



Building Local Resilience to Disasters: Challenges and Opportunities

24-26 August, 2009 - Incheon, Korea

ANNOUNCEMENT

Background

Since the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005¹, greater awareness of the importance of reducing disaster risk has emerged among different stakeholders. There have also been substantial changes in thinking on climate change, which increased receptivity to the disaster risk reduction message, particularly at the global level. Despite these positive trends, the gap between what needs to be done as outlined in the Hyogo Framework for Action and the reality at the community level, is way too large.

A broad consensus has been reached today among different stakeholders on the essential role local governments can play to bridge the above gap. It is in fact at the local level that development planning is expected to first take place, and the integration between DRR and development is supposed to be realized. Emphasis on disaster risk reduction at the local level is also becoming stronger as cities of all sizes are subjected to rapid population growth, environmental degradation and overall increased conditions of vulnerability. However, while cities and urban areas currently attract more attention in reason of their high concentration of risk, local and regional authorities have an equally important role to play in medium and small-scale cities, towns, and local rural areas.

Objectives

Based on this understanding, the conference will aim to stimulate a constructive debate on priority areas of common concern in disaster risk reduction, particularly with respect to their implications at the local level. The conference will be mainly targeted to local government representatives, but will also see the active participation and contribution of national governments, United Nations organizations, as well as NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Furthermore, the conference will also aim to support the development of an open forum that brings together local and regional authorities to address disaster risk reduction issues in a more consistent and inclusive manner.

Participation

Participation will be opened to governments and organizations that meet the following criteria:

- Have a comprehensive understanding of disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action, particularly with regard to the challenges and implications at the local level.

¹ The *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, was adopted by 168 Governments at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan in January 2005 – <http://www.unisdr.org/hfa>.

- Demonstrate a strong and continued engagement in disaster risk reduction implementation, especially at the local and sub-national levels.

Requests for participation by governments and organizations that do not meet the above criteria will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, given the importance and urgency of advancing this agenda, governments are encouraged to send a combination of policy and technical-level representatives so as to ensure strong and effective follow-up action.

Programme

Plenary Sessions

Plenary Sessions will provide the opportunity for governments and organizations to learn about the outcomes of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction², and discuss the latest trends in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Opportunities for collaboration between local, national, and global-level DRR actors will also be explored. Particular emphasis will be put on how to enhance dialogue between national and local government actors, and between local governments and NGOs / CSOs.

Thematic Sessions

On the second day, the conference will also host several thematic sessions that will focus on the following areas:

- Urban Risk Reduction
- Capacity Building for Local Governments in DRR
- Poverty Alleviation and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Disaster Risk Reduction as a Tool for Climate Change Adaptation
- ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction

Preparations of the Thematic Sessions will be organized in collaboration and through the leadership of selected organizations and stakeholders. There will be a major role for Governments, United Nations organizations, as well as NGOs and Civil Society Organisations.

Date and Venue

The conference is scheduled to take place on 24 - 26 August 2009 at the *Songdo Convensia* conference center, Incheon, Korea - <http://www.songdoconvensia.com>.

Organisation

The UNISDR secretariat and Incheon Metropolitan City will guide and support the preparations for the conference, in consultation with the Advisory Group of the "Local Government Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction"³.

² The Global Platform serves as the main global forum for all parties involved in disaster risk reduction. It is convened by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in his capacity as Chair of the UNISDR System – <http://preventionweb.net/globalplatform>.

³ For more information: <http://www.unisdr.org/lqadrr>

The official language of the conference will be English. Interpretation services will not be provided during the conference, although key documents and conference proceedings will be available in French and Spanish.

It is anticipated that limited resources will be available to sponsor the participation of government representatives from developing countries, with priority to the least developed countries. Further information on how to request financial support will be provided in due course.

Contact

For more information please consult the conference website www.buildinglocalresilience.org, which will provide up-to-date information on the background, programme, organization of thematic sessions, as well as practical information for participating governments and organizations.

Queries on the preparations may also be addressed to Mr. Michele Cocchiqia, UNISDR secretariat (cocchiqia@un.org) or Mr. Eon-Joo Noh, Incheon Metropolitan City (eonjoo@gmail.com).