

Call for abstracts for the 2013 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*

Introduction

The *Global Assessment Report* (GAR) is a major initiative of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). It contributes to the achievement of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) through monitoring risk patterns and trends and progress in disaster risk reduction and through providing guidance, to governments and non-governmental actors alike, on why and how they can, together, reduce disaster risks.

The purpose of this call for abstracts is to encourage more research on how public regulation and private investment shape disaster risk, in the context of broader changes in the global political economy. Up to now discussions on the role of the private sector in disaster risk reduction have been limited primarily to business continuity planning, risk sharing, through insurance and on corporate social responsibility, particularly during emergencies. In turn, public investment tends to be viewed as wholly government-owned, ignoring the role of the private sector in delivering public plans, for example through public-private partnerships or the execution of government contracts by private firms and in influencing public priority setting or decision-making.

To date, there has been insufficient discussion and analysis of how private investment is a driver of disaster risk and how the resulting disaster impacts negatively affect not only businesses themselves but also the economies and societies of which they form a part. It is also critical to understand how these investment–risk interactions have been mediated by trends in the global political economy since the 1970s including, for example: the liberalisation of markets and rapid increase in trade and capital flows; deregulation and the retrenchment in terms of the role of the state to plan and manage development; structural adjustment, with a reduction in social spending and guarantees as well as the transfer of responsibilities to the private sector in areas such as health and pensions.

By analyzing these interactions and mediations at different spatial and temporal scales it is expected that the abstracts will highlight the incentives and disincentives for managing disaster risks in investment decisions, particularly in the current constellation of global political and economic crises, concatenated risks and uncertainty.

UNISDR seeks background papers for the 2013 *Global Assessment Report* (GAR13) that address the following issues:

1. What has been the relationship between changes in the broader political economy since the 1970s and disaster risk trends? If the political economy has generated incentives for greater (or lesser) risk-taking at all levels, how has this manifested in patterns of disaster risk?
2. How do investment decisions in the private sector (in a context of incentives and regulation by the public sector) increase levels of disaster risk and, in some cases, transfer risk from private investors to governments and to other sectors of society?
3. To what extent are increasing disaster losses, in a context of reduced fiscal space, in both the public and the private sector, leading to a greater consideration of disaster

risk in investment decision making? What are the tradeoffs between longer-run and short-run perspectives in such decisions, and what combination of incentives and regulation could encourage more investment in risk reduction and an optimisation of risk management strategies?

4. To what extent do austerity measures result in higher levels of socio-economic and/or physical vulnerability?

For more information, see attached background document.

Submission process

- The deadline for submitting abstracts is Friday 30 March 2012.
- Abstracts should be 300 words or less.
- After a blind, external peer-review of the abstracts, UNISDR will invite successful applicants to develop full GAR13 background papers, which will be due in June 2012 and will award small grants/stipends to the authors.
- In addition, UNISDR will coordinate the submission of all final papers to an academic journal for consideration in a special issue focusing on the economics of disaster risk.
- Submissions and questions, contact: delpech@un.org.