must be equally strong for disaster risk reduction to be successful.

The disaster risk management framework forms the foundation for managing disaster risks by

- Providing common goals and approaches for disaster risk reduction
- Directing and securing resources (human, financial, information and material) towards disaster risk reduction
- Promoting coordinated efforts and partnerships in reducing disaster risks

National governments play a vital role in establishing a disaster risk management framework that applies to all government levels, non-government organizations, institutions and sectors, such as housing, health care, economics, etc. Good governance and strong leadership are necessary to generate the political will to drive the development, implementation and maintenance of the national disaster risk management framework including,

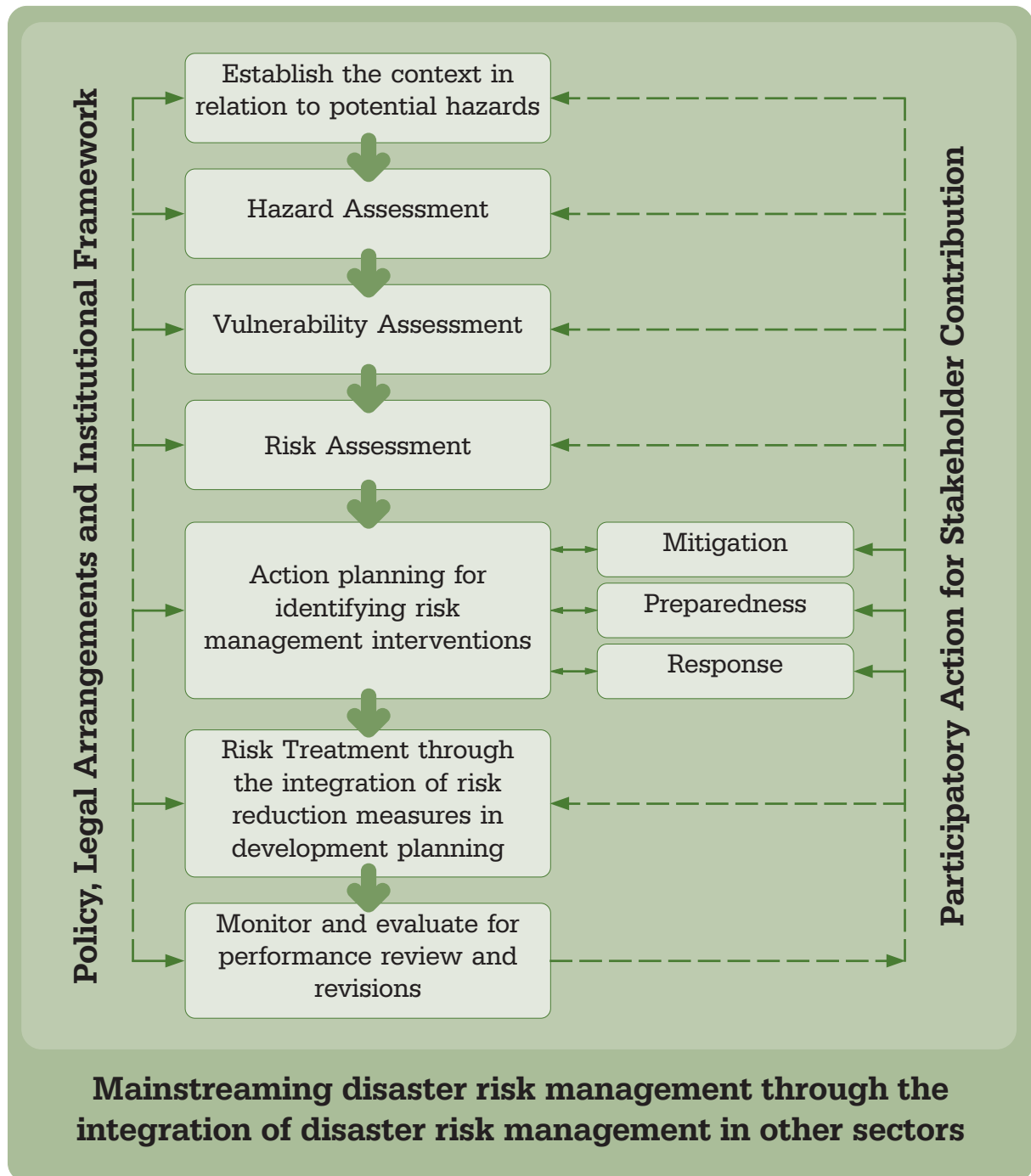
- Recognizing the need for a national disaster risk management policy
- Establishing a policy formulation process
- Defining the main policy elements
- Arranging for implementation and maintenance procedures, including monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of risk reduction actions

*(Modified from Carter, N 1992)*

A disaster risk management program is unlikely to succeed without the participation of all stakeholders who will be affected by implementation of risk reduction actions. The stakeholders include the government, ministry departments, private sector companies, city developers, NGOs, and communities.



**Figure 2.1**  
**Disaster Risk Management Framework**



The ideal disaster risk management framework requires a set of implementation tools. Policies, institutional and legal arrangements serve as these tools that address the need for each action displayed in the framework as well as identifying the roles and responsibilities of the actors and the resources required to put the framework into practice.



# Key Words



## **Coalition**

An alliance or union, especially a temporary one

## **Collaboration**

On-going, working relationships with other governmental and non-governmental organizations that have key roles in the prevention and mitigation of disasters.

## **Context**

“The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation, etc”. Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, second edition 1997. The social, political and economic context surrounding the development of the disaster risk management framework will determine the resulting structure and content.

## **Framework**

“... an overall organizing structure that identifies and defines the main elements of a process“– in this case” disaster risk management --“and explains how they fit together” (*Risk Management Framework for the Transportation of Hazardous Materials, US Department of Transportation, 2000*).

## **Partners**

People or organizations participating in a common activity; such as a partnership between two cities or countries

## **Policy**

Policies express a government’s political philosophy. They establish “a course of action pursued by a government, ruler, political party, etc. (*Random House, Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 2001*).” Policies form the framework for the legal arrangements necessary to put policies into action, such as local, state and national legislation, resolutions; programs, appropriations, administrative practices, and/or court decisions.

## **Program**

“A plan of action to accomplish a specified goal (*Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1997*)”. A disaster risk management program provides a plan to put policies into practice.



### **Legal arrangements**

Legal arrangements include a framework of laws, executive orders and other legal instruments that *establish basic guidelines* for governmental and non-governmental actions. They *define authorities, responsibilities and roles* of officials and organizations.

### **Institutional framework**

An institutional framework *establishes the structure and relationships* of governmental and non-governmental organizations, including ministries, departments, local governments, individuals and the private-sector.

### **Stakeholders**

Individuals, groups or organizations that have an interest or investment in the actions that will be taken to reduce disaster risks. Involvement of those who will be affected by disaster risk reduction actions is critical for successful development, implementation and maintenance.





# Concepts of Policy and Legal and Institutional Arrangements for Disaster Risk Management

## Policy, Legal Arrangements and Institutional Framework

The presence of policies, legal arrangements and an institutional framework is essential for effective risk management and institutionalizing risk reduction. Adopting these three components demonstrate the commitment, action and progressive thinking of the national governments that employ them.

This section discusses each of these three interrelated elements; policies, legal arrangements and institutional frameworks and how they form the platform of disaster risk management.

## Policy Formulation

Policy is the starting point for risk reduction activities. It sets ideas and concepts into motion and outlines the course of action to be taken. Policy making brings important issues to the attention of governments. Below are some examples of what policies can do:

- Force actions (high level jurisdiction forces action at lower level jurisdiction)
- Focus attentions (on risk reduction)
- Direct Action (authorize direct action by the administration)
- Regulatory Policies (establish mandatory requirement)

*(Mattingly, 2002)*

Policies are integral to institutionalizing disaster risk reduction. They help to incorporate risk reduction into everyday life,



government strategies and customs. They have the benefits of building lasting capacity and lasting constituencies for risk reduction. (*Mattingly, 2002*)

The integration of disaster risk management into routine government operations provides a mechanism to ensure efforts to reduce disaster risks becomes a sustaining part of government activities.

### **Reasons for Policy Formulation – Examples from Historical Events**

There are a number of reasons why policies are formulated. Reasons are mostly based on the social, economic, environmental and political circumstances (context) surrounding the risk management process. Circumstances can encourage or force policies to be made or they can be created in order to address inadequacies in any part of existing risk management mechanisms. Disasters have often triggered the formulation of policies and disaster management systems and they have become turning points for improvements in disaster management as evident from history. A few examples are listed below.

1980s	Run up to the start of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.
1990/91	The eruption of Mt Pinatubo and Bagio earthquake saw consolidation of NDCC in the Philippines.
1991	Cyclone in Bangladesh saw birth of a separate Disaster Management Bureau in 1993.
1994	Yokohama conference stimulated the preparation of national and sub-regional disaster management action plans for presentation there.
1995	Kobe Earthquake in Japan led to fundamental review of Japanese building control as well as national and regional disaster management arrangements.
1996	Typhoon Linda as well as 1998 and 2000 floods in Vietnam led to better implementation of the 1993 Water Disaster Management Plan and 2001 NDM Partnership.
1997	El Niño induced forest fires showed the regional scale of disaster and regional response (ASEAN Haze Task Force).
1998	After the 1996 and 1998 Anhui and Yangtse floods, China adopted a Natural Disaster Reduction Plan (1998 – 2010), a unique example of risk reduction mainstreamed in development planning.
1998	IDNDR had catalyzed action and new commitment, national committees and plans were formed. ADRC was formed in Japan.



- 2000 In India (1998 – 2000), a series of disasters, floods, earthquakes and the Orissa super cyclone expedited the formation of a high-power committee (HPC) on disaster management policy and plans. The way the disasters were managed raised expectations for wide ranging institutional reform.
- 2001 Gujarat Earthquake shook India and accelerated the HPC report and the shift of disaster management responsibility from the Ministry of Agriculture to Home Affairs.
- 2000 Mekong Floods in Cambodia and Vietnam led to regional river basin approach to Flood Management and Mitigation (FMM) led by the Mekong River Commission (MRC). The MRC FMM Strategy was formed.

*(Rego, ADPC 2002)*

Similarly, the recent 2004 Asian Tsunami triggered the development and review of tsunami early warning systems, land zoning, building codes, emergency preparedness and response, and reform in government and intergovernmental risk reduction arrangements.

However, policy-making directed to risk reduction should not only be a reaction to disasters. Policies should be made in order to reduce the risk of disasters occurring as a proactive practice.

## **Creating Interest and Support for Policy Formulation**

The formulation of policy, as well as risk reduction in general, must be driven by political will. There must be a desire to make improvements as this is what translates program elements into action and establishes disaster risk management as a routine part of government operations.

Political will requires strong leadership to advocate and find support for forming policies. Support can come from within the Government, private sector, NGOs, media and the general public. It can be generated through creating awareness of the particular issue or risk. Support is essential as it presents a case in favour of the policy.

The strength of the community should not be underestimated in their ability to create change and force policies. The petitioning and pressure of affected communities to the government is influential and provides much needed support for advocates of the particular policy.



## Issues Surrounding Policy Formulation

- National and sub-national governments assign different values and preferences to concerns related to disaster risk reduction due to variations in disaster experience, governmental goals and objectives, cultures, etc. These differences affect whether disaster risk reduction policies are developed, funding is allocated and long-term efforts are supported.
- Many countries and communities rank potential disaster impacts far behind more immediate concerns for health care, education, economic growth, etc. Infrequent disasters generally account for this relative lack of concern. In addition, the inability to see the link between a sustainable society and disaster management lowers the importance given to the formulation of disaster risk reduction policies.
- Even when the formulation of disaster risk reduction policies are a priority, differences in circumstances will influence the nature of the policies developed. Priorities and views at a ministerial / national level will differ from those at community level.
- A strategy for 'inter-relations' with other national policies such as National Development Policy or Environmental / Resource Management Policies, or Land use planning may be a more effective means of putting disaster risk management on the National agenda than establishing independent disaster risk management policies.
- Other sectors need to recognize the need for mainstreaming disaster risk management and apply policies, legal and institutional arrangements in their systems to enable risk reduction actions and programs to be implemented.

## Legal Arrangements

Legal arrangements, consisting of a framework of laws, executive orders, regulations, acts and other legal instruments, establish basic guidelines for governmental and non-governmental actions related to disaster risk management. The legal arrangements can establish the institutional framework by defining authorities, responsibilities and roles of officials and organizations.

Legal arrangements may include, but are not limited to, establishing programs, plans and projects:

- For multiple types of hazards (e.g. floods, earthquakes, cyclones, etc)



- At multiple levels of government (national, provincial/regional, district, local)
- Among multiple sectors of society (e.g. educational, financial, medical, industrial, power, communications etc.)
- Among multiple stakeholders (e.g. business owners, parents, facility managers, utility companies, donor nations, NGOs, neighboring countries etc)
- For multiple disaster phases (before, during and after)
- To establish cooperative agreements and collaborative relationships

### Issues Surrounding Legal Arrangements

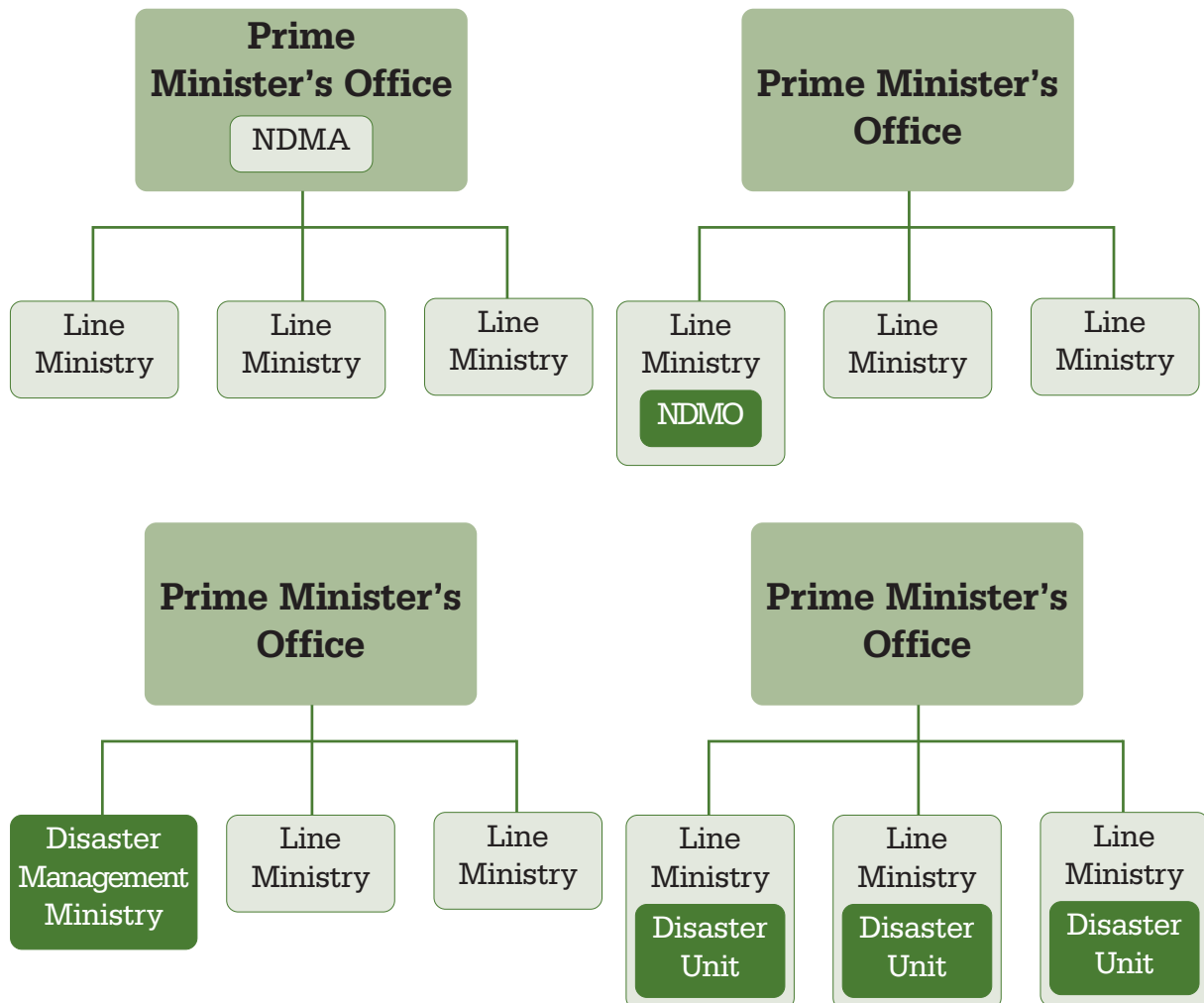
- If governments and bodies become too dependent on law to govern their roles, responsibilities and actions, there is the danger that holes will occur where laws do not cover particular circumstances or if a law doesn't govern a specific action it may be left undone. There are two approaches (which can be combined) for addressing these deficiencies.
  - 1) Create consensus for institutional arrangements and plans that overcome the law's deficiencies;
  - 2) Propose new legislation and generate institutional and political support for its passage. (*Mattingly, 2002*).
- Legal arrangements should address the issues vital to the institutional framework such as decentralization of disaster management arrangements, as it is vital to the success of the overall risk reduction strategy.

## Institutional Framework

Institutional frameworks define the relationships and locations of the organizations and institutions assigned with disaster risk reduction responsibilities. The government is a major part of the framework, but ALL of the stakeholders have a role to play in planning, supporting or implementing disaster risk reduction actions. The institutional framework identifies the reporting structure among organizations and institutions and establishes a mechanism for coordination and the implementation of duties. It commonly establishes a single coordinating entity at each government level and shows the relationships among those levels and with non-government sectors and stakeholders. Figures 2.2 show four examples of national level institutional arrangements that have been used throughout Asia for disaster management institutions.



**Figure 2.2**  
**Different Arrangements for National Disaster Management**



### Issues Surrounding the Institutional Framework

- Decentralisation of the institutional framework is a target to aim for. In many countries more power is needed at sub-national levels for decision making, handling funds and prioritizing and implementing risk reduction measures.
- The framework should seek to integrate disaster management into all levels of society, through the education and health systems, therefore the framework must be integrated and include representation from these ministries and departments as well as NGOs and private sector organizations.
- Achieving coordination and cooperation of agencies is a difficult task. Power struggles, lack of trust and difference in opinions create a large challenge for the institutional framework. These must somehow be overcome through mediation and the establishment of legitimacy and trust in the core disaster management unit driving the program.



- Capacity building in how their sectors relate to risk reduction is needed for relevant people across the ministries as they are all likely to be involved with integrated risk reduction, it also creates support for specific policy formulation.
- The institutional framework should have suitable arrangements to deal with all risk reduction activities including preparedness and response.

Having discussed each of policy, legal framework and institutional arrangements, the Box below summarises the ideal characteristics of the Risk Management Framework.

### **Box 2.1**

#### **Ideal characteristics of the Risk Management Framework**

- Advocated at the highest government level.
- A strong central agency for disaster risk management.
- Appropriate authority distribution. Decentralisation where possible.
- Multi-stakeholder participation in decision making.
- Formalizing of risk management strategies through policies and legal arrangements.
- Direct attention to total risk reduction covering mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Integration of all sectors in all aspects of risk reduction as disasters impact upon many different sectors.
- Co-ordination and management as well as clear structures in place so that each knows its responsibility and position.
- Good communications throughout the institutional framework because of the involvement of all the organisations. Some structures emphasise only one way communication, e.g., top down, but this is inadequate, communities and local governments must be able to approach the higher levels with ease.
- The risk reduction framework should seek to increase the resilience of the country and its people. Communities must have a role in the institutional arrangements.
- It must be strategy driven to ensure the focus is kept and goals are achieved.
- The framework should be flexible enough to respond to all hazards, robust enough to deal with them well and to the detail required.



- The framework must be based on risk assessments. There needs to be knowledge of risks, hazards and vulnerability.
- Supporting mechanisms such as IT management, training schemes, finance and logistics are essential. There should be adequate human and material resources.
- There should be suitable arrangements to generate or mobilize funds for proactive interventions for risk reduction.

## What is the Conducive Environment for Establishing an Appropriate Risk Management Framework?

It has been highlighted previously in this chapter, how disasters have led to the formulation of policy. Disasters not only change policy relating to the reduction of a specific risk, but they along with other factors, as listed below, can contribute to the establishment of an appropriate risk management framework:

- Impact of disaster event
- Ill effects of development (urban and sector based development activities)
- Environmental policies (Environmental impact assessment process and recommendations)
- Government commitment to global forums (*Agenda 21, Kyoto Protocol, WCDR 2005*)
- National policies for the conservation of natural resources.

Government commitment to global forums may be especially effective in encouraging the establishment of a risk management framework as international pressure and collaboration emphasizes the need for the particular issue to be addressed. They go as far as detailing the requirements of suitable frameworks to adopt. Some examples are given in Box 2.2:





**Box 2.2**

**Agenda 21 – Excerpts about Agenda 21, the roles of Governments and the need for policies, legal arrangement and institutional framework**

'Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment. It reflects a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level on development and environment cooperation. Its successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. National strategies, plans, policies and processes are crucial in achieving this.'

**Caption from Chapter 11 – Combating Deforestation**

'Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of regional, subregional and international organizations, should, where necessary, enhance institutional capability to promote the multiple roles and functions of all types of forests and vegetation... in supporting sustainable development and environmental conservation in all sectors. This should be done... by strengthening and/or modifying the existing structures and arrangements, and by improving cooperation and coordination of their respective roles. Some of the major activities in this regard are as follows:

- (a) Rationalizing and strengthening administrative structures and mechanisms, including provision of adequate levels of staff and allocation of responsibilities, decentralization of decision-making, provision of infrastructural facilities and equipment, intersectoral coordination and an effective system of communication.'

*(Agenda 21, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org))*

Agenda 21 is a particularly relevant international agreement to adhere to and adopt as the protection of natural resources is of great importance in disaster risk reduction.



## **World Conference on Disaster Reduction, 2005 (Kobe, Japan)**

### **Excerpt from Proceedings (Thematic Cluster on Governance, Closing Statement)**

‘Governance was at the heart of the Yokohama review and it remains a significant component of disaster programming.

The panel stressed the importance of participation by all stakeholders in actions implemented to reduce disaster risks. Legal and regulatory frameworks are needed to ensure that governments have the authority to act. Equally, the establishment of national and regional platforms to promote disaster reduction is central to ensure multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multilevel approaches. Platforms need to have the commitment of governments, strong leadership and guaranteed resourcing. Advocacy is important to ensure that disaster risk reduction remains high on government agendas especially when it is competing with so many other priorities.’

### **The Habitat Agenda**

The agenda addresses the needs to improve the quality of human settlements through solidarity, cooperation and partnerships, guided by the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations.

*‘The Habitat Agenda is a global call to action at all levels. It offers, within a framework of goals and principles and commitments, a positive vision of sustainable human settlements. The Habitat Agenda will guide all efforts to turn this vision into reality.’* (The Habitat Agenda, UNCHS, 1996)

### **The Kyoto Protocol**

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol provides a legally binding set of rules to address the issue of climate change. It holds the membership countries accountable of their greenhouse gas emissions and their commitment to the protocol ensures their national reduction of emissions of least 5% from 1990 levels in the commitment period 2008-2012. (*The Kyoto Protocol, UNFCCC, 1997*)



# Process for the Implementation of the Disaster Risk Management Program



## Key Factors

### **Collaborations, Stakeholders, Partners and Coalitions**

Disaster risk reduction policies should establish collaborations, partnerships, coalitions and stakeholders to help further disaster risk management goals and objectives. Implementation of disaster risk reduction policies involves the participation of many individuals, organizations and institutions. Relationships among these entities provide an opportunity to expand the personnel, expertise and funding available to implement risk reduction actions. These relationships also provide a number of pathways for disseminating knowledge and advice.

#### **Collaborations**

Collaborations among government ministries and departments with responsibilities related to disaster risk management, such as community development, land use planning and public works, help advance consistent approaches to disaster risk management. These collaborations can take the form of round table discussions among agency managers, workshops to exchange information on inter-related activities (e.g. irrigation, meteorology, mineral resources) and inclusion of government representatives on an inter-ministry disaster risk management committee.

#### **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders include all those who may be affected by a disaster. This may include the residents of a community, representatives of the national government, the owner of a power company, etc. The broad range of stakeholders typically leads to subcommittees focused on select issues related to disaster risk management.



### **Partnerships**

Partnerships with private sector organizations can enhance national and local disaster risk management capacity through direct monetary contributions and/or provision of in-kind services. Such services might include the provision of technical expertise, publication assistance, planning, etc. Partnerships with the international community may provide shared resources capable of advancing the disaster risk management program of both partners.

### **Coalitions**

Coalitions among multiple communities, countries or mixed public and private sector organizations provide a mechanism to address issues that extend beyond individual borders.

## Implementation is a Long Term Process

The time from policy formulation to the implementation of disaster risk reduction actions involves a long term effort and the results may take decades to show. The wide-spread vulnerability related to unsustainable development practice, including poor building construction, lack of land use planning, inadequate water systems etc., combined with rapid population growth and other pressures to maintain these practices, make disaster risk reduction a long-term, continual process. Success requires patience, attention to opportunities, the identification of priorities and an integrated approach that maximizes results through coordinated efforts with other agencies tasked with improving conditions.

### **Examples of long-term efforts to implement disaster risk reduction policies:**

- California initiated an earthquake risk management program 75 years ago that today is considered an international model. Improved building codes and stronger enforcement practice has produced buildings more capable of resisting earthquake damage, especially school buildings. Despite the success of this program, vulnerable buildings still exist in most communities. Continued political process will needed to further the goals and objectives of the program.
- After a decade and a half of concerted international effort to reduce earthquake disasters, the continued occurrence of catastrophic damage and loss of life in areas frequented by earthquakes show that it will take even longer for effective measures to be implemented at an international scale. A magnitude 6 plus earthquake in the Iranian city of Bam, the site



of frequent past earthquakes, resulted in about 20,000 dead, tens of thousands injured and left most of Bam's 80,000 to 90,000 residents homeless. There is clearly much more that needs to be done regarding risk reduction.

- After Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida in 1992, it was decided that major changes must be made to the Florida Building Code. These changes were enacted in 2002 – a full decade later. Four hurricanes hit Florida in 2004 causing wide-spread destruction to many structures built prior to the implementation of the new wind-resistant standards.

These are a few examples of the need to view disaster risk reduction as a long-term, on-going process with rewards that may not be apparent for many years.

## **Leadership and Good Governance**

In order to be effective, risk management framework must be built on a foundation of strong leadership and good governance. It is crucial for the government as a whole to be legitimate and respected. Features of good governance include:

- Allowance and promotion of public participation
- Equity and rule of law
- Responsiveness; effectiveness and efficiency
- Sustain the legitimacy of political processes
- Accountability and transparency in actions
- Strategic vision
- Values of equality, empathy and tolerance

*(Cadribo, 2004 [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org))*

Strong leadership will direct the course of action, the development and the success of the whole risk reduction program and also the framework. It is a driving force; it generates support and ensures success. The leadership is integral in forming public opinion and in upholding the motivation for those involved in the risk reduction framework. This leadership must be endorsed at high government level through support and representation.

## **Multi-sector and multi-level cooperation**

Disaster risk reduction requires a wide-range of interests and abilities. There is a growing need for more political and professional interaction through multiple and innovative forms of multi-sector cooperation. There is still a general need to develop policies and plans for various sectors at different levels, with clear roles and responsibilities for contributing to the national disaster risk reduction strategy.



## Regional and international partnerships

Regional and international partnerships can provide information and technical assistance to help reduce the consequences of disasters before they occur. While this expands the traditional role of providing emergency funds for disaster relief and recovery, pre-disaster risk reduction actions lower the need for post-disaster relief. Resources from donors, international and regional agencies, and government and non-government organizations include funds, technical expertise, information and networks for exchange of information.

Many high-level policymakers from the government sector and international agencies, including ADB, DFID, ECHO, UN agencies, USAID and the World Bank recognize the importance of disaster risk reduction.

Suggested forms of cooperation among regional and international partnerships include, but are not limited to:

- Training in different aspects of disaster risk reduction
- Exchange of both operational and technical professional information
- International and national partnerships and coalitions
- Multi-national and multi-jurisdictional coordination in policy formulation and implementation, especially for hazards affecting neighboring countries
- Development of consistent methodologies in information collection, assessment of risk

The advancement of information and communications technology has made cooperation easier. However, without the commitment of individuals to cooperate in reducing risk, interventions are likely to fail.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

It is possible that even when policies are implemented, they do not reduce risk or that the cost outweighs the benefits. Sometimes there are no accountability mechanisms to ensure that policies are followed. The risk reduction framework should cover monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of both the policies, laws and enforcement of the laws themselves as well as the effectiveness of the framework and institutional arrangements.

Monitoring can be carried out through reports and assessments submitted by implementing organizations and institutions and to provide a process for revising existing policies, legal arrangements



see chapter 6



see chapter 8



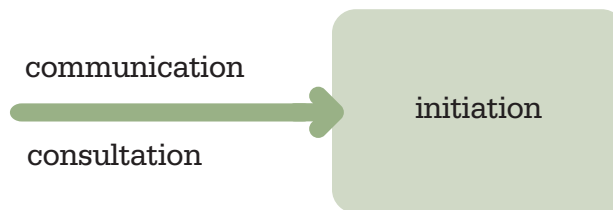
and institutional frameworks. The capacity to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and compliance of policies needs to be part of the disaster risk reduction framework.

## Process

Policy, legal arrangements and institutional framework are the basis of risk management. The process below demonstrates this.

### **Step 1      Establishing the context of the disaster risk management process**

The circumstances surrounding the initiation of the disaster risk management process will influence the level of effort, types of issues and concerns to be addressed. The following identifies items that may inform initiation of the process.



- Identify an advocate and leader to guide the disaster risk management process
- Communicate risks
- Establish a consultation process
- Identify the management team
- Assign responsibilities and resources
- Review social, economic and political goals and objectives of entity initiating the disaster risk management process
- Report on past disaster experience
- Identify stakeholders
- Review existing disaster policies, plans and procedures
- Review existing legal and institutional arrangements
- Determine governance and management arrangements
- Identify land-use practices
- Determine demographic parameters
- Determine socio-economic conditions
- Identify financial protection instruments

### **Step 2      Formulate disaster risk management policies**

Disaster risk management policies set the course of action to be followed to reduce potential risks. Policies reflect the context of



the disaster risk management process. The context typically changes as part of the disaster risk management process. This emphasizes the iterative nature of this process and the importance of on-going communication and consultation.

**Step 3      Establish legal arrangements to enact or encourage the implementation of disaster risk management policies**

Legal arrangements include the laws, executive orders, acts etc. necessary to translate policy into action.

**Step 4      Establish the institutional framework necessary to enact disaster risk reduction policies.**

The institutional framework establishes the roles and relationships among entities charged with implementing the disaster risk management program

Policies, institutional and legal arrangements combine to produce a disaster risk reduction framework that supports the implementation and maintenance of disaster risk reduction programs, plans and projects.





# Case Studies

The case studies provide examples of disaster risk reduction policies, legal arrangements and institutional frameworks established in China, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. They illustrate the influence of unique social, political, economic and environmental circumstances on the formulation and implementation of disaster risk reduction programs. A common theme in each case study is the importance of past disaster experience as a motivation to establish disaster risk management programs.

## China

### Long term commitment to formulation of policy

#### Motivation

Recognizing China's continued high risk to disasters coupled with huge economic and social losses in the last two decades, the central government has made developing a comprehensive framework to reduce risk a priority. Disaster risks are increasing more rapidly than ever before due to unsustainable development practices resulting from rapid economic development, population growth and urbanization.

- 41 per cent of China's territory (containing half of the country's major cities) is located in high risk areas where earthquakes could reach a magnitude of 7 or above
- 100 Million living along the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, also known as the breadbasket of China, were affected by the floods of 1999
- On average, the economic loss from disasters is 3 – 4 per cent of China's annual gross domestic product

China has been a pioneer in collecting hazard data (such as severity and frequency) to better understand the nature of the country's hazards:

- Flood data has been collected since 206 B.C.
- The first seismometer was invented by Zhang Heng 1,800 years ago
- More than one-third of the world's earthquakes with a magnitude of 7 or above, have taken place in China
- Published the 'Atlas of Natural Disasters in China', compiled by the People's Insurance Company of China and Beijing Normal University. The second edition was completed at the beginning of 2004.



China



China's extensive long-term collection of hazard data indicates its interest in disaster risk reduction.

### **Policy Formulation**

China is a good example of long term commitment to the formulation of policy. The National Government has made significant progress to address the issue of disaster reduction over the past 15 years.

**April 1989** The Chinese Government actively responded to the UN decade for natural disaster reduction by establishing a-‘China National Committee for IDNDR’ The responsibility of this committee was to:

- Develop a disaster reduction plan
- Formulate policies on disaster reduction
- Coordinate different departments and NGO's to carry out disaster reduction activities
- Supervise the work of local governments

**March 1994** During this decade, China experienced some of the most severe natural disasters in its history. The national government was also becoming aware of the impact of increasing population, necessity to preserve and find new agricultural land, and the enormous economic costs of disasters. The ‘China 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agenda for Coordination of the Environment and Development’ was established. The objective of this agenda was to link disaster reduction to sustainable development. This was an important step for China as it realized the importance of environmental and ecological protection.

**April 1998** Marked the launch of the National Disaster Reduction Plan of the People's Republic of China (1998 – 2010). It is a set of guiding policies for disaster reduction.

This plan is incorporated as part of the country's economic and social development strategy with an annual budget specifically for disaster preparedness and mitigation. Objectives outlined by the plan include efforts to:

- Develop a set of priorities which are of importance to advancing the social and economic development in China
- Increase the application of scientific and technical knowledge in reducing disaster risks



- Enhance public awareness and knowledge about disaster risk reduction
- Establish and strengthen operational structures and mechanisms for reducing disaster risks
- Reduce the impact of disasters on national economy and social development as measured by an obvious reduction in the direct economic losses caused by natural disasters

*(ISDR, 2002: 86)*

### **Legal Arrangements**

Since the establishment of 'China's National Committee for IDNDR' in April 1998, 20 laws and regulation related or linked to disaster reduction have been formulated and implemented. Laws were established to reduce earthquake, fire and flood risks. The Law on Earthquake Disaster Preparedness and Reduction, for example assigns responsibilities to all levels of government, and to agencies at each level in carrying out earthquake disaster risk reduction. There are specific provisions for earthquake monitoring and prediction, seismic resistant construction, development of citizen awareness and capabilities for rescue. There are requirements for national, local and agency level emergency plans and guidelines for post earthquake relief and reconstruction. The law also includes sanctions for non-compliance with seismic design code, abuse of powers, and withholding or embezzling seismic disaster relief funds and goods. Offenders are fined between RMB5,000 and 100,000 (*US\$604 and 12,082*).

### **Institutional Framework**

China's National Committee for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction is located in the Department of Disaster and Social Relief of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Currently, disaster reduction activities are located under a number of different departments and ministries. Decision-making and responsibilities follow a top down vertical process whereby all major decisions are made by the Central Government, and responsibilities delegated to other ministries and departments at provincial level.

A diverse representation of ministries, national committees, bureaus, military services and agencies are responsible for designing, developing, and implementing a disaster reduction framework. This network is as follows:



- Ministry of Civil Affairs
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- State Planning and Development Commission
- State Economy and Trade Commission
- Ministry of Science and Technology
- Ministry of Foreign Economical Relations and Trade
- China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Public Security
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Land Resources (China Marine Administration, China Geology and Mineral Resources Bureau)
- Ministry of Construction
- Ministry of Railways
- Ministry of Communications
- Ministry of Information Industry
- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Public Health
- People's Bank of China
- State Environment Protection Administration
- State Broadcast, Film and TV Administration
- State Forestry Bureau
- Chinese Academy of Science
- China Meteorological Administration
- China Seismological Administration
- China Red Cross Society

The activities of this network range from both long-term and large-scale structural mitigation to non-structural public awareness, development of early warning and monitoring systems, policy formation, and use of science and technology. A few initiatives to date:

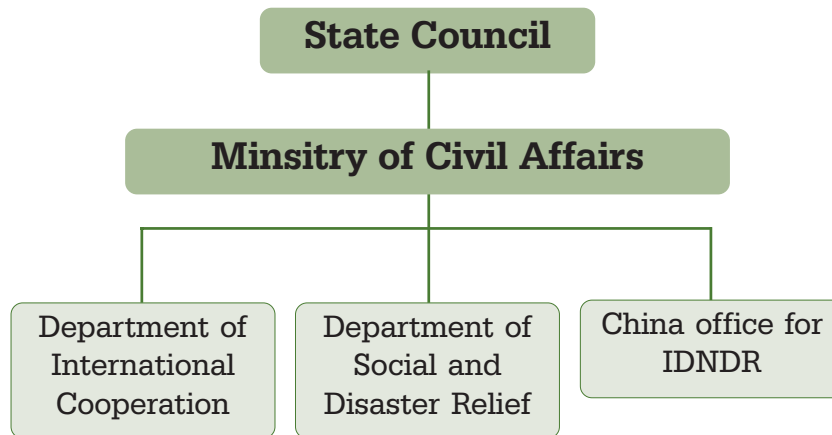
- Build a set of demonstration areas on dissemination and application of practical techniques to agricultural disaster reduction
- Strengthen the construction of a system guaranteeing the city's lifeline and that of an emergency response system
- Raise the level of collecting, processing, applying and sharing of the integrated information of disaster reduction
- Improve the forecasting and monitoring system for major disasters



Figure 2.3 shows the Disaster Management Organization of China comprising the disaster risk reduction institutional framework

**Figure 2.3**  
China's Disaster Risk Reduction Institutional Framework

**Disaster Management organization of China**



Source: [http://www.adrc.or.jp/nationframe.php?URL=.management/CHN/chngovt\\_org.jpg&Lang=en&NationCode=156](http://www.adrc.or.jp/nationframe.php?URL=.management/CHN/chngovt_org.jpg&Lang=en&NationCode=156)

## Japan

### Acting with great determination

#### Motivation

The Japanese are determined that the catastrophic losses caused by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that hit the city of Kobe and surrounding areas on 17 January 1995 do not happen again. The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake caused more than six thousand deaths and USD95 billion of direct damage. As a result, the Japanese have prepared a comprehensive disaster risk reduction framework. Japan has experienced the consequences of many natural hazards:

- Frequent earthquake activity
- Volcanic activity, landslides and flooding
- Tsunamis

Japanese scientists and engineers have collected and analyzed hazard data and applied results to the development of modern earthquake resistant design. Many public works projects focus on providing hazard alerts (flow monitors on streams that automatically activate gates to prevent cars from crossing them) and mitigating hazard affects (lava diversion channels and traps for volcanic debris;



**Japan**



upgraded seismic building codes (for new construction). The occurrence of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake caused attention to the need to expand existing disaster risk reduction efforts.

### **Policy and Legal Arrangements**

Japan's policy and legal arrangements for disaster risk reduction is given in the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act passed in 1961 and revised in 1997 based on lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The revised act aims to remedy inadequacies in the old disaster reduction framework and promote comprehensive and systematic efforts to reduce disasters.

The Disaster Countermeasures Act has five main foci:

1. Provide public financial resources to cope with disaster;
2. Clarify disaster reduction responsibilities and implement programs to prepare for, provide emergency response to, and recover from disaster;
3. Promote comprehensive administrative efforts towards disaster reduction;
4. Promote systematic administrative efforts towards disaster management
5. Set out procedures for proclaiming disaster emergencies.

Funding: Approximately 5% of the national budget was allocated in fiscal year 2001. Although not yet a provision, Japan categorizes the use of funds for disaster management into four categories:

1. Research and Development
2. Disaster Preparedness
3. Land Conservation
4. Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction

*(www.adrc.or.jp accessed: 4/11/2004)*

Roles and responsibilities: Before, during and after disasters, the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act defines roles and responsibilities for:

- The Prime Minister
- The State and the Central Disaster Prevention Council
- The Prefecture and the Prefecture Disaster Prevention Council
- A City, Town or Village and their Disaster Prevention Council
- National and Local Public Corporations (such as Nippon Telegraph and Telephone, the Bank of Japan, the Japanese Red Cross Society, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) and other corporations engaged in power, gas, transportation, communication and other public utility work)
- Residents and Others



Source: [www.adrc.or.jp](http://www.adrc.or.jp)

In addition, there are other laws besides the very general Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act including the Flood Control Laws, the Disaster Relief Law, and the Large-scale Earthquake Countermeasures Act that are part of the legal arrangements for disaster risk reduction. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show excerpts from the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act and the Large-scale Earthquake Countermeasures Act.

**Table 2.1**  
**Excerpts from the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act**

**Article 34 Paragraph 2 of the *Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act*** states that the Central Disaster Prevention Council shall formulate a basic disaster prevention plan, which shall be reviewed each year in the light of research findings, conditions of disasters that have occurred, and the effect of emergency measures taken, and revise it if deemed necessary.

**In Article 34 Paragraph 2 of the *Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act*** the provisions shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the formulation and revision of Earthquake Disaster Prevention Basic Plans pursuant to Paragraph 1.

**Table 2.2**  
**Excerpts from the Large-scale Earthquake Countermeasures Act**

**In Article 5 of the *Large-scale Earthquake Countermeasures Act*** it states: The Central Disaster Prevention Council shall formulate and promote the implementation of an Earthquake Disaster Prevention Basic Plan for an “ Intensified Area,” as defined according to the provisions of Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the Act.

When the Central Disaster Prevention Council has formulated or revised a basic disaster prevention plan as provided under the preceding paragraph, it shall promptly report it to the Prime Minister, inform the chief officers of designated administrative organs, governors of prefectures, and designated public corporations, and release to the public an outline of the plan or revision.

The prefect disaster prevention council, the city, town or village disaster prevention council and public corporations are expected to develop and revise annually the operational disaster prevention plan based on the basic disaster prevention plan.



## Bangladesh

### Bangladesh

#### **Moving from disaster response to a more comprehensive Approach**

The disaster impact in Bangladesh which was highest in Asia during the nineties has been reduced towards end of the century due to various interventions. One of the highlights of the actions taken by government is the establishment of institutional framework and policies. Bangladesh is one of the few countries in Asia where there is a separate Ministry dedicated to disaster management.

Decision-making at the national government level to develop and devise plans and policies that delegate tasks, roles and responsibilities is an indication of a nation's capacity to recognize the importance of disaster risk reduction at top-level planning.

Since the mid-1990s, the Government of Bangladesh has taken steps to move from disaster response to a more comprehensive approach of reducing disaster risk. This is reflected in Bangladesh's institutional arrangements for disaster risk reduction and in their policies and plans.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The structure of the Bangladesh Disaster Risk Reduction framework comprises:

- Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MDMR)
- Disaster Management Bureau (DMB)
- National Disaster Management Council (NDMC)
- Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee (IMDMCC)
- National Disaster Management Advisory Committee (NDMAC)
- District, Upazila and Union Disaster Management Committees

Bangladesh is the only Asian country to have set up a separate ministry for disaster risk reduction which is the focal point for disaster-related issues. The DMB assists the Ministry with information management in all phases of disaster risk reduction, and with developing awareness and capacity building programs for stakeholders at different levels and sectors.

The NDMC is chaired by the Prime Minister and meets twice annually. It is responsible for: policy formulation; issuance of guidelines; examining the recommendations of the IMDMCC and NDMAC and issue directives for their implementation; arranging





framing of disaster-related law; and approving the standing orders and national disaster management plans.

### **Bangladesh's Report 1999**

The IMDMCC chaired by the Minister of Disaster Management and Relief is responsible for implementation, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation. District, Upazila and Union Disaster Management Committees have also been established at local levels. Activities include:

- Standing Orders 1994
- Accountability defined and delegated
- Active political involvement at the highest level
- National Disaster Management Council
- Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee

A Disaster Management Act has been drafted which gives provision for the formulation of disaster risk reduction policies and plans. Although the Act has not yet been passed, this has not stopped the Government of Bangladesh in taking actions to reduce disaster risks.

### **Standing Orders on Disasters**

Bangladesh has created an enabling environment for disaster risk management. The “Standing Orders for Disasters” drafted in 1994 is one such important actions. It spells out the roles and responsibilities of each ministry and major agency/department to facilitate early warning and response actions in a coordinated manner. The National Disaster Management Plan for the period 1995-2010 has been developed in conjunction with the Standing Orders but also covers rehabilitation, preparedness and mitigation measures. In addition, Disaster Action Plans for district, upazila and union levels are developed. For example, action plans to simplify existing cyclone warning signals have been initiated.

### **Comprehensive Disaster Management Program**

In 2004, the UNDP initiated a Comprehensive program for risk management with the government of Bangladesh called the “Comprehensive Disaster Management Program”(CDMP). It is currently being implemented with the participation of the government and other stakeholders, such as NGOs, academic institutions and private sector.

CBDM is made up of five components, one of which is capacity building. Capacity building addresses the training and professional development of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MFD) staff. This is done through:



- Policy Changes–Review and revision of MFDM rules of business
- Professional development plan
- CDMP standard training curriculum for professional development
- Partnerships
- Support from international institutes

Other components address the wide ranging topics important in risk reduction to create a useful framework and plan.

The NDMC is comprised of the following members:

- Minister, Ministry of Water Resources
- Minister, Ministry of Finance
- Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives
- Minister, Ministry of Communications
- Minister, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs
- Minister, Ministry of Food
- Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
- Minister, Ministry of Agriculture
- Minister, Ministry of Shipping
- Chief of Staff, Army
- Chief of Staff, Navy
- Chief of staff, Air Force
- Cabinet Secretary
- Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister
- Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Secretary, Ministry of Finance
- Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs
- Secretary, Ministry of Defence
- Secretary, Ministry of Local Government
- Secretary, Ministry of Roads and Railways
- Secretary, Ministry of Shipping
- Secretary, Jamuna Bridge Division
- Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources
- Secretary, Ministry of Food
- Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
- Secretary, Ministry of Information
- Member, Socio-Economic Infrastructure, Planning Commission
- Principal Staff Officer, Armed Services Division

Bangladesh's commitment to risk reduction has enabled it to create this effective risk reduction framework. The risk reduction strategy supported and driven by the top government level has included many programs that have enabled effective risk reduction to take



place. Community based programs have been very effective as well as the standing orders, disaster management plan and mitigation measures.

## Vietnam

### **Policy and institutional framework spanning from central to local level**



**Vietnam**

#### **Motivation**

People in Vietnam have been living with floods for centuries, constructing stilted houses, evacuating to higher grounds during the flood season and planting seasonal crops to reduce flood risks. After several decades of constructing large structures to control flood in Vietnam, it is evident that these historical approaches and large structures have not provided adequate protection from floods.

#### **Policy and Legal Arrangements**

Over the past decade, Vietnam has adopted a number of policies and legal arrangement to address flooding, including,

1. The Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) was established in May 1990 in accordance with the Law on Water Resources. CCFSC mainly focuses on emergency response. Tasks of CCFSC include:
  - Developing programs, plans, measures for disaster reduction in coordination with other agencies, related organizations, and science and technology research;
  - Direct implementation of disaster mitigation activities;
  - Coordination with international organizations to increase cooperation in the field of disaster reduction in Vietnam.
2. Decrees 168-HDBT of the Council of Ministers – 1990
  - During the year 2000, the Government of Vietnam introduced the “Living with Flood” concept that became the strategy for disaster risk reduction in the Mekong River Delta. By building on traditional practices and by promoting regional and international cooperation (see Box 2.3), the Government of Vietnam has been planning and implementing a range of long-, medium-, and short-term measures to reduce flood risk. These measures contribute to government’s vision of achieving socio-economic stability and sustainable development by 2010.
  - Second Strategy and Action Plan for Disaster Management and Mitigation (2002 – 2020)



### Box 2.2

**Article 5 of Vietnam's Ordinance on Prevention and Control of Flood and Storm** states: "Vietnam shall expand its cooperation with countries, international organizations, foreign organizations and individuals in the field of scientific research and study, technology transfer, technical and professional training on forecasting, preventing, controlling and mitigating the consequences of floods and storms."

Source: [www.adrc.or.jp](http://www.adrc.or.jp)

Vietnam has a comprehensive system of organizations spanning from central to local government. Provincial, district and village People's Committees, elected by the people, form a hierarchical ladder of political power sharing. There is also a network of Women's Unions, which contribute to the hierarchical flow of information.



**Philippines**

## The Philippines

### **Putting power in the hands of people -The better option for city development and risk management, Naga city experience**

*"Successful leadership starts with a vision. When I ran in 1987, I knew clearly where Naga is (problem definition), what I want Naga to be (vision) and what must be done to get there (strategic management). The important corollary is that the leader must be competent and adequately prepared for the demands of the leadership".*

*Jesse M Robredo, Mayor, Naga city Philippines*

*"During the local elections in 1988, a young bachelor named Jesse M Robredo was among the mayoral candidates who were invited to a forum organized by the local NGOs and the city's civic organizations. With the fervor and spirit of the EDSA revolution still fresh in the hearts, the people demanded that sincere and committed leaders should earn their vote."*

*"At the forum, the upstart candidate listened and responded positively to the people. He signed a covenant with the people that if elected, he would attend to urban concerns as poverty and burgeoning number of squatters were among the top issues of the*



*time. A former Program Director of the Bicol River basin Development office, Robredo seems to have made a positive impression on the urban poor in Naga city.”*

*“True to his word, Robredo immediately convened a meeting after becoming the mayor, to flesh out details of an Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO). This was a beginning of a mutually beneficial partnership between the poor people and the local government. Barely a year in his post, Robredo established the “Kaantabay sa Kauswagon” program. The program is a tripartite partnership of local government, the urban poor, and private landowners designed to empower the urban poor to respond to two main problems underlying urban poverty, viz., **the absence of land tenure and lack of basic infrastructure and facilities**. This approach helped him to create safer communities in Naga. Attempts to empower the urban poor were done three years before the local government code of the Philippines was enacted to provide local government units greater autonomy in managing their affairs. The City Government of Naga mobilized its resources to put up housing projects for urban poor and provided land tenure to them.”*

*“Emergency Rescue Naga (ERN) is a showcase of a successful community resources mobilization effort in Naga city combining the resources of the city government, other government agencies and private sector institutions. ERN provides the following round the clock services;*

- *Emergency rescue and transfer*
- *First aid*
- *Ambulance services*
- *Quick police response*
- *Fire fitting and disaster preparedness and control.”*

*“ERN is able to respond to disasters and emergencies within three to five minutes. For further barangay (villages) the response time is 30 minutes.”*

*“Another successful endeavor of Mayor Robredo is the “Metro Naga Development Council” or “Metro Naga” concept. Metro Naga is composed of Naga and 14 rural municipalities clustered around the city for the task of local development in an environment of increased autonomy and ever present problem of limited resources. Given the poor condition of the area, municipalities in Metro Naga can hardly afford to provide the services needed by their constituents. But Naga city as a big brother helps in providing services including emergency services for other smaller municipalities. In return they*



*provide opportunities for city of Naga to use the spare areas for projects such as housing and human settlement development projects, solid waste disposal through development of landfill sites and even to tackle flood problem since it is easy to handle the flood problem in upper watershed area rather than within the city of Naga.”*

*“After hard work by the Mayor and his team for creating a exemplary city in many ways, Naga city became the winner of many awards for the past achievements as well the champion behind the success Jesse M Robredo, Mayor of Naga city Philippines.”*

Extracted from book “Making Local Governance Work, The Naga City model” by Jesse M Robredo, published by city development Information Office, City Hall Complex, City of Naga, December 2003.

<http://www.naga.gov,ph>



# Lessons Learned from the Case Studies



## Lessons learned from the case studies include:

- Catastrophic disasters can generate the political will to adopt disaster risk reduction policies and legal arrangements, and establish institutional frameworks to guide their implementation. This is shown repeatedly in the case studies by the adoption or revision of disaster risk reduction programs following a disaster.
- The case studies show the variation in institutional frameworks adopted to implement disaster risk reduction measures.
- Unsustainable development resulting from rapid population growth, increased development in hazardous areas and lack of construction codes increases vulnerability to disaster. This increased vulnerability contributes to the motivation to adopt disaster risk reduction programs.
- Disaster risk reduction may take decades to show results. Case studies show that countries frequently began implementing rudimentary disaster control methods centuries ago. These have often been updated periodically as new information and technology becomes available. Results still take a long time.
- Incorporation of disaster risk reduction into legal arrangements guiding programs targeting local communities, such as planning, construction, health and welfare, provides a mechanism for delivering information and encouraging and or mandating disaster resistant practices.
- Local government, non-government organizations and community networks are increasingly being recognized as necessary to the development of an effective disaster risk management program. The case studies mention mechanisms and efforts to provide information and technical expertise to the local level and to establish rules and regulations that mandate or guide planning and building practice.



- Disaster risk reduction does not depend on a single organization or institution but requires internal and external collaboration. Case studies involve adopting policies that establish mechanisms to coordinate among key groups.
- The case studies demonstrate that there is no one model to the formation of a disaster risk reduction framework. The various approaches presented in the case studies provide you with an opportunity to identify one that may work in your circumstances or provide ideas that will help you develop individual approaches.
- To formulate or revise a risk reduction framework it is important to assess what the risks are: how big, how frequent and where they occur.
- It is important to examine the recommendations made by implementing organizations and use to make revisions to existing policies, legislation and institutional arrangements. Capacity to effectively monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and compliance of policies needs to be built. Indicators need to be developed to measure effectiveness. Evaluation studies developed by non-government organizations and academic institutes could be promoted.
- Many government institutions involved in disaster risk reduction have largely focused on response activities. Now with a shift to a more integrated approach, understanding and commitment for such an approach needs to be fostered in order to effectively frame laws and policies.
- An understanding and commitment for the disaster risk reduction approach should not be limited to those formulating the policies but also to those implementing the policies.
- Placing greater emphasis on the role of municipalities, local governments and individuals would help foster disaster risk reduction at the local level. However, responsibilities at the local level cannot simply be increased without any support from the provincial and national governments. The absence of a strong provincial commitment may make it difficult for municipalities to reject development in flood risk areas or conversely municipalities may loosen development restrictions to encourage local economic development. In addition, a lack of technical and financial support would make it even more difficult.





## General Lessons Learned:

- Indigenous community coping mechanisms need to be acknowledged and be integrated into policies and legal arrangements.
- It is important to combine scientific and technical know-how with traditional coping mechanisms as demonstrated in the case study from China.
- It is increasingly recognized that disaster risk reduction requires a wide range of sectors, disciplines and institutions to incorporate disaster risk reduction in their policies and plans.
- Amendment of policies, legislation and institutional arrangements reflect the context in which they are amended, an assessment of risk, an evaluation of the importance of that risk and continual communication with stakeholders to select disaster risk reduction measures best suited to their needs. This demonstrated by the diversity of approaches used in the case studies.
- The past two decades have witnessed technological improvements as well as an increased use of computer applications (GIS, Remote Sensing, Internet and satellite imaging) designed to support decision-making processes. There are examples of these applications generating simulation models showing possible impact for different policies adopted.



## Discussion Questions

The following questions are intended to foster discussion among participants in disaster risk reduction activities. There are no “right or wrong” answers to these questions. Participants may want to discuss other issues of greater concern than the ones presented below. In discussing these or other questions, consideration must be given to the unique circumstances surrounding the development of your risk reduction approach.

**Policies and legal arrangements** (national, provincial, district, community)

- What laws, acts, standards, guidelines etc. exist in your community, ministry, department, country etc. to implement disaster reduction actions?
- Who should be involved in developing new or revising existing disaster risk reduction policies?
- Are there policies and legal arrangements that can be amended to include disaster risk reduction goals and objectives?
- If your organization has implemented disaster risk reduction policies and legal arrangements, did they have:
  - Intended effects on the target population?
  - Unintended side effects?
  - Were unintended side effects adverse?
  - Did implementation take place within a reasonable time frame?
  - Were the costs of implementation acceptable and reasonable?

### **Institutional frameworks**

- Is there a central organization or institution in your country or community charged with coordinating disaster risk reduction activities?
- Is there an institutional framework that shows how governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutes coordinate to address issues related to disaster risk reduction?

### **Disaster Risk Reduction Framework**

- What plans, procedures, documents, etc. does your community, ministry, department, etc have to implement disaster risk reduction activities?
- Are these activities identified in disaster risk reduction policies and legal arrangements?



# Challenges



Over the past decade many Asian countries have improved their ability to respond to disasters. Most states have legislated and established disaster risk reduction apparatus and many have developed national emergency plans that serve as the basis for inter- and intra-governmental coordination during disaster events. In recent years, the increased severity of disasters and a range of public awareness endeavors have raised governments' sensitivity to the need for more interventions to reduce disaster risks.

While this new environment provides an opportunity for more cost-effective and sustainable efforts in disaster risk reduction, the increased awareness of governments and donors has yet to translate into tangible action where disaster risk reduction is incorporated in the plans and practices of multiple sectors and government levels.

## **Motivation and capacity**

Disaster risk reduction policies and legal arrangements may not be a priority due to competing concerns. The occurrence of disaster events in the region and in other parts of the world may increase disaster risk reduction priority. Communication of risks from credible sources that are presented in a manner accessible to government officials and policy makers may provide the motivation needed to proceed.

People must be convinced that their lives, property and livelihood are in danger unless disaster risk reduction is implemented and maintained. "People" refers not only to communities and businesses likely to be affected by disasters, but also to government officials who have to juggle a number of other development needs and to donor agencies that have not included disaster risk reduction as part of their development agenda.

Disaster risk reduction policies and legal arrangements may be in place, but are not being implemented. Motivation tools used to increase the priority when disaster risk reduction is not being addressed at all may also help improve implementation and maintenance.

For disaster risk reduction policies to be implemented, people need to have the capacity to carry out disaster risk reduction actions. People need to know what can be done to reduce risk and have the capacity to reduce risk. Priority needs to be given to the development of information and understanding (knowledge development) that can develop capacity. The various and complex



see chapter 7

dimensions of disaster risk reduction need to be taught and continually reinforced through structured educational programs and professional training, as well as through informal training and community-based capacity building initiatives. For more details see chapter 7: Knowledge Development.

### **Integrating risk reduction into Governance**

Although risk reduction is now widely adopted as a concept, it still remains a challenge to fully integrate it into governance. It is a process that takes time and must follow a change in culture and thinking. Risk reduction should be held as an important part of development plans, and economic and political strategies. It should be given its own budget line, be a subject in capacity building of civil staff and allocated resources.

### **The Changing Environment**

Demographic, social and environmental changes take place quicker than policy, plans or simple procedures can be applied and be effective. The government must be able to anticipate change to develop the capacity to adapt and respond quickly to changes. Complex conditions with multiple dimensions such urbanization and climate change require timely and strategic action that takes into consideration the wider environment context and stakeholders.

### **Measuring Effectiveness**

Indicators and assessment methodologies need to be developed to measure disaster risk management program effectiveness. A number of organizations are working to develop a global framework to monitor and evaluate disaster risk reduction for application at a national level. They include:

- The Instituto de Estudios Ambientales's Indicators for Disaster Risk Management Project for countries of Latin America, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank
- Benfield Hazard Research Center's Disaster Risk Reduction Mainstreaming Framework, complete with indicators and benchmarks
- United Nations Development Program's Disaster Risk Index that allows country-by country comparisons of the risk of loss of life associated with earthquakes, tropical cyclones and floods. The Index also identifies some development factors that contribute to risk
- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction's Draft Framework to Guide and Monitor Disaster Risk Reduction

Finding the motivation and resources to use these indicators to regularly measure the effectiveness and achievements of disaster risk management programs will be a major challenge.



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**Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)**

<http://www.adpc.net>

Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)

[www.adrc.or.jp](http://www.adrc.or.jp)

ADRC has worked to foster cooperation among countries in Asia. A multi-lateral organization for disaster risk reduction based in Kobe, Japan, ADRC is composed of 23 Asian Member Countries and four Advisory Countries. ADRC's website provides full texts and summaries of policies and legislation, and organizational chart of institutional arrangements of member countries in Asia.

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