TOOLKIT FOR NATIONAL PLATFORMS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN AFRICA
SEPTEMBER 2010

This National Platform for DRR Tool Kit was developed for African countries by UNISDR Regional Office for Africa, based on information provided by national DRR focal points in Africa, with the kind support of the Federal Republic of Germany

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CD	Capacity Development
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
COP	Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GRIP	Global Risk Identification Programme
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (German Society for Technical Cooperation)
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ICDM	Inter-governmental Committee on Disaster Management (South Africa)
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Partnership
NDMAF	National Disaster Management Advisory Forum (South Africa)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (originally)

PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
UKCIP	United Kingdom Climate Impacts Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

BACKGROUND

National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are not a panacea, not magic formulae to solve the seeming intractable problems faced by many African countries from disasters triggered by natural hazards. They are a tool to use, the oil in the engine of nationally driven political and institutional processes aimed at seriously addressing the problems that frequent disasters pose for the achievement of development goals. They require a strong commitment and a continuous application of energy and resources to maintain and strengthen a process aimed at building resilience and sustaining development.

Why was the concept of National Platforms for DRR created?

Because DRR is a complex and multi-faceted issue, member states of UN ECOSOC, through resolution 1999/63, called on all governments to maintain and strengthen multi-sectoral platforms for DRR that were established firstly as National Committees for DRR under the UN's 1990 to 1999 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Subsequently, further UN resolutions and the outcome framework from the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005 – Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA) – reinforced this by calling on all nations *"to support the creation and strengthening of national integrated mechanisms such as multi-sectoral national platforms"* to ensure that DRR is a national and local priority.

What has happened in Africa?

Among all the regions, Africa has established a good foundation – 15 national platforms for DRR are in place and operating while another 6 countries have national platforms in name at least. These are not grounds for complacency, however. There are still 32 countries without national platforms and with the potential for disasters triggered by natural hazards to increase owing to issues such as climate change and economic uncertainty, development goals and objectives are under great threat.

Encouragingly, spending on DRR in Africa is increasing – from barely 20% of the global total in 2004, by 2009 the total had reached around 40%. Hopefully it will continue to rise, tapping into resources available both through development and humanitarian aid. All the more reason, therefore, to continue to encourage the growth of DRR through mechanisms such as national platforms.

Why is this toolkit necessary?

The need to protect development, to strengthen resilience in Africa is obviously an important goal. The reducing of disaster risk is one important way of achieving this goal and the encouragement of governments by UNISDR and others to use national platforms for DRR to assist the process is critical to its success. UNISDR has produced guidelines but these now need to be enhanced through the elaboration of practical steps necessary to establish, maintain and sustain the platforms. The toolkit is for this purpose – outlining actions, examples and resources available for those with the responsibility for animating their country's national platform for DRR or participating in it. The toolkit will also hopefully answer key questions about how the national platform will function, who will attend, what its agenda will be and whether it will have authority.

Who is the toolkit for?

Having a copy of this toolkit in your hands is not a guarantee of success. A toolkit requires someone to use the tools and the advice that are available. Also, not every tool is suitable for a particular situation – some tools will be useful in some circumstances, others will be useful in others. There is selection from which to choose and the choice will need to be made depending on the individual context.

Thus, the toolkit is for those who have the responsibility to set up, maintain and sustain a national platform for DRR. It is also for those who participate in national platforms and who organise and administer them. This is potentially a wide range of stakeholders. Obviously it includes government officials but it also includes members of civil society and the NGO community, as well as representatives of international organisations and donors and the private sector. Most importantly, perhaps, it includes the members of the communities that are at risk. This is a very wide constituency, consistent with the all-embracing character of DRR.

How is the toolkit organised?

The toolkit is designed to augment and enhance the "Guidelines for National Platforms for DRR" produced initially in 2005 and revised in 2010. Thus the chapters of the toolkit will mirror closely the contents of the "Guidelines" as they apply to African countries. The main chapters are as follows:

- Introduction

- Setting Up a National Platform

- Primary Activities of a National Platform

- Risk Information and Risk Identification (Setting Up a Baseline)

- Capacity Assessment and Capacity Development

- Building DRR Institutions at All Levels

- Mainstreaming DRR Into Development Policies, Plans and Programmes

- Measuring DRR Achievements Against HFA Priorities and Documenting

- Lessons Learned

- DRR and Climate Change Adaptation

- Main Characteristics Of a National Platform

- Maintaining and Sustaining a National Platform

What does the toolkit look like?

The toolkit uses a range of different methodologies, several methodologies often being found in the same chapter. Thus, one chapter might contain a quiz on some concepts after which the answers are given. Each chapter will contain one part of a case study running throughout the toolkit which looks at how a national platform might be created and managed in a fictitious African country. This will often be offset by real case material from African countries that have national platforms for DRR.

Individual chapters will look at how different mechanisms and practices have been used in disciplines other than DRR for comparison purposes. Each chapter will have a check list of key points and issues to be remembered as well as a list of resources and documents for follow up and further study.

It is hoped that the toolkit will be informative and entertaining as well as providing practical tools for the creation, maintenance and sustainability of national platforms for DRR in Africa.

1.   INTRODUCTION

There are some complex and quite puzzling concepts inherent in the establishment of a national platform for DRR. The field of DRR is terminologically confusing and you will often find different people using the same concepts in different ways. UNISDR has helped the situation by trying to collect different concepts and practices into a global terminology that is freely available and which anyone can use. We will use the terminology in this toolkit. (See the reference section of this chapter for full details.)

It is always good at the outset, though, to test your knowledge of the different concepts and practices. The following quiz will help to clarify how much you know about DRR and national platforms and, more importantly, what you don't know.

Write down your answers to the following questions and then check your answers in next section of the chapter:

1) *How would you define disaster risk reduction?*

2) *What is the difference between emergency management and disaster risk management?*

3) *How would you define a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction?*

4) *What is the Hyogo Framework for Action and what are its main priorities?*

5) *What is climate change adaptation and how is it linked to disaster risk reduction?*

6) *Why is a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction an important component of a country's disaster risk reduction programme?*

While you are working on your responses to these questions, consider the case of the Republic of Muyanda, a country that has recently taken the decision to establish a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction following some high profile disasters triggered by natural hazards and a recent global report identifying climate change as a significant future threat to the country's development.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

How things looked before 2007

The Republic of Muyanda embraces parts of both Eastern and Southern Africa. It has a mountainous interior, a dry plateau and plains sloping down to the sea. Its geography and topography help to create conditions favourable to the generation of natural hazards and these hazards have, in historical time, led to major disasters. In particular, droughts have occurred mainly along the plateau and in its foothills where much of the country's staple grains are grown. The plains are crossed by two major rivers which drain from the interior and heavy rains there can mean substantial flooding downstream. The coastal regions are prone to cyclones and tropical depressions, the wind and rain from which create regular problems for the coastal communities. In the mountainous areas, particularly around the mining towns, the threat of earthquakes is ever-present.

What has happened since

Two years ago, a major drought in the plateau region that extended into the plains left the country with severe food shortages and a relief programme that was feeding in excess of one million people. The relief programme continues today and as so often happens, the drought was followed by torrential rainfall that created serious flooding along the banks of the two major rivers. Again, the country needed to rely on external donations to support the families and communities that were most severely affected. Communities in both the drought and flood affected areas are still struggling to re-establish themselves and more adverse weather conditions are forecast. The government recently convened a major conference of scientists and technical experts to determine the likely effects of climate change on the country. The conclusions of the meeting were very pessimistic and it was predicted that Muyanda could expect more frequent serious disasters of a greater magnitude in the future.

The government decided to act. For the past 15 years, the Disaster Management Department in the Prime Minister's Office has had the responsibility for overseeing the country's response to disasters. But the Department is under-funded and resourced and limits itself to nominal coordination of international relief which is very much in the hands of international NGOs and the UN. There is little in the way of prevention and mitigation. During the recent UNISDR Global Platform, the government representatives approached UNISDR officials and requested advice on how to address the country's disaster problems. They were advised to consider an ongoing programme of disaster risk reduction, linked to development goals and objectives. One of the first steps the government was encouraged to take was to establish a National Platform for DRR as a permanent body to guide and oversee the disaster risk reduction process. The government has duly convened a multi-stakeholder meeting involving all the key actors in disaster management and development in the country, to discuss and agree on the way forward, including setting up the National Platform.

The Key Concepts and Practices

Taking UNISDR's terminology as our guide, the main concepts and practices that we will be using in this toolkit are as follows

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency management is the organisation and management of resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and initial recovery steps.

Emergencies are threatening conditions that require urgent action to stop them completely overwhelming individuals and communities. When a flood or cyclone hits a community adversely, urgent action must be taken to ensure that the emergency is managed to the point where people's needs are provided for and that efforts are made to rebuild and re-establish the community as rapidly as possible. Emergency management is focused on an adverse <u>event</u> whether it is concerned with warning and preparedness before the event happens, provision of relief during and immediately after the event or reconstruction and rehabilitation after the event.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Disaster risk reduction is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

Here we can see the contrast with emergency management. While emergency management is largely about dealing with an event – the next event – disaster risk reduction is concerned with the disaster risks that are inherent in any social, economic, environmental and geographical situation. The risk is ever-present and disaster risk reduction is concerned with anticipating these risks, including any changes to the risk patterns that may happen over time, and addressing them as much in advance as possible in order to decrease the potential for disaster to happen. Disaster risk reduction is concerned with building the resilience of communities to be able minimise the effects of disasters that might happen in the future.

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

The systematic process of using administrative directives, organisations, and operational skills to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

Disaster risk management is concerned with putting the institutional and management mechanisms in place to avoid, lessen or transfer the adverse effects of hazards through activities and measures for prevention, mitigation and preparedness. Note that this is in addition to the mechanisms that may be put in place to respond to disasters when they occur. The appropriate mechanisms for disaster risk management are quite often development mechanisms.   Emergency management mechanisms would be inappropriate for dealing with long-term and continuous issues even though they may offer opportunities to begin laying the foundations for longer-term activities. Disaster risk management is the main concern of a National Platform for DRR.   National Platforms act as the promoter and animator of disaster risk management activities

NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

A generic term for national mechanisms for coordination and policy guidance on disaster risk reduction that are multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary in nature, with public, private and civil society participation involving all concerned entities within a country.

This definition is derived from footnote 10 of the Hyogo Framework. Disaster risk reduction requires the knowledge, capacities and inputs of a wide range of sectors and organisations, including governments, United Nations agencies present at the national level, NGOs, civil society and the private sector, as appropriate. Most sectors are affected directly or indirectly by disasters and many have specific responsibilities that impinge upon disaster risks. National platforms provide a means to enhance national action to reduce disaster risks, and they represent the national mechanism for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. There are some key concepts in this definition – "coordination", "multi-sectoral", "inter-disciplinary" – implying the need for a function that is multi-stakeholder in participation with a responsibility for oversight of all DRR activity on a national basis.

HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

A global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts with a ten-year plan, adopted in January 2005 by 168 governments at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) has three strategic goals:

- The integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning

- The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards

- The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes.

It also has five priorities for action:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.

3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.

4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.

5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

The HFA also sets out roles and responsibilities for states, all of which contribute to the work plan of a National Platform. Recognising their primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of their citizens, states are committed to:

- Develop national coordination mechanisms

- Conduct baseline assessments on the status of disaster risk reduction

- Publish and update summaries of national programmes

- Review national progress towards achieving the objectives and priorities of the HFA

➢ Implement relevant international legal instruments

➢ Integrate disaster risk reduction with climate change strategies.

No country is legally required to work towards fulfilling the priorities and objectives of the HFA. However, with so much international endorsement and with the UN offering a major resource to promote the HFA agenda, most countries find that working towards achieving the aims of the HFA makes good sense, helps to set the national agenda and allows for the important international interchange on good practice and lessons learned.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects. Adaptation can be carried out in response to (ex post) or in anticipation of (ex ante) changes in climatic conditions. It entails a process by which measures and behaviors to prevent, moderate, cope with and take advantage of the consequences of climate events are planned, enhanced, developed and implemented (adapted from UNDP 2005, UKCIP 2003 and IPCC 2001).

Specific mention is made of climate change adaptation because climate change is likely to be an increasing problem for countries that are faced by frequent disasters triggered by natural, particularly hydro-meteorological, hazards. Although the exact picture is unknown, many scientists and policy makers will be aware of the potential for more disaster events to occur with increasing severity. Climate change is being tackled by the international community in two ways – climate change mitigation, which is largely concerned with reducing and balancing carbon emissions, and climate change adaptation. Adaptation is what will assist vulnerable communities to address climate change now and in the future and it is likely that adaptation actions will fall largely in a DRR agenda. Thus, the National Platform for DRR will have an even more important role and will need to coordinate closely with national actions for climate change adaptation.

Platforms are not exclusive to DRR

A physical platform is a horizontal platform raised above the level of the adjacent area, such as a stage for public speaking. This gives us a picture of the purpose a National Platform for DRR serves. A platform can also be a place, a means or an opportunity for public expression of opinion which also gives an accurate picture of the role of a National Platform for DRR. Another definition of a platform is a formal declaration of the principles on which a group, such as a political party, makes its appeal to the public. The National Platform for DRR serves as a vehicle for the principles of the HFA being applied in a national context and made available to the public through institutions, capacities and resources.

A good example of a platform is the basic technology of a computer system's hardware and software that defines how a computer is operated and determines what other kinds of software can be used. For example, when an application is said to "run on the Windows platform," it means that the programme has been compiled into the x86 machine language and runs under Windows. It implies x86 because Windows runs mostly on x86 PCs. The Xbox "gaming platform" refers to the Xbox proprietary operating system, but different hardware depending on model (Xbox or Xbox 360). The same goes for the "Palm platform," which ran the Palm OS on Motorola 68000 chips and later on ARM chips. In any case, a computer operating system is a platform that determines how the system operates. It is the same with a National Platform for DRR. It determines how DRR will be developed and implemented and provides the principles through the priorities and objectives of the HFA.

What has happened in Africa already

Africa has made a good start in terms of establishing National Platforms for DRR with already 15 countries having operating platforms. Other countries may also have operational coordinating mechanisms for disaster management that may include DRR but they may not be called National Platforms. There are also countries where attempts have been made to establish National Platforms but where the initial process has stalled. However, in many of these countries the conditions are conducive to further attempts. The necessary conditions for the national discussion of a DRR agenda and programme are complex as we will see later in the toolkit. For example, there may be:

1. Over-high expectations of how quickly and comprehensively DRR can bring results which leads to disappointment.

2. The feeling that the process is too costly to be sustainable.

3. A lack of commitment from the real decision-makers in the process.

4. A lack of financial resources to hold regular meetings of the National Platform.

Another major factor is that with major disasters recurring with seemingly increasing regularity, the focus continues to be on emergency management as understandably national authorities struggle to deal with people's immediate needs.

Nevertheless, a good start has been made and there is every hope that the need to deal with disasters more proactively will be increasingly understood, leading to the emergence of more and more national DRR efforts and the consequent establishment of National Platforms.

Checklist of key points

- ✓ *My country experiences disasters triggered by natural hazards on a regular basis, or, at least, on an increasing level compared to past years.*

- ✓ *It is clear that when disasters do occur they not only take lives and destroy property, they also have a severe and substantial negative impact on the economy and the environment as well as on the social cohesion of communities. They cost my country so much in terms of resources that can take a long time to re-establish.*

- ✓ *The relief programmes that are mounted each time a disaster occurs are very costly and lead to resources and capacities being moved from long-term development to short-term humanitarian goals.*

- ✓ *My country's disaster management function is oriented solely to humanitarian response. Even though the legislation and policy identify prevention and mitigation as key activities for the national function, in effect there is an absence of programmes in these areas.*

- ✓ *My country's development plans at different levels contain only a passing reference to disaster risk and do not attempt to integrate DRR as a major focus.*

- ✓ *Currently my country does not have a mechanism for addressing long-term disaster risk issues despite the fact that disasters seem to be increasing year-on-year.*

References and Resources

Key documents include:

Words Into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework. (UNISDR, 2007)

Towards National Resilience: Good Practices of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. (UNISDR, 2008)

National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas. (UNISDR/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 2010)

Guidelines: National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. (UNISDR, 2007 – under review)

Terminology On Disaster Risk Reduction. (UNISDR, 2009)

For information on disaster risk reduction and associated activity in Africa go to: http://www.preventionweb.net/english/countries/africa/

UNISDR has a section of its website dedicated to its activities in Africa at: http://www.unisdr.org/africa/

Although no longer in existence, the Provention Consortium still maintains its useful website containing materials related to DRR with a particular focus on the community level: http://www.proventionconsortium.org/

The work of the IFRC in DRR is increasing and you can find a selection of their resources on the topic at: http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/reducing/index.asp

2.   SETTING UP A NATIONAL PLATFORM

A step by step process

It is clear that a National Platform for DRR cannot be established overnight – it has to be undertaken in stages to ensure that the mechanism established is the most effective. It is important to be aware also that not everybody who needs to be involved will necessarily understand DRR and its application in a national context.

After an initial national discussion has led to the decision to proceed with the setting up of the National Platform for DRR, a logical next step is to form a Task Force to take on the job of recommending how the National Platform should be established. Of course, the Task Force, supported by the Government and particularly by the Government-designated focal point institution, will have access to support from the UNISDR.

Setting up the task force

Building the Task Force and the appointment of the Task Force Coordinator is an important step. The Task Force Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the process of establishing a National Platform for DRR and for recommending how it can be maintained and sustained. One important prerequisite is to ensure that the Coordinator fully understands DRR and, therefore, there may be a need for some initial capacity development so that the Coordinator can act as an effective advocate for DRR across a range of Government and non-government stakeholders.

Great attention is needed when building the Task Force because how the Task Force looks as it grows and develops will determine largely how the desired National Platform for DRR will be tomorrow.

Steps in building a task force

The following steps in setting up a Task force are suggested:

- Seek guidance first from the UNISDR Regional Office in your region: it has the knowledge and memory of National Platform experiences from elsewhere in the region.
- An already established "National Disaster Management Committee" may exist and some may claim that this is, in fact, a National Platform for DRR. However, if this national committee focuses, as is most often the case, on disaster response **only** then clearly it is not the body appropriate to addressing DRR. It is probably best to leave the Committee as it is and recruit a representative from it as one key stakeholder in the Task Force.
- Identify and recruit key stakeholders and potential champions. A more determined few is often better than a less determined many so target stakeholders

should be those that are already involved in disaster matters (and the more that understand DRR the better) together with representatives from development-related departments such as national planning, finance, poverty reduction and land use management. It is important to promote, from the outset, the appreciation that DRR needs to be mainstreamed into development to be effective.

- Identify and recruit potential key "champions" of DRR, preferably opinion makers/leaders who are listened to.

- Initiate and build dialogue and collaboration among the first key stakeholders and champions. Discussions focusing on "what to do about the country's disaster risk" help trigger dialogue among different people with shared interests. And just continuing the dialogue is already a form of collaboration. Ensure that the first key stakeholders and champions always meet even informally and agree on "the next steps (to take)" to maintain momentum.

- Ensure that the first key stakeholders and champions agree to meet regularly with proper meeting agenda and minute records. This provides a sense of "real business" and also a sense of commitment in the attainment of results. At this stage, an informal coordinator may have emerged spontaneously, providing some focus and direction to the undertaking.

- As the interactions become more focused, enrol more key stakeholders and champions. This is now easier with the existence of an informal coordinator and with support from the first key stakeholders and champions. One of the potential dangers is that Government might look upon this process as something that is purely Government business. This would be a great mistake. It is important to recognise that National Platforms for DRR are multi-stakeholder (see below) and involve a range of people and organisations outside of Government.

- In all this process it is important to have a task force coordinator, someone who has the confidence of Government **and** other key stakeholders. This person may spontaneously emerge or may be appointed. Whatever the nature of the appointment, the coordinator needs to have a full and complete understanding of DRR and be able to lead others into an understanding.

The next steps

With a Task Force in place and with a Coordinator appointed the initial agenda will cover the terms of reference of the National Platform, its status with Government and its institutional "anchorage". This institutional basis is crucial even to the point of giving the Platform legal status because to leave the National Platform as an ad hoc group with no real ability to influence development programmes and agendas. Associated with this need is a requirement for there to be strong endorsement from Government at the highest level possible. Further endorsement from other key stakeholders, such as the UN Resident Coordinator, and the full backing of UNISDR will also be critical in giving the National Platform its strong foundation.

Endorsement by Government is one thing but this should not be a disinterested endorsement. Government needs to have an active involvement and to provide the

necessary leadership to ensure success. The National Platform will also need a Coordinator who has the confidence of the stakeholders. This person does not have to be the person who coordinated the Task Force that established the National Platform.

When the National Platform has been established, when its institutional basis has been agreed, its Coordinator appointed and its terms of reference agreed then it is strongly suggested that the Platform is formerly launched with accompanying publicity which can act as a first step is sensitising the general public to the Government's forthcoming DRR agenda. Also, even if the National Platform for DRR has been established with very little help from UNISDR, it is important for the Platform, once established, to take part fully in international action on DRR and to be a full member of the UNISDR System.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

The Government Forms a Task Force

The multi-stakeholder meeting convened by the Prime Minister held a two hour meeting with a flexible agenda under the chairmanship of the Minister of State. The conclusions of the meeting were principally three: firstly, the Government should attempt to establish a strong, development-focused programme of DRR, largely integrated into existing development activity; secondly, the Government should set up a National Platform for DRR as a mechanism to drive and sustain the national DRR agenda: thirdly, a Task Force should be established to initiate the establishment of the National Platform, to develop the terms of reference, establish the initial agenda and recommend the participation. The Prime Minister summoned the Head of the Disaster Management Department, Mr. Triandon, for consultations on the formation of the Task Force including the selection of a Task Force Coordinator. Mr. Triandon, after some consideration, recommended Dr. Andrew Sabanda, Head of the Geography and Environment Department at Muyanda National University, who has been running undergraduate courses that include disaster risk mitigation and prevention.

Dr. Sabanda accepted the post and proceeded to put together his proposed list of participants which he shared with Mr. Triandon. Dr. Sabanda developed his proposed list of participants adopting the principle of inclusiveness to involve as many stakeholders as possible. Mr. Triandon was concerned about the inclusion of so many no-government stakeholders and felt that the participation should be largely Government representatives from across the sectors plus the Muyanda Red Cross and the UN Resident Coordinator. He said that he would need to consult the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister called a meeting involving himself, Mr. Triandon and the UN Resident Coordinator. The conclusion of the meeting was that although it was necessary to restrict membership to keep the size of the Platform to manageable proportions, the Platform should reflect as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. The Platform would then have the authority to co-opt other participants as the need

arose. It was also agreed that theoretically anyone could recommend the agenda items for discussion.

The Results of the First Meeting

The Task Force duly held its first meeting and agreed on the broad participation for the National Platform. At its second meeting, a draft Terms of Reference was agreed. The third meeting devoted itself to a discussion on the contents of National Platform discussions and in effect produced an outline draft DRR policy for Government. The minutes of the meetings were reviewed by the Prime Minister and a summary was submitted to Cabinet for endorsement. After some discussion about the efficacy of investing in DRR instead of continuing to strengthen the Government's disaster response mechanisms and some concern about the participation of non-government stakeholders, Cabinet agreed to establish a National Platform for DRR. Dr. Sabanda was asked to chair the Platform until the Platform itself nominated its own chair. Mr. Triandon's Department was to provide the Secretariat for the Platform. It was also agreed that the at the first meeting of the Platform, the agenda items should be the adoption of the Terms of Reference, agreement of the participation and suggestions for the Platform's areas of discussion broadly guided by the HFA. Dr. Sabanda suggested that before the first formal meeting, there should be a launch of the Platform which should be done with the full involvement of the media. The opportunity could be used to undertake some public awareness on behalf of the Government's DRR strategy. Dr. Sabanda agreed to contact the UNISDR regional office for their support in making the launch a useful and effective event for furthering the cause of DRR in Muyanda. He felt that it would be ideal to have the launch on International Disaster Reduction Day in October.

In one of their normal weekly briefing meetings, the Prime Minister raised the issue of the National Platform with the UN Resident Coordinator and requested UN support for developing a DRR policy and strategy and for developing the appropriate mechanisms. The Resident Coordinator promised to consult with senior staff of the UN agencies in Muyanda and come back with some recommendations on how the UN could support the strengthening of DRR in Muyanda including resources for the National Platform Secretariat.

UNISDR's recommended steps in engaging in multi-stakeholder dialogue to establish the foundations of DRR

UNISDR recommend the following steps to initiate the process of multi-stakeholder engagement in promoting DRR:

- Identify key stakeholders and ensure active collaboration among them. Key stakeholders are those who should play a role in the planning, promotion or implementation of risk reduction strategies and programmes.

- Identify relevant existing governmental or civil society organisations. Assess whether the dialogue could be anchored within or benefit from these existing networks.
- Identify one or more disaster risk reduction champions.
- Convene interested and affected parties.
- Agree on shared goals, scope, agenda, working arrangements and ground rules.
- If appropriate, establish multi-disciplinary working groups or committees to work on specific issues.
- Establish a mechanism for overall coordination of the work effort. Coordination includes setting and monitoring progress and integrating outputs.
- Develop an arrangement for keeping the dialogue going.
- Set up a system for disseminating discussion results and for receiving and acting on external input. Results commonly should go to key officials, participating organisations and the public.

UNISDR recommend that participation in the dialogue should include central planning, development, finance, environment and policy making bodies; representatives of other sectoral ministries' national disaster management and civil protection agencies, emergency services and the Red Cross or Red Crescent Society; owners of critical infrastructure and enterprises; public agencies responsible for overseeing, for example, the implementation of building codes or regulations sanctioning or providing incentives; environmental managers, climate change focal points, women's commissions and key humanitarian and social service organisations; relevant professional organisations, technical and scientific institutions and development NGOs; private sector institutions; media organisations; other non-governmental and community groups that are advocates for residents in high-risk areas.

A National Platform for DRR is a multi-stakeholder partnership

According to the UN, a multi-stakeholder partnership is defined as a "voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both State and non-State, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits". Multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) is increasingly becoming popular to drive certain public interest issues that have ultimate impact on the society such as the reduction of disaster risk.

An MSP brings various organizations and groups together – in particular those who agree to address policy development and implementation challenges. Some would say that with an MSP, the outcome should be larger than the sum of the parts. One has to weigh the risks of putting the various players in a partnership. In some cases the partnership is not viable and a loosely organized network may be better. Networks and MSPs are very much interrelated and the best way to understand MSPs is by comparing it with networks. MSP brings diverse institutions which have a perceived common purpose together while networks rely on institutions with somewhat similar core objectives. Multi-stakeholder processes focus on advocacy, policy making and

implementation; networks are attuned to research and information sharing. Multi-stakeholder processes last for short or medium term while networks are established to deal with issues that have medium and long term relevance. It is conceivable, therefore, for a National Platform for DRR to eventually adapt to becoming a network as more and more DRR activity is integrated into normal programmes

A National Platform for DRR is also concerned with coordination

Coordination is not one type of action or actions involving one set of actors. The UN's humanitarian coordination organisation is OCHA or the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Coordination for OCHA means various types of actions involving different sets of actors, providing different types of support, using many different tools and mechanisms.

Humanitarian coordination is based on the belief that a coherent approach to emergency response will maximize its benefits and minimize its potential pitfalls. The same is true for DRR.

OCHA carries out its coordination role by:

- **Developing common strategies**- Humanitarian assistance is most effective when the actors involved are able to define common priorities, share goals, agree on tactics and jointly monitor progress. OCHA works with its partners both within and outside the UN system to develop a strategy known as the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP), and to establish a clear division of responsibility for addressing humanitarian needs. Apply this to a national programme for DRR.
- **Assessing situations and needs** - Ongoing analysis of the political, social, economic and military environment and the periodic assessment of humanitarian needs are critical to understanding the causes, dynamics and impact of any crisis. As emergencies evolve and needs change, relief agencies and other actors come and go, focusing on their respective areas and particular programmes. Throughout a crisis, it is OCHA's job to: 1) identify overall humanitarian needs; 2) develop a realistic plan of action for meeting these needs that avoids duplication; and 3) monitor progress, adjust programmes if necessary and analyze their impact. As we will see in the next chapter, a dynamic information base is crucial for effective DRR. A National Platform for DRR can help to 1) identify overall DRR needs; 2) develop a realistic plan of action for meeting these needs that avoids duplication; and 3) monitor progress, adjust programmes if necessary and analyse their impact.
- **Mobilizing resources** - A consolidated and cost-effective approach to fundraising improves access to funding and ensures a more efficient allocation of resources.
- **Addressing common problems** - During a crisis, problems arise that affect many agencies and NGOs, but do not fall squarely within any particular agency's mandate. OCHA addresses problems common to humanitarian actors, such as

negotiating with warring parties to gain access to civilians in need or working with UN security officials to support preparedness and response measures in changing security situations. Similarly with DRR, a National Platform can help to resolve problems that are cross-organisational and common to many of the stakeholders.

- **Administering coordination mechanisms and tools** - OCHA serves as the secretariat for critical inter-agency coordination mechanisms. The National Platform can be the repository for issues concerning inter-agency coordination across a range of stakeholders

There are three basic coordinating mechanisms: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, and standardization

- **Mutual Adjustment.** This mechanism is based on the simple process of informal communication. It is used in very small companies, such as a 5-person software shop, or for very, very complicated tasks, such as putting the first person on the moon. Mutual adjustment is the same mechanism used by furniture movers to maneouvre through a house, or paddlers to take a canoe downriver, or jazz musicians playing a live engagement. It's especially useful when nobody really knows ahead of time how to do what they're doing. As such, this mechanism may have only limited use for a National Platform.
- **Direct Supervision.** Achieves coordination by having one person take responsibility for the work of others, issuing instructions and monitoring their actions. An example is the offensive unit of a football team. Here, there is marked division of labor and specialization, and the efforts of the players are coordinated by a quarterback calling specific plays. If the organization is large enough, one person cannot handle all the members, so multiple leaders or managers must be used, then the efforts of these people (the managers) are coordinated by a manager of managers, and so on. Apart from the fact that the work of the National Platform should operate according to and within an overall national policy and strategy, this mechanism also is of little use to the operation of a National Platform.
- **Standardization.** A third mechanism of coordination is standardization. Here, the coordination is achieved "on the drawing board", so to speak, or "at compile-time" if you like, not during the action or "run-time". The coordination is pre-programmed in one of three ways:

    Work Processes. An example is the set of assembly instructions that come with a child's toy. Here, the manufacturer standardizes the work process of the parent. Often, the machinery in a factory effectively standardizes work by automatically providing only, say, blue paint when blue paint is needed, and only red paint when red paint is needed. The national policy and strategy would apply here in the case of the work of the National Platform.

Outputs. Standardized outputs mean that there are specifications that the product or work output must meet, but aside from that the worker is free to do as they wish. Stereo equipment manufacturers have a lot of freedom in designing their products, but the interface portions of the product (the connections to other stereo devices like CD's, speakers, tape-recorders, etc.) must be the same as everyone else's, or else it would be hard to put together a complete system. With a National Platform, everyone must be working according to the same principles with the desired output being the reduction of disaster risk for as many people and communities as possible. Of course, there are many ways of achieving these goals but the agenda remains the same for all stakeholders.

Worker Skills. Professional schools, like medical schools, law school, business school, produce workers that do stuff exactly the same way. How do you treat a staphylococcus infection? You use one of the following antibiotics. It's a series of recipes that are memorized. Employers (e.g., hospitals) can rely on these employees (physicians) to do things the standard way, which allows other employees (e.g., nurses) to coordinate smoothly with them. When a surgeon and an anesthesiologist meet for the first time in the operating room, they have no problem working together because by virtue of their training they know exactly what to expect from each other. The need for common capacity development of all DRR stakeholders is critical to effectiveness. The understanding of DRR can be very confused with different stakeholders meaning different things. A common problem, for example, is the confusion between "disaster impact reduction" and "disaster risk reduction", one having a short-term perspective and the other a very long-term perspective. Worker skills, therefore, in the context of DRR are important areas of focus.

What has happened in Africa already

As we have previously said, there are around 15 countries in Africa now with operational National Platforms. For example, in the **Comoros** a National Platform for DRR was established in 2007 with its office housed in the Rescue Operations Centre. Chaired by the Department of Defence, it comprises the main sectoral departments, representatives of autonomous islands, the UN, the Comoros Red Crescent and an environmental NGO.

In **Kenya**, tthe 2009 National Policy for Disaster Management envisaged the establishment of a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction as a stakeholder forum for consultation, negotiation, mediation and consensus building on disaster risk reduction. The Platform will work within the Ministry of State for Special Programmes. The broad objectives of the forum are defined as to:

- Promote and enhance education, public awareness and advocacy of disaster
- risks.

- Obtain commitment from the public leadership to disaster risk reduction.
- Stimulate and strengthen multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral partnerships and networks for Disaster Risk Reduction at all levels.
- Improve dissemination and understanding of natural and man-made causes of disasters and their related effects upon vulnerable communities.
- Plan dissemination of information on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Play an advisory role to all the stakeholders on DRR

Membership of the National Platform is to be drawn from Line Ministries, NGOs, and CBOs. The UN agencies and the Private Sector are encouraged to participate, and share their information, knowledge and expertise with the other stakeholders.

In **South Africa**, there is no named National Platform. However, the National Disaster Management Advisory Forum (NDMAF) is a Technical Forum, established by the Minister for Provincial and Local Government under the Disaster Management Act of 2002. The Forum is a body in which national, provincial and local government and other disaster management role-players consult one another and co-ordinate their actions on matters relating to disaster management. The Forum must make recommendations concerning the national disaster management framework to the Intergovernmental Committee on Disaster Management (ICDM – political Forum), and may advise any organ of state, statutory functionary, non-governmental organization or community or the private sector on any matter relating to disaster management. The NDMAF meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Head of the National Disaster Management Centre. It brings together the sectoral ministries, specialist departments like the South African Weather Service, representative bodies like the South African Farmers Union, NGOs and international organizations like the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, and the heads of the Disaster Management Departments of the 9 provinces.

Checklist of key points

   ✓ *My country has a national Platform for DRR which is given legitimacy by my Government and contributes significantly to driving a formal national DRR agenda which my Government gives significance to as a major component of development planning and programming.*

   ✓ *My country established a National Platform some years ago but until now it has only met once and has not made a significant contribution to reducing disaster risk in my country.*

   ✓ *There is a National Platform existing in my country which does meet and which does make some useful recommendations which Government says will contribute to the implementation of its DRR strategy. However, the only thing that we tangibly see happening is the regular strengthening of the Government's disaster response capacity.*

- ✓ *There is a National Platform in my country but its meetings are not transparent and the participants are from a small number of Government departments and agencies.*

- ✓ *The National Platform in my country is active and its meeting discussions and recommendations are disseminated for public consumption. However, the Government controls the operation of the National Platform very closely meaning that non-government actors do not attend on as regular a basis as they should because they do not feel that their opinions are taken account of.*

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

For more information on multi-stakeholder partnerships please go to:

http://www.prolinnova.net/fmsp-booklet.php

http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/partnership-carmen-malena.doc

http://www.globalknowledgepartnership.org/gkp/index.cfm/pageid/256/Home/Programme/Publications/

http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/meetings/docs/isoc_multi-stakeholder-partnerships_20080313.pdf

This is just a selection. There are many resources available on MSPs.

For Coordination, please refer to the following:

http://www.analytictech.com/mb021/coordination.htm

For coordination in OCHA please go to:
http://ochaonline.un.org/OOLmockup09/AboutUs/Coordination/tabid/5872/language/en-US/Default.aspx

CHAPTERS 3 TO 9: PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM

Chapters 3 to 9 cover some of the main activities of a National Platform for DRR for which the HFA provides a reference for assessing and monitoring achievements, thus facilitating the work of National Platforms for DRR when undertaking their work in the following areas.

3. PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM – RISK INDENTIFICATION AND RISK INFORMATION

The importance of accurate information

One of the most important initial tasks of a National Platform for DRR is to establish an information base upon which to base actions. This requires a risk assessment to be undertaken. This is a complex task and it cannot be achieved quickly. Moreover, assessment of risk is something that accumulates and is refined over time. Risk assessment never stops – it is a continuous process with more and more information becoming available over time leading to a constantly increasing understanding of the nature of risk and the needs to be addressed.

Risk is often misunderstood. Frequently, a country may call an assessment of hazards a risk assessment. But this only tells you where earthquakes and floods of different magnitudes occur or, more likely, where they have occurred in the past, based on historical data. For DRR purposes we need to know more – in those geographical areas where hazards are likely to manifest themselves, what populations exist and how badly are they exposed? What are the specific vulnerabilities express themselves – to the resident populations, their lives and livelihoods, to the economy and infrastructure and to the environment. Moreover, to get the complete picture we need to know what capacities and resources are available to address the effects hazard and minimise the risk. The more accurate the information available from risk assessments, the able we will be to target programmes to promote resilience.

Why we need a baseline

A baseline will help us to assess the most urgent needs and the issues at stake, as well as stakeholders and their capacities. Baseline information will shape subsequent planning and prioritize implementation of activities by National Platform partners. It serves as a starting point from which to assess and report progress in DRR. Baseline studies provide strategic information to DRR stakeholders gathered in National Platforms and strengthen their ability to guide future DRR programming. Baseline information will also allow decision makers and communities to make critical choices necessary for building resilience to disasters. They provide a foundation for legitimate claims to request both human and financial investment in DRR.

How to conduct a baseline

Because the completion of a comprehensive baseline study is a long process and should benefit from the input of various stakeholders, it is a primary task for a National Platform. However, the process can begin with preliminary findings. Multiple

stakeholders gathered as a National Platform can provide their initial assessment of the risk and institutional landscape from their various thematic sectors' or organisational point of view. Combined with those of other sectors, this "big picture" overview can inform a better coordinated approach to address these needs through joint action that can be planned on the basis of the initial assessment.

This assessment should establish a timeline and feed into it with information on disasters and related losses. For this, consideration should be given to social, economic, environmental and physical vulnerabilities. Attempts should be made to establish the impact of disasters with clear figures on the number of casualties and the number and detail of people who have been affected. Economic disaster losses and expenditures for recovery and rehabilitation should be assessed. The assessment should also consider where disaster did not occur in spite of hazardous events and assess how preparedness and prevention measures, combined with mitigation, helped to avoid disasters.

National Platform members should also identify the existing institutional set-up for disaster management and particularly risk reduction (see Chapter 5). To establish the risk and institutional profile of a country, province or community, various information sources should be taken into account. Information should come from a wide range of National Platform stakeholders (as well as some who may not be directly involved including from communities). Local authorities, line ministries, technical services, statistical offices and results from field missions, Red Cross/Red Crescent Society vulnerability and capacity assessments or similar exercises usually carried out by NGOs and CBOs (Community-Based Organizations) can all contribute to this exercise. By linking up with the international community, in particular UNISDR member agencies and UNDP and UN/OCHA, further data from their development and humanitarian assessments, but also various other sources, including regional assessments, can be obtained. National data should be contrasted with international statistics to put the particular risk profile and institutional landscape in an internationally comparable frame.

Once information has been collected, it should be analyzed and collated. The Hyogo Framework for Action provides a general framework which could serve as guidance. It could be particularly helpful to align the assessment also with the HFA Monitoring format, which itself provides indicators of progress to implement the provisions of the Hyogo Framework. The information thus gathered provides the basis for subsequent work planning and division of labour among National Platform members to address most urgent needs and build more resilient nations and communities.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

The National Platform Meets

Following a successful event to launch the National Platform for DRR, which was led by the Prime Minister, with most of the sectoral ministers present, the first formal meeting of the Platform took place with the intention of electing a chairperson and setting a priority agenda. The launch provided an ideal opportunity to publicise the Government's intention to proceed with a proactive DRR agenda. The event got full media coverage and was supported by the UNISDR Regional Office who prepared some visual material which was shown on the national TV station as a way of raising awareness   about   the   issues.

Dr. Sabanda chaired the first meeting of the National Platform by first standing aside and letting a member of the secretariat (from the Disaster Management Department) conduct an election for the chair. This confirmed Dr. Sabanda in the chair. The meeting was attended by most of the government sectoral ministries, representatives of UN agencies, the Muyanda Red Cross and other key NGOs and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce in the capital city. Two visiting Commissioners from outlying districts were also in attendance.

The meeting confirmed the following list of areas of focus in order of priority (although many of the activities would, of course, overlap). These priorities are as follows:

- risk identification and information
- capacity assessment and development
- building DRR institutions at all levels
- mainstreaming DRR into development
- measuring DRR achievements and reporting
- DRR and climate change adaptation.

The National Platform began the task of determining how to organise itself to begin the task of building a baseline for the purposes of risk assessment and identification. Dr. Sabanda asked all participants to return to the next meeting with the information that they have on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities so that the baseline can begin to be built. He also requested the Secretariat to follow up with the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Planning and Development (which includes a mapping department) to obtain the information that they have on past disasters, the effects of those disaster on communities and the response that was made.

Dr. Sabanda offered the resources of his university department (the Department of Geography and Environment) as a filter for the information received, saying that he has research students who could undertake the task as part of their research. The Country Director of UNDP offered some funds in support of this process and promised to contact UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) which hosts the

Global Risk Identification Programme or GRIP, to see what resources they could offer. In a separate meeting with the Prime Minister, the UNDP Country Director suggested that UNDP develops a small project to provide some seed money to support different aspects of the Government's proposed agenda. The German development agency GTZ offered its resources for the analysis and mapping of information, particularly the advanced software that it was using to elaborate disaster risk. This was very willingly accepted. The Muyanda Red Cross promised to make the results of its recently conducted Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) available at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting was adjourned for two weeks.

A useful tool

UNDP has established a risk identification programme (GRIP - Global Risk Identification Programme) that works with international and local expert institutions and authorities in various aspects of risk and loss assessment in five areas:

1. Demonstrations – In a few countries, the GRIP will demonstrate that information on disaster risks and losses can be applied to improve risk management decisions and development outcomes. Demonstrations will be undertaken with the explicit understanding that a multi-stakeholder client base agrees to participate and intends to use the risk analyses to inform the identified priority policies, plans and decisions. Governments and local institutions are the key partners, supported by international agencies.

2. Capacity development – The GRIP will work to develop capacity by local partners to undertake risk assessments and apply the results. Activities include the development and promotion of standards and the training of national actors and institutions in disaster risk analysis.

3. Enhanced global disaster loss data – The GRIP will expand and improve the evidence base on disaster-related losses. Historical loss data is necessary for risk assessment and for measuring progress towards achieving the expected outcome of the HFA – the substantial reduction of disaster losses. Work in this outcome area includes development and promotion of tools and standards for damage and loss assessment. It also promotes the systematic organization of loss data into databases for analysis and use.

4. Risk analyses for management decision-support in high-risk countries – These analyses are similar in nature and intent to the demonstrations described above.

Although the degree of GRIP engagement in linking risk assessment results to decision processes will be less than in the demonstration cases, these analyses create additional opportunities to convene, facilitate and provide technical support to national crisis risk analysis exercises. As with the demonstration cases above, governments and local institutions are the key partners, supported by international agencies as appropriate.

5. Global risk update – Risk analyses generated through the GRIP will be compiled into a periodically-issued global risk update. This update, which will be widely distributed, will contribute to a common understanding of disaster risk patterns and their causes globally. With each iteration, the risk update will be increasingly based on high resolution analyses contributed to by local, national and regional partners.

Assessing and managing risk in work and daily life

Risk assessment consists of an objective evaluation of risk in which assumptions and uncertainties are clearly considered and presented. Part of the difficulty of risk management is that measurement of both of the quantities in which risk assessment is concerned - potential loss and probability of occurrence - can be very difficult to measure. The chance of error in the measurement of these two concepts is large. A risk with a large potential loss and a low probability of occurring is often treated differently from one with a low potential loss and a high likelihood of occurring. In theory, both are of nearly equal priority in dealing with first, but in practice it can be very difficult to manage when faced with the scarcity of resources, especially time, in which to conduct the risk management process.   So we all make intelligent guesses at times and we weigh up the relative importance of issues – some risks are more acceptable to us than others.   This means that we are prepared to absorb the outcomes of some risks becoming actualities more than others.

The UK's Health and Safety Executive considers a risk assessment to be simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Workers and others have a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures.   Accidents and ill health can ruin lives and affect your business if output is lost or machinery is damaged or even if insurance costs rise. The Health and Safety Executive suggest five steps are necessary to undertake a risk assessment:

1) Identify the hazard(s)

2) Decide who might be harmed and how

3) Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

4) Record your findings and implement them

5) Review your assessment and update it if necessary.

In simplified form, these suggested steps for a risk assessment concerning safety in the workplace are not far removed from the steps that need to be taken to assess disaster risks in a country or regional context.

What has happened in Africa already

The African Union's Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of 2004 highlights the improvement of the identification and assessment of risk as a key priority in Africa. Hazards and vulnerability factors are dynamic and their potential impacts vary. The Strategy considers that greater knowledge of hazards and vulnerability enables communities and countries to better understand and anticipate future hazards and helps them minimize the risk of disasters. Prospective assessment of the risk of disasters to development and the effect of development interventions on disasters, effective early warning of impending risks, and systematic assessment of disaster losses are particularly important in helping communities and countries to determine and understand the actions which they may take in order to reduce the impact of potential and existing risks. The Strategy highlights the importance of a participatory approach to risk assessment warning that both the public authorities and the public need to be better familiar with risk assessment processes and early warning systems and be aware of the utility of these processes and systems in informing them of impending risks and empowering them to take timely action to reduce disaster risks. The ultimate objective of risk identification and assessment is to help individuals, communities and countries protect their lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and ecosystems.

The Strategy goes on to state that to effectively achieve this requires integration of risk identification and assessment processes and their mainstreaming in development activities. Hence, early warning systems need to provide information about vulnerability factors and patterns in addition to hazards forecasting. Also, post-disaster loss assessment needs to provide information for prospective risk assessment and early warning. This way, hazard analysis, vulnerability assessment, risk monitoring and early warning can be better integrated. To help fill the gap of inadequate risk identification and assessment, it is necessary to strengthen risk analysis capacities, promote integrated vulnerability and capacity assessment, upgrade data monitoring stations and capacity for early warning, and improve loss assessment.

The strategic directions recommended to improve identification and assessment of disaster risks are:

- improve the quality of information and data on disaster risks;
- improve identification, assessment and monitoring of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities; strengthen early warning systems, institutions, capacities and the resource base, including observational and research sub-systems;

- improve communication and information exchange among stakeholders in risk identification and assessment; and

- engender and improve integration and coordination of risk identification and assessment processes and interventions.

Checklist of key points

✓ **My country experiences floods and storms frequently that lead to flooding, as well as earthquakes but these events seems to have affected different geographical areas and different populations and it is difficult to predict who will be hit next time and how they will be affected.**

✓ **The only maps in existence in my country that reflect that disaster risks are maps showing the historical occurrence of disasters and reflect the characteristics of the hazards and nothing else.**

✓ **My country has made some considerable advances in development in recent years but every now and then a disaster occurs which destroys or severely disrupts this at least on a local level and the problem is we don't know when and where it will happen next.**

✓ **There is no systematic collection of information about disaster-related issues in my country. There is, in particular, no real understanding of how communities are affected by disaster beyond the period of providing immediate relief and no real appreciation of the local capacities that might exist to absorb the effects of disaster.**

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

More detail on the GRIP can be found at: http://www.gripweb.org/grip.php?ido=1000

More general risk assessment sources are (among others):

http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf (UK Health and Safety Executive)

http://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/riskassessment/index_html

http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~rtusler/project/riskasse.html

http://www.ucop.edu/riskmgt/erm/documents/sampleproj_risk.doc

The African Union's Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy can be found at: http://www.unisdr.org/africa/af-hfa/docs/africa-regional-strategy.pdf

4. PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM – CAPACITY ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The need to implement effectively

You can have the political commitment, a well developed agenda and an action plan for implementation. You can even have the resources to pay for implementation – but if you do not have the capacities in place to undertake the implementation effectively, then nothing will happen. This chapter is about those necessary capacities – individuals, organisations and the enabling environment – that will contribute to the successful implementation of DRR. We are concerned here with the assessment of capacities, a process through which capacity development needs are identified and the subsequent capacity development process itself, the strengthening of existing capacities and the creation of new ones as appropriate. These actions are quite properly the task of a National Platform, to chart the capacity development process and to ensure that it takes place.

Assessing capacity in the first place

UNDP defines capacity as "the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner." Capacity development (CD) is thereby the process through which the abilities to do so are obtained, strengthened, adapted and maintained over time. A capacity assessment is an analysis of current capacities against desired future capacities, which generates an understanding of capacity assets and needs, which in turn leads to the formulation of capacity development strategies. Note the importance of understanding both assets and needs; if there are good capacities in place then these need to be built on – there is no need to duplicate.

UNDP's Capacity Assessment Framework is composed of three dimensions:
- **Points of Entry:** UNDP recognises that a country's capacity resides on different levels – the enabling environment, organisations and individuals – and thus needs to be addressed across these levels. A capacity assessment team selects one level as its point of entry, and may "zoom in" or "zoom out" from that level as needed. Capacity assessments at the individual level are generally conducted within the context of an organisational assessment.
- **Core Issues**: These represent the issues upon which UNDP is most often called to address. Not all of these issues will necessarily be analysed in any given assessment, but they provide a comprehensive set of issues from which a capacity assessment team may choose as it defines its scope: 1) leadership; 2) policy and legal framework; 3) mutual accountability mechanisms; 4) public engagement; 5) human resources; 6) financial resources; 7) physical resources; and 8) environmental resources. All of these are relevant to a DRR context. A

human rights based approach normally serves as an "overlay" on any capacity assessment.

- • **Cross-Cutting Functional Capacities**: A capacity assessment will need to look at two types of capacity – technical and functional. Specific functional capacities are necessary for the successful creation and management of policies, legislations, strategies and programmes. UNDP has chosen to prioritise the following functional capacities, which exist at all three points of entry and for all core issues: 1) engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue; 2) analyse a situation and create a vision; 3) formulate policy and strategy; 4) budget, manage and implement; and 5) monitor and evaluate. These are functional capacities that are all relevant to a national DRR agenda.

Developing the capacities you need

Assessment is only one step in a recommended capacity development process. In fact, it is the second step. The full five steps are as follows:

1) Engage all key stakeholders in the process
2) Assess capacity assets and needs
3) Formulate a capacity development response
4) Implement a capacity development response
5) Evaluate capacity.

So once your assessment has been completed you will know in more detail where to focus your capacity development response.

It may seem a pedantic point of definition, but frequently the term **capacity building** is used and there are some significant differences between this term and capacity development:

CAPACITY BUILDING	CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
• Narrower scope • Focuses only on initial stages of building or creating capacities • Assumes that capacities do not exist to begin with • Often indistinguishable from the provision of training	• Broader scope • Includes both creating and building (or enhancement) as well as the (subsequent) use, management and retention of capabilities • Recognises existing national capacities as a starting point • Aims to create capacity sustainability.

Thus, capacity development recognises that capacities may already be in place but they may need enhancement or re-orientation to make them effective.

So the five steps of capacity development need to focus on the two types of capacity – technical and functional – and the three levels of capacity development – individual, organisational and at the level of the enabling environment.

Some key issues to remember when implementing a capacity development process are:

- The process needs to be locally driven – capacity development cannot be imposed.

- The development of DRR capacity is the concern of all of society, hence the need for as wide a range of stakeholders in the National Platform for DRR as possible.

- There are many dimensions of capacity that need support meaning that there is no prescription or "blueprint" for developing DRR capacity.

- The capacities needed to manage disaster risk involve far more than just people's skills and competencies.

- It is necessary to think well beyond just the technical capacities and ensure that adequate attention is paid to the functional capacities. Technical capacities need to be combined with the promotion of leadership and other managerial capacities.

- It is often assumed that enhanced capacities will, of themselves, lead to improved performance but this is not necessarily to case – hence the need to focus on the enabling environment.

- The task of developing and sustaining capacity for DRR must be viewed as a long-term venture.

- Training is only one methodology for capacity development, probably best for targeting the individual level. Capacity development methodologies go well beyond training.

- Learning is ongoing and makes use of new and established methods and technology.

- Learning can take place through informal mechanisms as well as more formal means.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

The Second Meeting of the National Platform – a Lot of Raw Data

The second meeting of the National Platform was held two weeks after the first. The first half of the meeting concerned the establishment of a baseline when the wide range of stakeholders among the participants submitted the data and information that they had on disaster risk in Muyanda. The Platform Chairman, Dr. Sabanda, thanked all the participants for their contributions and promised that a digest of the information will be prepared by research students at his University Department and presented back to the National Platform in a month's time, together with some estimation of the gaps and requirements that will need to be given some attention in the future. The further analysis of the information will be undertaken by GTZ with the probable support of UNDP, including the mapping of existing data.

Addressing Capacity Assessment

The second half of the meeting concerned the need to assess capacities for DRR in Muyanda and the way in which the assessment can be carried out. Dr. Sabanda suggested that the National Institute of Management be approached to prepare an assessment framework and conduct an assessment based on existing guidelines. The representative from USAID suggested that this task should be put out to tender as there were certainly private sector companies and institutions in Muyanda who could undertake such a task. The Representative from the Disaster Management Department suggested that capacity assessment for DRR should be a relatively easy task as his department had trained personnel at national and district levels and they could provide the principal means of implementing a DRR agenda. Dr. Sabanda said that he thought the capacity assessment should go much wider to embrace a wide range of stakeholders as DRR will need to be integrated into development which meant that all the sectors needed to possess the capacity to deliver. The representative from the Disaster Management Department strongly disagreed and suggested that the Chairman was trying to undermine the authority of the Department. Dr. Sabanda suggested that this issue be taken to the Prime Minister and recommended the adjournment of the meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting should be convened in one month's time.

Capacity development and the HFA

The overall guidance provided by the Hyogo Framework for Action gives an indication of the types of capacities required to address the various outcomes and results that relate to the Framework's five priorities agenda. While these offer an insight into the kinds of

capacities required for DRR, they should only be considered indicative, as every country situation is different. The following broad categories are identified:

- Developing policy and related implementation frameworks, legislation, national strategies and platforms, etc. (especially related to improving resilience of developing countries).

- The availability and use of data being crucial to hazard, vulnerability and comprehensive risk assessments, with particular emphasis given to both the technical and human aspects of monitoring disaster risk factors and early warning activities.

- Development of human resources through knowledge, education, training and the transfer of experience by means of information, networking and advocacy.

Paragraph 4 of the HFA offers the following statement on the challenges posed by disasters:

There is now international acknowledgement that efforts to reduce disaster risks must be systematically integrated into policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction, and supported through bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including partnerships. Sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually supportive objectives, and *in order to meet the challenges ahead, accelerated efforts must be made to build the necessary capacities at the community and national levels to manage and reduce risk.* Such an approach is to be recognized as an important element for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

What has happened in Africa already

Capacity development remains a major challenge for countries of Africa attempting to address disaster risks in a proactive way. While the African Union's Regional Strategy for DRR does not specifically mention capacity development, it is implicit throughout. The problem is that there is little institutionalised capacity development available on a national or regional basis. There has been some attempt to establish training an education functions in some universities, mainly in southern Africa, but, as we have seen, capacity development is more than this. It requires a more systematic approach, one that goes well beyond the current donor time frame windows and the application of one-off training events. This will require some creative thinking.

Checklist of key points

- ✓ *Beyond the Disaster Management Department in my country and its limited representation at district level there is little capacity to address response to disaster, let alone the more extensive needs of disaster risk reduction.*

- ✓ *My country has competencies to assess capacities which would help in identifying and prioritising the needs.*

- ✓ *Three years ago, a major international NGO received a grant to implement a major training programme with government at both national and local level. The programme was implemented over a period of 9 months and reached a wide variety of stakeholders at national, local and even community level. The problem is that nothing has happened since and the capacities developed have long since dissipated*

- ✓ *My Government implicitly recognises the need for capacity development but it is difficult for it to admit this.*

- ✓ *NGOs and the international community understand DRR far more than national and local counterparts but there is little in the way of knowledge transfer.*

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

UNDP's excellent resources on capacity assessment and development can be found at:

http://www.undp.org/capacity/resources.shtml

The UN Development Group is a specialist UN agency that focuses, among other things on capacity development. See its resources at: http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=225

5. PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM – BUILDING DRR INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

Governance is the key word

This chapter is largely about governance and the institutions that are considered necessary for managing an effective DRR programme. UNDP defines governance as the "exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences."

Institutions are components of governance and consist of things such as policy and legislation, and also plans, regulations and procedures through which government operates at all levels in the day-to-day elaboration of its duties to its citizens. The UNDP definition makes the importance of governance institutions as conduits for the expression of citizen's rights and interests central and certainly the building of DRR institutions should have the needs of citizens and communities as an emphasis.

The first priority of the HFA is devoted to prioritising DRR as a national and local priority and the building of a strong institutional basis for implementation. UNISDR suggests the following indicators as possible means for assessing progress in implementing this priority:

- A legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with explicit responsibilities defined for all levels of government

- A national multi-sectoral platform for DRR is operational

- A national policy framework for DRR exists that requires plans and activities at all administrative levels, from national to local

- Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement DRR plans at all administrative levels.

The focus here will be on policy and legislation.

The global position in 2005

Tear Fund's review of 119 reports submitted to the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, indicated that 80% included some form of legislation for disaster management. The reports showed:

- A common outcome of disaster management legislation is the formation of a National Platform for DRR

- National Platforms can play a role in liaising with line ministries and other actors in shaping risk reduction policies

- Regional governance can support national-level legislation and its implementation

- The implementation of DRR legislation takes place at the local level which requires appropriate support

- The strategic use of development policy to mainstream DRR was only noted in 55% of national returns to the Conference, suggesting that DRR policy continues to be marginalised

- Only a small number of countries have connected DRR policy with national development planning frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP).

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

The Third Meeting of the National Platform on DRR

The agenda for the third meeting of the National Platform for DRR was a long one and a whole day was given over to the discussions. Some participants, not normally attending the Platform's meetings, were co-opted for their specific technical inputs. The meeting was held out of town in order to ensure commitment to the discussions.

The Beginnings of a Baseline

Before the meeting, the Platform Secretariat in the Disaster Management Department had circulated the summary of risk data received from Platform participants that had been prepared by research students in the Geography and Environment Department at Muyanda National University. The report was strong on hazard data but contained very little relating to either vulnerabilities or capacities. Dr. Sabanda requested that participants give some consideration as to how the gaps in the baseline can be filled. The UNDP Country Director stated that he had requested a visit from the Global Risk Identification Programme (GRIP) of BCPR and he was waiting for a response. The representative from GTZ said that he could ask his mapping and IT section to take the summary data and try to map it against some key socio-economic variables as a start to producing risk data. The representative from the Muyanda Red Cross submitted a report of its latest Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment covering two districts in the south west of the country.

Moving Forward on Capacity Assessment and Development

Dr. Sabanda reported on his meeting with the Prime Minister concerning starting the process of DRR capacity assessment and development. The Prime Minister indicated that he was keen to see the Director of the National Management Institute take charge of the assessment process but perhaps interested parties from the private sector could give support as appropriate. Dr Sabanda suggested that a working group was formed under the chairmanship of the Director of the Institute or his nominee and that his working group could begin the task of developing a capacity assessment framework which could be used to guide implementation. The representative of the Disaster Management Department strongly requested that the Working Group should be based in the Department offices as this process was mainly about strengthening his department and its local offices. Dr. Sabanda recommended that the Task Force should first meet and then decide on its modalities including where it should be based. The representative from OXFAM (US) made a strong plea for representation on the Working Group from local communities as local communities where an important component of capacity development.

Reviewing the Institutional Framework

Dr. Sabanda indicated that it was time to review the current status of the institutional framework for DRR in Muyanda. The Government was keen to establish a viable DRR programme across the country and this needed a strong institutional framework to encourage effective implementation. Some NGO representatives in the meeting voiced the concern that even if they wanted to pursue DRR initiatives in the country there were few people in Government who really understood DRR. Dr. Sabanda stated that this was what the capacity development process would hopefully rectify while a review of the institutional framework for DRR would help to create the enabling environment for DRR to develop. He requested the representatives of the Ministry for Public Administration and the Ministry of Justice to collect together all relevant policies, plans and legislation pertaining to DRR and produce a summary report for submission to the next National Platform meeting in one month's time.

Why do we need policy and legislation?

National policy and legislation provide the general framework under which disaster risk reduction (DRR) stakeholders can work to build resilience of communities. Policy and legislation provide an enabling environment for disaster risk reduction actors by setting parameters for their engagement. Policy and legislation do not only define institutional roles and responsibilities, they should also define the adequate allocation of resources for DRR.

Developing national DRR policy and legislation is a long process which requires a participatory approach and political commitment. Policies and legislation are meant to

serve as references over a medium to long-term timeframe (5-10 years for policies and mostly open-ended for legislation). Therefore, National Platforms should include the review and possible amendment of existing policy and legislation in their terms of reference.

What are the key elements of DRR policy and legislation?

National DRR policy and legislation are based on a country's risk profile, hence the importance of establishing a baseline an important first priority. They should refer to national, regional and global resolutions and action frameworks, such as the Hyogo Framework and any regional strategies. DRR policy and legislation are authoritative instruments that guide all DRR stakeholders as they show a course of strategic planning and action. Most countries are likely to have legislation and/or policy concerning responding to emergencies (what might be commonly called disaster management) but it is unlikely that there will be policy and legislation guiding DRR apart from some vague mention of mitigation and/or prevention. In addition, with the increased attention on addressing climate risk through climate change adaptation measures, countries may wish to integrate both DRR and climate change adaptation in their policy and legislative frameworks.

Policy and legislation should spell out general principles. They may start as a conceptual framework which is then developed into policy which forms the basis of legislation upon which implementation plans and strategies are established. A participatory process is best with consultations being made at the different stages of development. National policy should, perhaps, be developed both separately and defined as a cross-cutting theme reflected in various sector policy documents. A national DRR policy may refer to all or just a few hazards a country is facing and related mitigation measures for the sector concerned.

DRM policy and legislation should allow for multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multi-level approaches to build disaster resilience. They should foresee an integration of DRR in various thematic areas and sectors and underline the cross-cutting nature of DRR (see Chapter 6). National DRR legislation provides the institutional foundation for DRR. It elaborates the roles and responsibilities of all the major stakeholder and promotes a multi-stakeholder National Platform for DRR as the single entity responsible for coordinating DRR activities and maintaining lines of communication and coordination. Further provisions can be made in separate decrees, executive orders, regulations, guidelines, or national policy documents. The DRR legislation also makes provisions for funding DRR through national resources.

The role of the National Platform for DRR in policy and legislation

National Platform members should review existing DRR policy and legislation. If they believe that there is a need for amendment, they should propose to Government and/or Parliament to engage in a multi-stakeholder review processes. Maybe the National Platform should lead this activity. Local-level actors, vulnerable communities and other civil society representatives should explicitly be involved. These stakeholders could in turn mobilize support among their constituencies. Eventually, National Platform members will submit a proposal to Parliament and Government to trigger a parliamentary debate. The National Platform should seek to be heard as an advisor in this process and thus manifest its added value to shape the country's policy and legislation for DRR.

Consultations on DRR policy and legislation should also review and propose realistic provisions to enforce decisions in an equitable way to ensure the effectiveness of policy and legislation. There is a need to ensure, as far as possible, strong public participation in the review process, to set benchmarks for desired risk reduction outcomes at the local level.

A National Platform can take inspiration from other countries which have gone through similar legislative and policy review processes. UNISDR system partners, like the UNDP, support such legislative review processes and can also assist in ensuring a continuum from legislation and policy to work planning and action on the ground. In fact, policy and/or legislation rarely provide action-oriented detail. It is therefore necessary to complement these instruments by a National Strategy, Strategic National Action Plan or other action frameworks, such as implementation plans of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. DRR policies are more likely to be successfully implemented if they are consistent and integrated with such development and poverty reduction plans and planning cycles (see Chapter 6).

What has happened in Africa already

Africa possesses one of the best examples of the process of institution building for DRR. Between 1994 and 2005 (but really to the present day as the process continues), South Africa established its disaster management institutions in a manner which was applauded internationally. Tear Fund has analysed this process closely. The Disaster Management Act itself was promulgated in 2003, but there were two clear stages leading up to this – a broad period of stakeholder consultation and policy configuration from 1994 to 1999, and the movement of the legislation from discussion to formal status between 1999 and 2003. A third stage in the process is observable after 2005 has led to the establishment of a national implementation framework following from the building of legislation.

Tear Fund identify six preconditions for the successful establishment of DRR institutions in South Africa:

- An enabling political and legal context, characterised by high levels of energy and spirit for transformation (remembering that 1994 was the year of the election of Nelson Mandela to the presidency)

- A regional disaster risk context characterised by increasing severity and complexity

- A local professional context seeking to align itself with international best practice

- An international professional context that supported local initiative and responsibility

- High levels of local skill, characterised by continuity and individual capacity, integrity and creative initiative, and

- A change process that enabled gradual professional reorientation and incremental policy adjustment.

Of course, there were challenges, one of which was sustaining the consultative process particularly with local authorities. Another challenge has been that the legislative reform process has, in itself, been a barrier to mainstreaming DRR, while the degree to which DRR is the focus over and above preparedness and response considerations is also under constant scrutiny.

Checklist of key points

- ✓ *The current legislation in my country covers disaster management and the Government's emergency powers; there is very little in the legislation that refers to a DRR strategy apart from passing references to mitigation and prevention.*

- ✓ *Disaster management issues are spread across a wide range of different policies including environment and public health; there is no separate, unifying policy for DRR.*

- ✓ *Disaster management legislation covers roles and responsibilities largely at national level; there is very little substance on the roles and responsibilities of local government and the non-governmental stakeholders apart from the Red Cross/Red Crescent.*

- ✓ *The country has relatively well-developed democratic systems but there is a strong tendency to compartmentalise issues meaning that there is little scope to develop a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary focus.*

- ✓ *With UNISDR's help there is a growing regional component to DRR which provides opportunities to examine good practice and lessons learned from countries both inside and outside the region.*

- ✓ *Disaster risk seems to be growing both in my country and in the region.*

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

Other resources on governance issues for DRR include:

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/8684_MDRRG4Brochure.pdf

http://www.climategovernance.org/

The following documents covering particularly legislation and policy are important sources:

Legislation for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction. (Tear Fund, 2006)

Governance for Disaster Risk Management – "How To" Guide (UNDP/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 2007)

6. PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM – MAINSTREAMING DRR INTO DEVELOPMENT

Understanding mainstreaming and the relationship between disasters and development

UNDP has defined the concept of mainstreaming DRR as:

"… the process of assessing the implications of disaster risk on any planned development action – from the policy to the program implementation – in all practice areas and at all levels. This process enables the incorporation of risk reduction concerns and experiences as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of UNDP policies and programs".

Thus, mainstreaming is not an easy concept to appreciate but it results from an understanding of disaster risk and how it can be addressed. While humanitarian action for rapid response to the impact of disasters will always be important, development actors across the world are facing a critical challenge: *How to anticipate — and then manage and reduce — disaster risks better by integrating the potential threats into development planning and policies?* There is an emerging consensus that the key to achieving sustained reductions in disaster losses lies in factoring risk considerations into both development and post-disaster recovery activities. Managing risks could become a means of reducing future disaster risks through 'corrective' development planning which ensures, through measures such as land-use planning, building controls and others, that development activity does not generate new risks. Because disaster risks impact multi-sectoral development activities (such as education, health, environment, governance, employment and livelihoods) they influence development gains, which negatively affect progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. So an assessment of the extent to which these social domains *consider* natural or human-induced factors of risks (existing and prospective) in the conceptualization and implementation of programmes, is crucial. This also means that development programmes need to assess whether a development project could cause or increase risk of any kind of disaster in future and if necessary identify or introduce counter-measures.

Mainstreaming and the HFA

Priority 4 of the HFA is concerned with reducing the underlying risk factors. This implies that in the preparation of programmes aimed at achieving overall economic and social development, disaster risk must be factored in and addressed to strengthen overall resilience. Nowhere will the impact of this be greater than in the integration of DRR into projects and programmes aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) and strategies aimed at poverty reduction. The HFA disaggregates this overall requirement, identifying the following key activities:

- Sustainable ecosystems and environmental management

- DRR strategies integrated with climate change adaptation (see Chapter 8)

- Food security for resilience

- DRR integrated into the health sector and safe hospitals

- Protection of critical public facilities

- Recovery schemes and social safety-nets

- Vulnerability reduction with diversified income options

- Financial risk-sharing options

- Public-private partnerships

- Land use planning and building codes

- Rural development planning.

Obviously this is not an exhaustive list and really what the HFA is promoting is a culture of recognising the importance of addressing disaster risk in each and every development action made by the state at different levels as well as by organisations and individuals right down to the smallest community. As with Environmental Impact Assessment through which the environmental impact of different projects is assessed, so planners and programmers in development at whatever level should be asking the questions:

- What might be the potential impact on achieving my project's goals and objectives of disasters of different magnitudes occurring during and after the project's lifetime and what can I do to reduce that potential as part of the project's activities?

- What disaster risks might my project construct through its implementation that I need to be aware of and minimise as part of project activity?

This is a complex area and focusing on underlying risks rather than those that we might identify superficially will lead to more effective development of resilience.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

A Special Meeting of the National Platform is Called Following Severe Flooding Among Poorer Communities on the Edge of the Capital

Dr. Sabanda called a special meeting of the National Platform for DRR once the 3,000 families affected by the flooding in the Kubushu area of the capital city Sarandinga had had their initial needs met and efforts were focusing on recovery. The purpose of the meeting, Dr. Sabanda said, was not to see what support the National Platform could give to the relief effort but to initially see what could be done to assist recovery to be sustainable and to try to ensure that links are made between the recovery effort and long-term development. But this required a thorough understanding of the situation and a relevant focus if real results were to be achieved. The overall objective of supporting the recovery process and its integration with long-term development was to ensure that the vulnerability of the affected population was reduced to the point where the resilience of communities was strengthened and they were better able to deal with the risks to which they are exposed.

Dr. Sabanda introduced David Graham from the NGO Development Action who, on behalf of the NGO, had conducted a study of the reasons why the communities in Kubushu were so exposed to disaster risk. Mr. Graham began by detailing the situation in Kubushu prior to the floods. Many families had arrived in the capital in recent years from the rural areas and settled in unoccupied areas which tended to be in the valleys of streams which during the rainy season carried fast-flowing streams. People from the communities established in Kubushu had little or no resources and had been trying to eke out a living in the informal sector through petty trading, through services such as shoe-shining and liquor selling and prostitution. Family homes were precariously built flimsy shacks often collected closely together and there were no health and sanitation services available, no electricity and running water. Kubushu is well out of sight of the main residential areas of the capital so the situation had largely been ignored but recently a television film crew had highlighted the plight of the communities which had led some politicians to demand the removal of the people and their establishment in more conducive conditions where they would have to pay rent and contribute to the formal economy. This sentiment was echoed by some participants in the meeting who made it clear that to way to deal with the problem was to get tough, remove the settlements and re-settle the people in more conducive surroundings.

Mr. Graham then offered some insights which led to an appraisal of the role the National Platform might play in addressing this [problem and similar problems that exist in other parts of the country. What we see in Kundushu, said Mr. Graham, was not the problem itself but the result of other problems that have remained, over time, unaddressed. Clearing the settlements in Kundushu and re-settling people only moves the problem elsewhere. The real problem is not the conditions under which people live in Kundushu, it is the situation in the rural areas that lead people to migrate to the city

in poverty in the first place. If we can somehow develop an integrated solution that addresses both the problem of rural incomes and urban conditions, this might be more permanent.

The meeting continued in discussion and after a lively debate, members of the National Platform were asked to go away and develop their solutions to the problem including the role that their department or organisation could play in implementing these solutions.

What needs to be mainstreamed?

Mainstreaming means to develop and respect standards and other rules and regulations that prevent risk exposure in various sectors. For example, this could be an incorporation of internationally recommended guidelines for earthquake resistant housing as a binding component into construction guidelines for public investments projects. It could also mean to promote the use of more drought resistant seeds in view of expected increases of temperatures due to climate change. At the same time as promoting changes of practice, it is also necessary to ensure that the population becomes risk aware and convinced of the need to adopt a risk approach with its consequences. Closely linked to advocacy and education, mainstreaming thus also means to leverage the education sector's role and build risk awareness among pupils and the larger public by integrating DRR into curricula. Beyond awareness-raising and coercive measures, tax incentives and subsidies for mitigation investments are ways to promote risk approaches. Mainstreaming DRR is the elaboration of disaster-sensitive development plans, either at national and sub-national level and/or for all, several or individual thematic sectors.

The National Platform's role

National Platforms need to leverage the combined potential of their members to lobby and achieve a substantial integration of disaster risk reduction in development as well as in humanitarian planning and practices, including early recovery (see below). For this, they have to embark on an effective advocacy and awareness-raising campaign establishing the links between poverty, development and disasters. This is not a stand-alone activity, but should build on similar processes to establish an enabling environment for DRR (see Chapter 6). A national framework that articulates all the major elements of a national strategy for DRR is key to successful mainstreaming.

National Platform need to promote the importance of information gathering in order to model hazard risk in macroeconomic projections and estimation of real per capita

income losses due to disasters. These findings establish causal links between disasters and slowed development progress and refer to the Millennium Development Goals and/or other human development indicators. Further disaggregated, e.g. by their impact on different groups, sectors and geographical areas and particularly referring to their impact on recent development initiatives, this data needs to be maintained and updated to provide a strong basis for arguing the importance of DRR in a country's development activities. In a parallel second step, the costs and benefits of investing in concrete DRR measures need to be spelled out to allow for comparison. Scenarios and modelling can help to illustrate the advantage of DRR investments in the short, medium and long-run. This can best be done through specific task forces – e.g. per sector.

Eventually the National Platform's objective is to have DRR reflected as a cross-cutting theme in national development instruments, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and sector wide plans and implementation programmes, using an approach that covers all major hazards that are likely to affect the country. It is also important to encourage a country's international partners to follow the same practice.

The importance of mainstreaming into emergency response and recovery

Whereas the mainstreaming of DRR into development might seem fairly logical given that disasters can severely limit or even destroy the potential for reaching development targets and goals, mainstreaming into emergency response and recovery might seem strange. Emergency response and recovery objectives are largely about satisfying people's immediate needs and getting families and communities back on their feet again. However, decisions taken in the emergency and recovery periods might have long-term repercussions. It is thus important to ensure that emergency response and recovery programmes are implemented with a view to linking them, as soon as possible, with long-term DRR efforts so that, for example, the resource momentum generated by the disaster is not lost. The emergence of Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and other similar mechanisms obviously assist this process.

The role of the World Bank

The World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) has emerged as a major mechanism for supporting mainstreaming of DRR into development. Working in a number of high-risk priority countries, GFDRR continues to be actively engaged in mainstreaming DRR in national development strategies and lending operations. GFDRR's promotion of the integration of DRR in development efforts is supported by a comprehensive system that allows proactive policy dialogue on DRR with country teams while strategies and lending operations are formulated, and follow-up monitoring of process made over subsequent strategies.

The importance of communities

The HFA recognizes the importance and specificity of local risk patterns and trends and suggests decentralizing responsibilities and resources for DRR to relevant sub-national or local authorities as appropriate. The mainstreaming of DRR at community level is closely associated with the concept of **resilience.** Increasingly, resilient communities should have the capacity to:

- Absorb the shocks of hazard impact so that they do not become disasters
- Bounce back during and after a disaster
- Change and adapt following a disaster.

Indicators of a resilient community include:
- A community organization
- A DRR and disaster preparedness plan
- A community early warning system
- Trained manpower – risk assessment, search and rescue, masons for safer house construction, etc
- Physical connectivity – roads, electricity, telephone, clinic, etc
- Relational connectivity with local authorities, NGOs etc
- Knowledge of risks and risk reduction actions
- A community disaster reduction fund
- Safe house to withstand local hazards
- Secure sources of livelihood.

Given that a nation's development objectives are largely focused on improving the overall well-being of its citizens, including communities in the mainstreaming agenda is a critical requirement.

What has happened in Africa already

While some countries, such as Madagascar and Mozambique, have started to examine the significance of DRR to their overall development objectives, we have yet to see the important acceleration of mainstreaming that would predicate a considerable advance in disaster reduction programmes in Africa. However, the framework exists – the African Union Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of 2004 recognizes the explicit cause-and-effect links between disasters and development interventions. It states that development policy should aim at reducing basic risks to society while attaining sustainable development objectives. Balancing these two goals requires mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development policies, strategies and programmes at local, national and sub-regional levels, including internationally-agreed development goals such as the MDGs. It is therefore essential that disaster risk reduction is included in PRSPs, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other national strategies for sustainable development. In the past, this has been limited by several factors including the lack of guiding principles, inadequate advocacy and limited

exchange of knowledge and experiences among countries and regional economic commissions and with other regions on how to implement mainstreaming.

Emergency response is also covered by the African Union Strategy together with post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery. The African Union believes that it is essential that they be complemented by development actions that do not result in the accumulation of risks. This is particularly important in post-disaster situations when the opportunity exists to reduce prospective risk through development interventions.

Checklist of key points

- ✓ *The major sectoral ministries in my country think that disasters are no concern of theirs but rather are the concern of the Disaster Management Department.*

- ✓ *Many people, including senior members of Government, consider that disasters are largely phenomena that are random and unpredictable or are "Acts of God"*.

- ✓ *Government's view of poverty and the plight of the poor is that although it is intolerable, there is very little that can be done about it apart from making sure that poor people are given the welfare necessary to survive*.

- ✓ *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development is understood by many people in the international community but not necessarily in Government*.

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

Excellent resources on mainstreaming include the following:

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/1066_toolsformainstreamingDRR.pdf

http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=2302 refers to mainstreaming experience in an Asian context

For the UN Development Group's take on mainstreaming DRR into Common Country Assessments and UN Development Assistance Frameworks see:

http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1093

Background information on the World Bank's GFDRR see:

http://www.gfdrr.org/gfdrr/

Community level disaster risk management is comprehensively covered in:

www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/publications/12Handbk.pdf

Important background on linking DRR and poverty reduction can be found at:

http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=3293

An excellent examination of resilience can be found at:

http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=2310

Of particular interest for Africa and countries affected by drought is the following:

http://www.unisdr.org/preventionweb/files/11541_DroughtRiskReduction2009library.pdf

7. PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM – MEASURING DRR ACHIEVEMENTS AND REPORTING AGAINST HFA PRIORITIES

What to measure

Having established a process for elaborating a DRR strategy, formed the National Platform and prepared an agenda for the gradual implementation of DRR actions, it is important to ensure that you are able to measure the results of what has been achieved and report on those results periodically not just to national counterparts but also in international forums and meetings. The results of your achievements are just as important to others working to similar agendas as DRR grows from what becomes accepted as good practice and lessons learned from previous or ongoing programming. The National Platform for DRR plays the most important role in ensuring that the measurement of achievements takes place and that reports are prepared and delivered.

The HFA priorities are the key

One of the most useful facets of the HFA is that it presents a realistic and practical framework against which to measure progress. As we have already seen the HFA has three strategic goals and five priorities with broad indicators for assessment purposes. The HFA also suggests that the indicators generated should be in conformity with internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, i.e. the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The HFA is broadminded in its approach to the use of indicators suggesting, quite rightly, that different users need different sets of indicators and there are indicators to cover different stages of implementation:

- *Indicators of inputs* – to measure the financial, administrative and regulatory resources being applied, such as budgets expended, or the staff time applied.
- *Indicators of outputs* – to measure the immediate and concrete deliverables achieved with the inputs, such as houses strengthened, or the number of people trained.
- *Indicators of results* – to measure the results at the level of beneficiaries, in social and economic terms, such as the fraction of population receiving early warnings, or with houses free from flooding risk.
- *Indicators of impact* – to measure the overall impact on the society, such as reduced vulnerability to hazards, or security of livelihoods. The Hyogo Framework's expected outcome and strategic goals fall into this category.

In summary, the guidance indicators produced by UNISDR to measure progress or achievements against the expected outcome, the three strategic goals and five priorities of the HFA are as follows:

EXPECTED OUTCOME	RECOMMENDED INDICATORS
The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and states.	i. Number of deaths arising from natural hazard events ii. Total economic losses attributed to natural hazard events iii. Number of people affected by natural hazard events

STRATEGIC GOAL	RECOMMENDED INDICATORS

1: The integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and practices	i. National development plans include elements which address disaster risk reduction.
	
	ii. All international plans and programmes such as;
	   a. poverty reduction strategies,
	   b. common programming tools of the UN and international agencies,
	   c. climate change adaptation plans and strategies,
	   d. and donor supported country development assistance programmes
	
	include elements which address disaster risk reduction.

2: Development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards	i. A national policy framework for disaster risk reduction exists, that includes policies, plans and activities for national to local administrative levels ii. A national multi-sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning iii. Dedicated and sufficient resources are available for planned activities to reduce disaster risks.

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	RECOMMENDED INDICATORS
3: The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes.	i. The national policy framework incorporates disaster risk reduction into the design and implementation of emergency, response, recovery and rehabilitation processes. ii. Post-disaster reviews are routinely undertaken to learn lessons on risk reduction and these lessons are incorporated into plans and preparedness for response

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	RECOMMENDED INDICATORS
1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation	i. National institutional and legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction exist with decentralized responsibilities and capacities at all levels. ii. Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans at all administrative levels. iii. Community participation and decentralization is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels. iv. A national multi-sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.
2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.	i. National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors. ii. Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities. iii. Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities. iv. National and local risk assessments take account of regional/ trans-boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.

3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.	i. Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing system). ii. School curricula, education material and relevant trainings include risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices. iii. Research methods and tools for multi risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened. iv. Country wide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.
4: Reduce the underlying risk factors.	i. Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment-related policies and plans, including for land use, natural resource management and climate change adaptation. ii. Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk. iii. Economic and productive sectoral policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities. iv. Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes. v. Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes. vi. Procedures are in place to assess disaster risk impacts of all major development projects, especially infrastructure.
5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.	i. Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster

	management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place. ii. Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes. iii. Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to enable effective response and recovery when required. iv. Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during disasters and to undertake post-event reviews.

There are few sectoral or disciplinary areas of activity that contain such comprehensive guidance as this.

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Time for Some Evaluation

It is now one year since the first meeting of the National Platform for DRR and during that time it has met 6 times. The participation was never less than 60% at any of the meetings and although it is the intention to meet less frequently in the future (perhaps 4 times a year), nevertheless a good start has been made in establishing the Government's proposed new DRR strategy. With the Global Platform for DRR due next year, it was felt that it would be useful to measure the progress made so far and begin drafting the report that the country will present at the Global Platform.

Establishing a Baseline

Risk maps have been prepared covering floods, storms and earthquakes based largely on historical data supplemented by existing socio-economic data. It is recognised that these initial maps are fairly basic and will need to be expanded. An expert from UNDP's GRIP programme has made a visit and suggested ways in which the process can be improved and there is the hope that some technical support will be forthcoming.

Capacity Assessment

The National Institute of Management has conducted a comprehensive capacity assessment with support from the private sector who contributed some technical expertise and resources for travel. The assessment has revealed some major capacity gaps and weaknesses but also some strengths particularly at community level where in

some areas there is a strong understanding of the risks to be faced and means of addressing these. UNDP is preparing a project to support the development of capacity in selected areas as well as the development of policy and the revision of legislation.

The Institutional Framework

The review by the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Justice of existing policy and legislation has revealed the need for much more comprehensive legislation to cover DRR needs but first of all the need for a comprehensive, all-embracing policy which can then guide the legislative process. Some mention of disasters and disaster management can be found in more than 40 different policy statements and frameworks so some streamlining is needed and there is a need also to put the emphasis on DRR rather than on disaster management.

Other Achievements

The NGO Development Action, at the request of Dr. Sabanda, prepared a report following the floods in Kubushu outlining possible actions that could be taken to reduce the population's vulnerability as well as suggested long-term measures to address the problem of rural poverty. This has been shared with several key donors and it is hoped that a pilot project can be prepared which might provide the potential for future replication.

Work has started on harmonising Muyanda's DRR and climate change adaptation agendas. Climate change adaptation has, until now, been the responsibility of the Ministry for the Environment and the Chief Secretary of the Ministry has been invited to lead a task force leading to recommendations on harmonisation.

The National Platform confirmed the formation of a Working Group to draft the report that would be presented at next year's Global Platform.

UNISDR's Guidance on Reporting

The reporting process is built into the HFA and UNISDR has developed guidance for states to use when developing their reports. At the national level the reporting can help:

- To monitor progress on achievements to build resilience to disasters

- To identify gaps and necessary resources related to programmes and initiatives

- To share good practices among national actors and with other countries that might be undertaking similar initiatives

- To assist in providing information on progress of disaster risk reduction in the reporting mechanisms of existing international and other frameworks concerning sustainable development, and

- To develop procedures for reviewing national progress against the HFA.

At the regional level a reporting process will contribute to regional and sub-regional baseline assessments of the disaster risk reduction status and to periodic reviews on progress in the region and on any impediments to progress. It will also support the achievement of the essential purpose of the UNISDR system, namely to provide coordinated international efforts to support the growth of national and local capacities to reduce disaster risks.

What has happened in Africa already

While some African states prepare reports for Global Platforms (the last of these being held in 2009), it is not clear whether there is systematic action being taken to measure progress against the indicators established by UNISDR. With a limited number of progressive DRR agendas in Africa at present it is probably true that the measurement of progress at this stage is limited.

Checklist of key points

- ✓ *I do not know whether my country reports regularly on achievements in meeting the strategic objectives and priorities of the HFA.*

- ✓ *My country's approach to disaster risk is not really concerned with reduction; it is more concerned with disaster response and yet I am told that my country still reports to the Global Platform on DRR even though there is very little DRR in the report.*

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

The guidelines for reporting on progress in the implementation of the HFA can be found at:

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/1314_Saint.Luciareportingguidelineshfa.pdf

8.   PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM: DRR AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Clarifying climate change adaptation

The world of climate change is a confusing one. There is a lot of terminology and some clarity is needed before proceeding too much further. When looking for the role of DRR in addressing climate change the link is with **climate change adaptation** (CCA). The other major activity dimension of climate change is **climate change mitigation**.

The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines CCA as ***"the adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities".*** Examples of CCA include preparing risk assessments, protecting ecosystems, improving agricultural methods, managing water resources, building settlements in safe zones, etc. These are activities that would fit well into a DRR agenda.

For the record, the IPCC defines **climate change mitigation** as ***"an anthropogenic intervention to reduce the anthropogenic forcing of the climate system; it includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions and enhancing greenhouse gas sinks".*** Examples include more efficient furnace systems, developing new, low-energy technologies for industry and transport, reducing consumption of energy-intensive products and switching to renewable forms of energy such as solar or wind power.

While in the big picture governments need to address climate change mitigation issues, especially in the medium to long-term, DRR contributes substantially to the CCA agenda and so it is important for a National Platform to concern itself with collaborating with CCA activity for a holistic picture.

CCA and the HFA

With the definition of DRR given in Chapter 1, it is not difficult to see the synergy between DRR and CCA. Moreover, the HFA outcome for the decade 2005 to 2015 is "*the substantial reduction of losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries".* Moreover, It specifically identifies the need to "*promote the integration of risk reduction associated with existing climate variability and future climate change into strategies for the reduction of disaster risk and adaptation to climate change..."*

Thus, being guided by the objectives and priorities of the HFA implies a strong connectivity with the climate change agenda.

Where DRR and CCA differ and converge

Sometimes it is easy to think that we you are engaged in implementing a DRR agenda, you are automatically addressing CCA concerns as well. But there are marked differences between DRR and CCA and we must look to the areas of potential convergence to find the common ground. For example, flood defences built in response to past experiences will not necessarily be substantial enough to defend settlements faced with the kind of climate that might be expected in the future. Failure to address future climate risks will result in DRR actions increasing risk rather than decreasing it. Climate informed DRR, however, will lead to stronger flood defences.

Tear Fund have developed the following table to demonstrate the differences between DRR and CCA as well as the areas of convergence:

DIFFERENCES		SIGNS OF CONVERGENCE
DRR	**CCA**	
Relevant to all hazard types	Relevant to climate-related hazards	N/a
Origin and culture in humanitarian assistance following a disaster event	Origin and culture in scientific theory	CCA specialists now being recruited from engineering, water and sanitation, agriculture, health and DRR sectors
Most concerned with the present – i.e. addressing existing risks	Most concerned with the future – i.e. addressing uncertainty/new risks	DRR increasingly forward looking Existing climate variability is an entry point for CCA
Historical perspective	Future perspective	As above
Traditional/indigenous knowledge at community level	Traditional/indigenous knowledge at community level	Examples where integration of scientific knowledge and

is a basis for resilience	may be insufficient for resilience against types and scales of risk yet to be experienced	traditional knowledge for DRR provides learning opportunities
Structural measures designed for safety levels modelled on current and historical evidence	Structural measures designed for safety levels modelled on current and historical evidence and predicted changes	DRR increasingly forward looking
Traditional focus on vulnerability reduction	Traditional focus on physical exposure	N/a
Community-based process stemming from experience	Community-based process stemming from policy agenda	N/a
Practical application at local level	Theoretical application at local level	CCA gaining experience through practical local application
Full range of established and developing tools	Limited range of tools under development	None, except increasing recognition that more adaptation tools are needed
Incremental development	New and emerging agenda	N/a
Political and widespread recognition often quite weak	Political and widespread recognition increasingly strong	None, except that climate-related disaster events are now more likely to be analysed and debated with reference to climate change
Funding streams ad hoc and insufficient	Funding streams sizeable and increasing	DRR community engaging in CCA funding mechanisms

Tear Fund recognise the need to focus on the similarities and the need to explore the genuine synergy between DRR and CCA. For example, both DRR and CCA have similar aims, they have mutual benefits, they can both benefit from a focus on non-structural measures, they both are keen to address poverty reduction and underlying

risk, they can both be substantially mainstreamed and they both have emerging remits and highly significant converging agendas. At COP 13 governments formally recognised the importance of DRR for adaptation in the Bali Action Plan, agreeing that *"enhanced action on adaptation should include consideration of disaster reduction strategies".*

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

Harmonising DRR With CCA

With the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment agreeing to head a Task Force to report on the synergies between DRR and CCA, Dr. Sabanda has taken the liberty of meeting with the Chief Secretary prior to the first meeting of the Task Force. The Chief Secretary said that although he was happy to lead the Task Force if only to limit the amount of duplication that there might be in the implementation of the two agendas, there were some problems that needed to be overcome. The first problem concerned some of the major technical experts in the country who had been invited to contribute to the country's growing CCA framework. These people were mostly top level scientists and they clearly did not understand DRR, interpreting it as a dimension of humanitarian action and therefore nothing to do with the longer-term implications of climate change. The Chief Secretary stated that the main technical input that he received was on climate change mitigation – there was very little expertise available to him on CCA.

The other problem that the Chief Secretary was facing was the issue of funding. Currently, there was an increasing amount of climate change funding available to the Ministry of the Environment and he was having regular meetings now with some high-level donors. He was under pressure, therefore, to use these funds, as much as possible, within the Ministry and not elsewhere. The problem for Dr. Sabanda has been that apart from some limited funding from UNDP and GTZ, resources for supporting the country's DRR programme have been very limited and he has serious concerns about maintaining the momentum of the process. He suggested to the Chief Secretary that without committing himself to anything, he, the Chief Secretary, should lead this Task Force and come back to the National Platform with conclusions. At that point there would be a discussion about how to proceed. Dr. Sabanda said that he was willing to take a meeting with the Prime Minister if necessary to prioritise the way forward.

The Task Force duly met four times and came to the National Platform with a five step process of harmonisation between DRR and CCA. The five steps recommended by the Task Force were:

- Stakeholder analysis
- Framework development
- Methodology preparation

The reasons why DRR should be considered a valuable adaptation measure

UNISDR identifies a number of examples where the benefits of investing in DRR can not only be calculated in terms of money saved, but also in more secure livelihoods and saved lives. Examples include:

- China spent US$3.15 billion on flood control between 1960 and 2000 which is estimated to have averted losses of about US$12 billion

- The Rio de Janeiro flood reconstruction and prevention project in Brazil yielded an internal rate of return exceeding 50 %

- The disaster mitigation and preparedness programmes in Andhra Pradesh, India, yielded a benefit/cost ratio of 13.38

- A mangrove planting project in Vietnam aimed at protecting coastal populations from typhoons and storms yielded an estimated benefit/cost ratio of 52 over the period 1994 to 2001

- Property owners in the US Gulf States who implemented hurricane protection methods employed at nearly 500 locations avoided an estimated US$500 million in property losses from Hurricane Katrina after customer investments of only US$2.5 million.

However, in order for DRR to play a truly effective part in CCA, it must invest in addressing prospective disaster risk reduction (aimed at future risks) as much as it does corrective disaster risk reduction (aimed at the risks that currently exist).

UNISDR concludes the following

UNISDR's conclusions, in support of the Bali Action Plan and in consultation with UNISDR system partners and parties from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), consisted of the identification and promotion of the following three areas of action:

- Develop national coordination mechanisms to link DRR and CCA

- Conduct a baseline assessment on the status of DRR and CCA efforts, and

- Prepare adaptation plans drawing on the HFA.

What has happened in Africa already

Africa's variable climate variability is already contributing to its development problems but climate information, although it exists, is rarely incorporated into development decisions. A recent gap analysis found issues in four areas:

- Integrating climate into policy

- Integrating climate into practice

- Climate services

- Climate data.

And the analysis concluded that this was largely a problem of negligible demand coupled with inadequate supply.

Nevertheless, some good practice is emerging, particularly in countries that are considered "high risk" such as Mozambique and Malawi and it is in these countries where the distinction between CCA and DRR is often less relevant than it is to the international community that promulgates the terminology.

The International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) concluded a study of climate risk management in Africa by drawing the following lessons:

- Climate information is most effective when integrated into decision-making frameworks

- Reducing climate-related risks requires multi-level stakeholder coordination and communication

- Climate information must be credible if it is to be used in decision making

- Reinforcing and sustaining climate observation networks is essential if the full potential of climate information for decision making is to be realised

- Information and communications technologies, the media and the extension services are vital components of improved information systems

- Innovations for managing climate-related risks are being developed and deployed

- Economic analysis of the value of climate services is lacking

- Countries with growing experience of managing climate risks could benefit from learning from each other's experiences.

Disaster risk managers in Africa would not necessarily disagree with the broad content of these lessons.

Checklist of key points

- ✓ *Disasters triggered by natural hazards seem to have increased in my country in recent years*

- ✓ *The hydro-meteorological services in my country mainly provide information for short-term weather forecasts and are not involved in longer-term climate management*

- ✓ *The Disaster Management Department in my country has no interaction with those government departments working on climate change issues*

- ✓ *The information that we need to make decisions on anticipated future disaster risks is not available – we are concerned only with what we know now and what has happened in the past*

- ✓ *Too many politicians and bureaucrats in my country do not take climate change seriously enough. They either believe it is not happening or they think it is something that will happen in the future.*

References and resources

Please refer to the list of base documents and websites at the end of Chapter 1.

The following sources give good input on linking DRR with CCA:

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/7846_climatechange1.pdf

http://www.proventionconsortium.org/?pageid=95

http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/env_cc_varg_adaptation_en.pdf

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/4146_ClimateChangeDRR.pdf

http://www.tearfund.org/webdocs/Website/Campaigning/CCA_and_DRR_web.pdf

http://www.gechs.org/downloads/GECHS_Report_3-08.pdf

For specific reference to climate risk management in Africa, refer to:

http://portal.iri.columbia.edu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_1171_0_0_18/Climate%20and%20Society%20No1_en.pdf

9.   MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR DRR

Guidance from the guidelines

The "Guidelines for National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction" offer a set of characteristics of effective National Platforms. This gives us the ideal picture, rather like perfect competition in economics. These are characteristics that every National Platform should try to attain and they are consistent with what states are being asked to provide to be consistent with the overall goal, strategic objectives and priorities of the HFA. Of course, not attaining some of these characteristics to the full does not necessarily mean that the National Platform does not function. But the more that these characteristics apply, the more effective the National Platform will be.

This chapter will look briefly at these characteristics and suggest some questions that should be asked about the attainment of each.

❖ **Effective National Platforms have clearly defined goals that seek to address the underlying causes of disaster risk and promote the resilience of vulnerable communities**

This may seem like a strong requirement but unless underlying causes are being addressed and unless the real focus is on strengthening the resilience of those communities that are affected each time disaster strikes then achievements are going to fall very far from what is necessary to reduce disaster risks. And because the underlying causes are in many cases not directly associated with the potential for disaster to occur but are often linked to some failure of development, it means that programmes for DRR have to be firmly rooted in development goals. The reason that a community lives in a location that is regularly exposed to the negative effects of natural hazards may relate much more to economic and social factors. So you should be asking some questions about your National Platform:

✓ *Does my National Platform have clearly defined goals and are they what is needed to truly reduce disaster risk for the most vulnerable?*

✓ *Is my country's National Platform really addressing underlying causes or is it only concerned with superficial issues? Is it able to significantly influence Government policy and strategy?*

✓ *Have I noticed changes in the resilience of the most vulnerable communities in my country? Is their resilience increasing in the face of potential future disasters or are there signs that increased resilience is achievable?*

❖ **Effective National Platforms have a clearly defined mandate that fills a gap within the DRR system of a country and adds value to the efforts of individual members and organisations**

Obviously a clearly defined mandate can flow from clearly defined goals. The issue here, for many countries, is whether the National Platform is filling a gap in the DRR system of a country or whether it is, de facto, the system itself. A National Platform should essentially drive the national DRR agenda but in some cases the National Platform may be the agenda and Government's deferment to it in relation to DRR a way of saying that DRR is now being dealt with because we have a National Platform. Thus a National Platform is not the programme – it is a means to an end and not the end itself. So ask the following questions:

✓ *What kind of mandate does my National Platform have? Can it really influence national policy and strategy?*

✓ *Is my National Platform adding value to an already existing DRR programme that is strongly sanctioned by Government?*

✓ *Does my National Platform enhance and strengthen the DRR actions of Government and other organisations and agencies?*

❖ **Effective National Platforms have the capacity to engage with Government at an appropriate level in order to influence development policy and planning**

How the National Platform is situated in the structure of Government is often indicative of the importance its function is given. If, for example, it is considered to be a sub-committee of the National Disaster Management Department and its decision-making very much internal to the Department, then obviously it will not practically have significant influence on Government policy and strategy. But if, for example, the National Platform is chaired by a Minister of State from the Office of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister himself pays regular visits to the Platform's meetings, then you know that the Government takes a serious interest in its deliberations. So ask some key questions:

✓ *Who is listening to what the National Platform is saying? Does it have the ear of high levels of Government?*

- ✓ *Do people in the higher levels of Government make regular pronouncements on DRR and the discussions of the National Platform?*

- ✓ *Is there real evidence of the discussions of the National Platform significantly influencing Government DRR policy and strategy?*

- ❖ **Effective National Platforms tackle a substantive and high-impact agenda and can mobilise good technical support that allows them to make solid recommendations**

The real effectiveness of National Platforms can be seen not in how many times they meet and who attends, but in what they discuss. If the agenda is really concerned with effecting change and making a major impact in reducing disaster risk, if it is truly tackling issues associated with addressing underlying risk factors and attempting to make an impact on strengthening the disaster resilience of the most vulnerable, and if its discussions have a real impact on Government action, then we can say that it has real influence. However, there are also those agendas that concern themselves with minutiae that focus on political issues or on the pet projects of influential people. It is also possible for the meetings to be "hi-jacked" by influential members with particular agendas. So ask the following questions:

- ✓ *What does my National Platform discuss? Is the agenda high-impact and does it really support the strengthening of resilience for the vulnerable?*

- ✓ *Is the National Platform able to get the involvement of key technical and scientific expertise in addressing DRR problems and issues? Do the meetings contain the appropriate expertise and experience?*

- ✓ *Do I notice the conclusions and recommendations of the National Platform regularly influencing national policy and strategy?*

- ❖ **Effective National Platforms have a clearly defined composition and membership that is manageable and supportive of their mandate**

It can be said that you will know how important the National Platform is considered to be and how influential it is by who attends it. One danger for the Platform is that after a high profile launch which attracts all major stakeholders (who perhaps want to be seen more than anything else), attendance then drops off either because of a lack of interest, or a lack of Government commitment or even because the agenda is not attracting the

right stakeholders. It is important for the National Platform to continue to engage in supporting a true multi-stakeholder partnership in which everyone is made to feel relevant and in which all stakeholders recognise that they have a right to offer and opinion which is both heard and, as necessary, acted upon. So ask the following questions of your National Platform:

- ✓ *Who attends the National Platform? Is it truly a cross-section of the DRR community in my country? Does it represent a wide range of stakeholders representing both Government and non-government functions?*

- ✓ *Does attendance at the National Platform meetings remain fairly constant? Do the same people or organisations regularly attend and contribute?*

- ❖ **Effective National Platforms are characterised by strong leadership and management that are able to generate trust, mutual respect and consensus among individual members in dealing with DRR**

With such a wide variety of stakeholders expected to attend and take part in the National Platform, we should not expect there to be immediate consensus over the issues to be discussed and acted upon. Members of the Platform will come from different organisational backgrounds and cultures, will have different agendas and will have different views of the role of the Platform. Thus, leadership and management of the Platform is an important consideration. We have spoken before about the importance of "champions" – true and passionate leaders of the DRR debate who can galvanise opinion and action. Leadership in the context of the National Platform also requires the ability to listen, to allow for the elaboration of as wide a range of opinion as possible, to create the space for issues to be discussed and to quietly urge the necessary consensus, thereby fostering a culture of trust. This is no easy task and you should ask the following questions:

- ✓ *Does my National Platform have the right kind of leadership – leadership that is strong in gaining consensus, forthright in ensuring that decisions are taken and acted upon, but diplomatic to allow all views and opinions to be valid?*

- ✓ *How well is my National Platform managed? Is it ordered and structured bit in a way that allows for flexibility in debate and in the issues raised and discussed?*

✓ *Does the culture of trust exist in my National Platform? Is their respect from members towards each other's viewpoints, representation and interests?*

❖ **Effective National Platforms have mechanisms to facilitate the participation of and consultation with local-level stakeholders, in particular from high-risk areas**

There is always a danger with an entity constituted at national level that its concerns and agenda remain rooted it what is required by the national level. Of course, the National Platform, if it is truly effective, is concerned with the resilience of vulnerable communities and the strengthening of this. It is, thus, largely concerned with local-level issues and yet all too often the voice of the vulnerable is not heard in the National Platform. The good leadership and management mentioned above extends to ensuring that this voice is not only heard but also dominates to the extent that the programme requirements in DRR are largely focused on local-level solutions. So ask the following questions of your National Platform:

✓ *How many of the regular members of the National Platform represent local-level interests?*

✓ *How often do local-level concerns and issues appear on the agenda of the National Platform and how many of the conclusions and recommendations of the discussions focus on local action?*

✓ *Does the National Platform contain any mechanism that allows for consistent involvement of local-level stakeholders?*

❖ **Effective National Platforms promote DRR/the HFA and monitor progress of its implementation**

Even though a local-level focus is of paramount importance for the effectiveness of the National Platform, it is also important to recognise that the National Platform is part of a global initiative and participation in this allows for the national issues to gain an international stage as well as offering the opportunity for being exposed to the experience of and learning from the lessons of others. It is to be hoped that the HFA guides the work of the National Platform which means that it is working towards meeting the same objectives and priorities as many other countries and it will be regularly reporting on its progress in sub-regional and international meetings. This visibility is

important to the success and effectiveness of national DRR efforts. So ask the following questions of your National Platform:

✓ ***Is my National Platform and the national DRR programme being guided by the HFA? Are the objectives and priorities of the HFA what the national programme is measured against?***

✓ ***Does my National Platform take part regularly in international activity concerning the NFA and is it an active member of the UNISDR system?***

✓ ***Does my National Platform report regularly on progress made in achieving DRR goals?***

❖ **Effective National Platforms measure their own performance, are accountable and transparent**

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of establishing an effective National Platform is to ensure that it is accountable and transparent. There will be those that say that because the National Platform supports national programming, this accountability and transparency might be difficult to achieve. There may be aspects of the process that Governments believe to be sensitive and difficult to expose politically. The problem is that by establishing such a cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder process you are really required to ensure that the requisite public exposure and open-mindedness exists. It is up to all the stakeholders participating in the National Platform to ensure that this accountability and transparency exists through the way they conduct themselves in the meetings and the way that the results of the discussions are disseminated. It is also important that the National Platform periodically takes a look at itself and measures its own performance. And if it is shown to be lacking in certain requirements that members think are important then it should not be afraid to adjust and change accordingly. You will need to ask the following questions of your National Platform:

✓ ***Are all the proceedings of meetings of my National Platform made available publicly and circulated widely?***

✓ ***Does my National Platform demonstrate transparency in its dealings and is it accountable to the membership and thereby the wide constituency that it represents?***

✓ ***Does by National Platform evaluate its progress on a regular basis and are the results of these evaluations made available as widely as possible? Do***

these evaluations lead to necessary changes in the way the National Platform conducts itself and its business?

❖ **Effective National Platforms have a solid resource base that allows them to fulfil their functions**

The other very difficult aspect of establishing a National Platform is to keep it maintained and sustained. In the initial stages of its creation and establishment, resources may be available to complement the high profile nature of the activity but after a while these resources may fall away. In general, resources available for DRR are inconsistent and fickle and there is plenty of evidence to suggest, globally, that not all National Platforms established with a fanfare are in existence three to five years on. The sustainability is, firstly, in the hands of governments. It is up to Government to demonstrate its commitment by making foundations resources available to allow the National Platform to undertake its basic agenda. But it is also in the hands of all the stakeholders to indicate their commitment by offering to contribute to the sustainability of the process. It is not good enough for a National Platform member to merely attend the meetings and take part in the discussions. Membership implies full involvement and that means contributing to the National Platform's sustainability. This in turn means that members are entitled to expect the National Platform to be organised and run efficiently and effectively with appropriate transparency and accountability. So ask these questions of your National Platform:

✓ *How is my National Platform resourced? Does my Government contribute to its sustainability and do other members also provide support?*

✓ *Is my National Platform as strong (if not stronger) than it was when it was originally formed? Is the level of resourcing the same as when it was established or have the resources decreased or increased?*

References and resources

This chapter is based primarily on Chapter 3, "Main Characteristics of Effective National Platforms" from the draft revised "Guidelines: National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction" (under revision).

10.   MAINTAINING AND SUSTAINING A NATIONAL PLATFORM

Sustaining a National Platform requires constant attention

Once a National Platform has been established, maintaining it and sustaining it will not be easy. However, one principle that must be uppermost is that we haven't set up a National Platform for its own sake. If all goes well with the integration of DRR into government plans and programmes then there may come a time when we can say that we no longer need the National Platform, or, at least, the National Platform as currently constituted is not necessary. Part of the reasoning behind the establishment of the National Platform is to use the mechanism as a way of lifting the profile of DRR, to get it established as a national priority and to provide a means of continuity and support as DRR programmes are being established. If we arrive at the point when DRR has become very much second nature, then we might need other mechanism to support the process. But for most countries in Africa, the presence of an active National Platform is the best way to promote a national DRR agenda.

The problem when disasters are not in the current consciousness

One major problem for anyone dealing with DRR is that it is difficult to promote the required agenda if people do not see it as relevant to them – and that has a lot to do with a consciousness of disaster that people carry with them. It is true to say that if a major disaster (or one perceived as such) happened a week ago, you will hear people say that it must not happen again and that we should do as much as we can to minimise the risks for the next time. And in that heightened awareness DRR becomes not only possible but a necessary focus for the future. A few months after the disaster and these issues start to fade from the memory. Five years later and you may find that resources expended in DRR being questioned. Can we afford this? Isn't it a luxury? Disasters don't seem to happen anymore. Trying to promote a DRR agenda in this kind of environment is not easy and can attract negativity and disinterest.

Some suggestions concerning sustainability

Maintaining an overall interest in a DRR agenda requires hard work and persistence. Some of the tools that you might consider using to not only keep the National Platform alive but also active and relevant

- *Institutionalise the process as much as possible.* There is no substitute for ensuring that DRR becomes institutionalised, that it is part of regular institutions and day-to-day activity. This does not happen overnight but once the National Platform is established subsequent activity should work towards ensuring that DRR has a home not only in Government but in the consciousness of all

stakeholders and communities. Institutionalisation does not mean bureaucratisation, however, and we should continue to encourage flare, creativity and flexibility in the implementation of DRR. Institutionalisation is much easier in those countries where disasters occur fairly frequently and much harder where disasters are not constantly reminding the population of their presence.

- ***Renew Government commitment to the DRR process.*** This is, of course, easy to say but if a National Platform was set up in the first place then at least someone in Government must have felt it necessary. Once the Platform is established ways should be sought of continually reminding Government of the importance of DRR and why the Platform exists. If it is possible, demonstrate effectively what an investment in DRR means in cold hard figures.

- ***Rotate coordination of the National Platform among members, especially those from development sectors.*** Advocacy among the development community in a country is an importance component of National Platform activity particularly as there will be a few who do not see the association between their development sector and disaster risk. We have spoken before of champions and there really is no limit as to the number of champions you can have espousing the cause of DRR. Once they are on board, change the leadership of the coordination process so that all the key champions get the opportunity for leadership.

- ***Support the mainstreaming of DRR into the education system.*** This doesn't mean just schools although they are very important. It also means universities and other tertiary learning institutions including training colleges and particularly, perhaps, those institutions that have the responsibility of training public servants. Institutionalisation of DRR begins in the primary school. Children remember the things they are taught at that age and carry them with them for the rest of their lives. Again, this is easier in countries where disasters happen fairly frequently or are of high magnitude (such as Japan, for example) but can be integrated into other similar curricula.

- ***Reinforce national ownership and leadership.*** It is easy to think that the National Platform and the DRR agenda somehow belongs to UNISDR and the international community. Of course, the establishment of a National Platform can only effectively happen because Government wants it to and it is important, therefore, to continue to find ways to reiterate this and reinforce it. The DRR agenda will only ever be Government's to own.

- ***Access ongoing training and capacity development.*** Regular opportunities will exist in many countries for training and education to support the development of capacity in key institutions and organisations involved in implementing the DRR agenda. These opportunities should be taken as much as possible particularly when involving those people who are considered potential champions or key to the sustainability process.

- ***Try to secure regular, ongoing funding and resourcing of the process.*** In some ways this is the most difficult area when addressing sustainability. If Government has somehow been persuaded by a UNISDR regional representative to establish a National Platform there might be some expectations of funding to support the process. The truth of the matter remains though that this is a national process and it is necessary, therefore, to try to ensure that the resource foundation for the sustainability of the National Platform and for DRR activity should come from Government. But Government should spread the load. As DRR is a cross-cutting issue, funding should be made available across the spectrum, from many different sources. It remains true also that if Government shows itself willing to provide the base funding for the process, other external donors may then be willing to provide additional support.

- ***Involve vulnerable communities as much as possible.*** With the outcomes of DRR programming being a reduction in the risks to which vulnerable communities are exposed and a strengthening of their resilience, keeping these communities central to the process will help to provide the right kind of advocacy. This means ensuring that whenever possible, there should be local-level attendance at the National Platform and local-level platforms should be encouraged where communities can find a means of articulation of the issues that they need to address. Above all, local, high-risk communities who are

regularly facing problems, can help to highlight through their experience and knowledge, the real reasons for the investment in DRR.

- ***Take an active part in the international mechanisms established to support DRR.*** Keeping the country's DRR profile high in the international community's consciousness is another important way of encouraging sustainability. Take an active part in the UNISDR system, seeking visibility at Global and Regional Platforms and other events and even as a country, being a champion for DRR within your region.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MUYANDA

A Difficult Time

It is three years since the initial establishment of the Muyanda National Platform for DRR in a blaze of publicity. The Platform continued to meet on a regular basis for a period of about 18 months but at that point, the Chairman, Dr. Sabanda, secured representation to the International Geographical Union and was therefore absent from Muyanda for long periods of time and could not continue to chair National Platform meetings on a regular basis. His place was taken by the Chief Secretary from the Ministry of the Environment but he, unfortunately, sought to use the Platform to support the agenda of his Ministry. At this point attendance started to drop. Some of the non-government stakeholders in particular saw little value in them attending the meetings when clearly there was a highly political agenda which they felt they had no part to play in. The meeting turned into an exchange between government personnel and eventually, in economically difficult times, the Government decided to cut the budget.

The National Platform has not met for over a year. The political commitment is lacking and the leadership does not exist. Dr. Sabanda has returned from his international posting. A chance meeting between him and the Prime Minister led to a discussion about the Platform. The Prime Minister was curious to know why it was not functioning. Dr. Sabanda explained the complex reasons including the lack of budget and the lack of a champion as well as diplomatically mentioning the lack of political will. The Prime Minister was mindful of the upcoming rainy season and suggested to Dr. Sabanda that he call a meeting of the Platform. Dr. Sabanda stated that it would not be easy as people had lost interest and perhaps even some faith in the system. He said that he was only willing to re-establish the Platform if he was given sustained resources to manage the process properly, if he could be guaranteed the commitment

by Government to developing a DRR programme and if he was given the green light to develop capacity so that the process did not rely entirely on him. The Prime Minister promised to look into these issues and get back to Dr. Sabanda quickly.

Three months later, Dr. Sabanda was still waiting for a reply. Meanwhile, serious flooding had affected the south-west of the country and a major relief programme had been mounted.

What the meeting of National Platforms at the Global Platform held in June 2009 recommended

These recommendations highlight the important actions that need to be taken by various stakeholders to continue the process of building a DRR consciousness and supporting resilience. Under these recommendations, Nations should:

• Continue to expand their human and financial support to develop fully functional National Platforms as a means to support accelerated implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action at local, regional and national levels;

• Support the development of National Platforms as multi-stakeholder structures including private sector, NGO and civil society to:
  a. Facilitate the integration of disaster risk reduction in various sectors, as a contribution to achieve sustainable development in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (e.g. poverty reduction strategies);
  b. Take into account specific vulnerabilities of social groups (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, etc.) in disaster risk reduction strategies;
  c. Enhance the participation of gender-balanced and community-based organisations in disaster risk reduction.

• Use the capacities and lessons learned from National Platforms to develop coordination mechanisms and strategies for DRR at the local level;

• Facilitate and co-ordinate links between climate change adaptation focal points, and National Platforms for DRR, to avoid parallel mechanisms and to link existing expertise in order to reduce the human impact of climate change;

• Officially declare existing multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms as National Platforms if approved by the country's government or self government and as requested by the Hyogo Framework for Action;

• Identify and appoint disaster risk reduction focal points in various key Government ministries, as the ministerial focal point persons are key in the coordination and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities at the ministerial portfolio level;

• Enhance information-sharing and exchange with other existing National Platforms

through UN/ISDR facilitated networks and other National Platform channels;

• Promote capacity-development in DRR within National Platforms and develop common strategies through exchange of experiences with other countries on regional and international levels through information sharing and communication.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, through the UNISDR Secretariat, should:

- Organize and maintain a standing international forum of National Platforms for disaster risk reduction, in order to mobilise their potential for the implementation of the HFA in a participatory manner, and in order to support information exchange and coordination;

- Facilitate the development of a system of cooperation between National Platforms and the UNISDR secretariat by defining the roles and responsibilities of the secretariat. As an example, the UNISDR Secretariat should channel all information and communications with countries through National Platforms, where existing.

- Provide greater support and higher visibility for the National Platforms by integrating a presentation of the activities undertaken by National Platforms into the agenda of each Global Platform;

- Facilitate and co-ordinate links between climate change adaptation and DRR, to avoid parallel mechanisms and to link existing expertise in order to reduce the human impact of climate change;

- Enhance advice and technical support by UN/ISDR to the development of National Platforms and national strategies for DRR based on the five priorities of the HFA.

- Other ISDR system partners, including regional organisations, bilateral development agencies, non-governmental organisations and the private sector should:

- Continue to expand their technical and financial support to National Platforms for DRR, through a more systematic information-sharing and cooperation on DRR related activities;

- Promote the development of HFA focal point institutions and National Platforms as critical operational organisation tool for more efficient and effective local and national implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action;

- Strengthen mechanisms, at the national, regional and international levels, to support

- preparedness, emergency response and recovery at the local level;

- Establish, in those countries where it is needed, sub-regional funds for disaster risk reduction to enhance awareness raising, training, risk assessment, and ICT in order to improve availability and rapid exchange of information for enhanced disaster risk management.

What has happened in Africa already

A recent inventory of national DRR institutions noted that there are 15 countries with operational National Platforms for DRR in Africa. In addition, according to the World Bank, three countries have incorporated DRR concerns into their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In addition, some of Africa's Regional Economic Communities have developed disaster management programmes.

This means that over two-thirds of African countries do not have an operational National Platform. There are quite a few countries where National Platforms were established but then did not meet after the initial launch. In other countries there has been little interest in taking DRR further. Other priorities are considered to be more important. Some of the reasons given for these problems are mentioned in the inventory, quoting a survey of National Platform activity in the Arab States:

- Over-high initial expectations lead to subsequent disappointment
- The process is too costly and unwieldy to be sustainable
- The real decision-makers are not sufficiently committed to the process
- There is a lack of financial resources to hold meetings
- The discussions focus on unrealistic options without considering the costs.

There are probably many more reasons. Whatever the analysis reveals, National Platform activity is severely limited in Africa while the potential for serious disaster to occur continues to increase.

References and resources

For the recommendations of the meeting of National Platforms held at the Global Platform Meeting in Geneva in June, 2009, see"

http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=10265&pid:18 4