

Report - Asia NGO consultative meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction

27th and 28th May, 2008.
The Royal Princess Hotel, Bangkok
Thailand.



Report of the Asia NGO consultative meeting on DRR

July 29, 2008

This document contains the report of the Asia NGO consultative meeting on DRR, held in Bangkok on the 27th and 28th of May, 2008. The report contains the background and objectives for holding the meeting, describes the proceeding and outcomes of the sessions. Please refer to the annexes for details on participants, contacts and presentations.

Executive summary

Oxfam Hong Kong, UN/ISDR, the Special Unit for South South Co-operation at the UNDP and the Asia Disaster Risk Reduction Network organised a two day consultative meeting on disaster risk reduction in Asia.

The main objective of the consultative meeting was to establish a framework for collaboration on disaster risk reduction among non – governmental organisations in Asia.

The meeting aimed to stimulate discussions on the following topics:

- Purpose and added value of regional collaboration (on DRR) for NGOs in Asia.
- Incentives for participation and collaboration for NGOs.
- Mechanisms to sustain collaboration on DRR in the medium and long term.
- Possible structure and governance of a regional framework for collaboration in Asia (links with UN/ISDR and GNDRR)
- Measurement of performance of such a framework (quality and quantity)

The main agreements/outputs of the consultative meeting are as follows

Collaboration around key thematic areas

- Participants agreed to collaborate on the following thematic areas- strengthening linkages between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, addressing urban risks and strengthening local governance in Asia.
- Existing regional and national DRR NGOs and their networks will set-up an **Asia level co-ordination framework**. This framework will aim at strengthening local action on DRR and will be linked to the Global Civil Society Network on DRR (GNDRR).

- Participants agreed that there is a need to establish a network on harmonization of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Asia. To do so, various options should be considered, such as 1) establish a network focused on advocacy for harmonization of CCA and DRR and 2) Build capacity of existing networks on disaster risk reduction to address climate change issues.

Develop a regional coordination framework on DRR in Asia

- A process was agreed to establish a regional co-ordination framework on DRR. The Asia level coordination framework should strengthen and support local and national capacities on DRR. The regional framework should work towards promoting effective DRR programmes on climate change, local governance and urbanization at the local level.
- At the regional level, its engagements can be focused on policy advocacy around DRR issues.
- It was agreed that while national civil society alliances need to be strengthened, new alliances need to be formed in countries or region, where none exists.
- It was identified that South East Asia has no existing DRR regional network. Mr. Esteban Masagca of the PDRN was tasked to facilitate the formation of the DRR network in South East Asia.

Structure and governance of a regional coordination

- The current Steering Committee (UN/ISDR, ADRRN, Oxfam Hong Kong and Special Unit for South South Cooperation at the UNDP) was expanded to include representatives from Duryog Nivaran, Center for Natural Resource Studies, Bangladesh and Pampanga Disaster Response Network, Philippines.
- The ***expanded Steering Committee*** will take the recommendations of this meeting forward, namely:
 - By October 2008, the ***expanded steering committee*** will establish a '***Regional Advisory Committee***' for networks and organisations.
 - The Regional Advisory Committee is mandated work towards strengthening national networks and engage regional level work on DRR with national and global effort.
 - The 'Expanded Steering Committee' will write the Terms of Reference of the Regional Advisory Committee by end of October 2008.
 - Other tasks of the 'Expanded Steering Committee' include - mapping existing NGO networks in Asia relevant to DRR and identify immediate and appropriate actions for the regional advisory committee.

- The Expanded Steering Committee shall perform these tasks from June to end October 2008

Role of OHK

- Oxfam Hong Kong will continue to be the focal point and will negotiate with its management to provide support to coordinate the regional advisory committee in the mean time.

Introduction

Recognizing the important role of NGOs in disaster risk reduction (DRR), the UN/ISDR secretariat initiated in 2006 the development of a “Global Network of CSOs for DRR - GNDRR”, in collaboration with the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation - UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok. The Network was officially launched in June 2007, and is currently facilitated by a Steering Group of 11 representatives from international and local NGOs, including Action Aid, ADRRN, BOND DRR Group, Duryog Nivaran, Huairou Commission, InterAction, ProVention Consortium, Tearfund and World Vision¹.

The Network aims to increase the effectiveness of civil society to build disaster resilient communities, by bringing the concerns and interests of vulnerable people into the heart of the global DRR policy and practice. One of the objectives of the GNDRR is to build South-South and South-North cooperation among NGOs through information sharing, knowledge exchange and capacity building. However, this can only be done if there is wider ownership of platform from local, national and regional DRR actors.

Oxfam Hong Kong has been calling for increased participation of local, national and regional NGOs in global DRR efforts, such as those of the GNDRR, to inform policy development on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Consequently, Oxfam Hong Kong and UN/ISDR, in consultation with some of the key players in the region, held a consultative meeting on disaster risk reduction in order to discuss potential collaboration in Asia and support the efforts of the GNDRR at the regional level.

The consultations brought together development, civil society and non-governmental organisations from Asia to examine challenges to disaster risk reduction and potential for collaboration among regional stakeholders.

The consultations were held on the 27th to the 28th of May 2008 at the Royal Princess Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand, and saw participation from representatives of the GNDRR and non-governmental organizations, working to enhance disaster risk reduction in Asia. Participants in this consultation shared a common

¹ For more information visit : <http://www.unisdr.org/ngos>

background in DRR and a strong commitment to address disaster risk reduction issues in Asia.

The meeting was facilitated by a steering committee that includes the Asia Disaster Risk Reduction Network (ADRRN), Oxfam Hong Kong, and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation at the UNDP and UN/ISDR. A total of 33 participants attended the 2-day consultative meeting. Please refer to Annex 1 and 2 for details on the agenda and participants.

Objectives of the Meeting

The meeting aimed to stimulate discussions on the following topics:

- Purpose and added value of a regional coordination framework on DRR for NGOs in Asia.
- Incentives for participation and involvement of NGOs in DRR coordination. .
- Mechanisms to sustain coordination on DRR in the medium and long term.
- Possible structure and governance of a regional framework on DRR in Asia, with links to GNDRR and UN/ISDR
- Measurement of performance of such a co-ordination framework (quality and quantity).

Proceedings for Day 1

Session One: Opening session of the meeting

The meeting was opened by Oxfam Hong Kong² with a welcome address, introductions of participants and expectations from the meeting.

Participants expected this meeting to highlight the importance of collaboration, explore areas of cooperation, and discuss a framework for exchange of information through setting up a structure to coordinate efforts of civil society organizations in Asia, relevant to disaster risk reduction, through a strong and well-supported secretariat.

Please refer to the annex 1 for more background information and agenda of the meeting.

² The welcome address was delivered by Imelda Abarquez, Manager, Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Management Programme, Oxfam HK. Apologies were sent by the keynote speaker, Rajan Gengaje of the UNOCHA as he had to attend a high level emergency meeting for the Myanmar cyclone.

Session Two: Presentations and discussions on DRR in Asia

The second session started with setting the context of the two day meeting with four key presentations.

Emerging disaster issues in Asia by Mehul Pandya (*All India Disaster Management Institute*), India.

The presentation provided an overview of facts and disaster scenario in Asia along with emerging challenges and opportunities for disaster risk reduction work. The main challenges for DRR work in Asia are related to lack of capacity to deliver DRR work and quality of the DRR work being done. The main conclusions are –

- Helping the poor in Asia reduce their risk is not done through global systems or governments alone but needs action at the local level.
- Local institutions and partnerships are more likely to be effective in disaster risk reduction than external interventions.
- Approaches that support local enterprise and bridge national and local initiatives represent promising areas for the future.
- Strengthen INGO surge capacity to fully utilize local and national capacities.
- Asia has long struggled to contextualize and meet the international standards for humanitarian response; it is now time for it to take lead in setting an agenda for global disaster risk reduction.

Urban risks in Asia by Amod Dixit (*National Society for Earthquake Technology*), Nepal

The presentation provided an overview of challenges to implement disaster risk reduction in urban areas in Asia. There has been very limited focus on addressing vulnerability of people living in urban areas. As more and more people live in urban areas in Asia, it is important that DRR NGOs build their understanding of disaster risks in urban areas and work towards addressing them. Successful DRR practices in urban areas were shared along with highlighting gaps and challenges in doing DRR work in urban areas in Asia. The main recommendations are as follows:

- Develop capacity and knowledge of local actors on risk and reduction issues
- Increase co-operation and dialogue among NGOs working on DRR in the region
- Highlight good practices and support “champions” of DRR work.
- Participate in NGO reporting of the HFA.

Extreme events, conflict and migration in Asia brought about by climate change by Dr. D.L. Mallick (Bangladesh Centre of Advanced Studies.)

Recent climate trends and reports (such as the IPCC report on Asia) show a disturbing picture of growing disasters such as floods, droughts and storms. Growing climate related disasters and impacts are causing slow onset of conflict and migration in Asia. DRR NGOs in Asia must collaborate on sharing risk scenarios due to climate change, tools and methodologies to address these risks. Along with this, we must call for global policy action on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Training and learning concepts in DRR by Prasad Sevekari (Red R) India and Lorna Victoria (Centre of Disaster Preparedness), Philippines.

There were two presentations on this topic to share good practices and tools used in training and learning in DRR in Asia. Edit this sentence. Both Red R and CDP have emerged as leaders in this area and were invited to present their work.

The main recommendations were as follows. This meeting

- Should help in **knowledge management** with regards to DRR. Managing the data and information so as to help identify existing patterns that could underline contextual knowledge could be undertaken.
- Create a mechanism that would enable the practitioners reach out to their peers.
- Support development of a **collaborative learning and sharing** platform where the learners would assimilate the newer knowledge realms and relate them to existing frameworks, for further processing. Collaborative learning setting would provide learners an opportunity to converse with peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs, question other conceptual frameworks, and be actively engaged.
- Support research on development of indicators for DRR.
- Bring together the South and South-East Asia based Training Institutions to develop a curriculum for 'Advanced CBDM'
- **Establish a dialogue with the regional governments**, particularly those lagging behind in the implementation of the MDGs and in the normal development patterns about the approaches for increasing the social safety and security nets to reduce vulnerability towards disasters.
- Invite the different stakeholders like the ADB, Grameen Bank, etc. on board to discuss the economic initiatives that could enhance the security net.

Please refer to the annexes for presentations and papers. The morning session of presentations concluded with a question and answers session.

Session Three: Exploring the potential for collaboration on DRR among NGOs in Asia.

This post lunch session started with a presentation by Marcus Oxley (chairman, GNDRR) on updates and reviews from the Global CSO Network for DRR (GNDRR). He mentioned that GNDRR's main purpose is to increase the effectiveness of civil society to build resilient communities and nations by putting the interests and concerns of vulnerable people at the heart of global disaster risk reduction policy and practice. Full presentation in Annex.

This session was focused on building consensus among the participants for DRR related issues that can be addressed through collaboration among civil society in Asia. The main issues identified by participants were then ranked to prioritize the most important ones as perceived by the group.

Issues for potential collaboration on DRR

- Disaster risk reduction in urban areas
- Environmental Displacement
- Climate change along coasts and cities
- Food security
- Early warning
- Conflict sensitivity
- Local governance
- Livelihoods
- Communication
- Day to day hazards, small frequent shocks
- Exclusion/social disparities
- Risk Financing/scale up existing structures
- Disaster management laws, structures, DRR with local government infrastructure

The participants ranked climate change, local governance and urbanization as the three most important issues linked with DRR in Asia.

Potential ways for collaboration on DRR in Asia

- Increasing the outreach and up scaling disaster risk reduction in Asia
- Capacity building of local NGOs on DRR
- Putting in place regional accountability and ownership mechanisms for DRR stakeholders
- Create a platform for regional advocacy on DRR related issues
- Increase options for shared learning on DRR in the region
- Invest in developing tools and methodologies for DRR
- Develop a mechanism for collaboration and coordination for NGOs in Asia
- Help local NGOs and network on DRR for resource mobilization to implement DRR activities on the ground

The participants felt that capacity building, collaboration and coordination and setting standards for DRR were the most important issues that need to be addressed to enhance action on DRR in Asia.

Session Four: Working Group Discussion: Moving forward

The last session of the day was focused on developing a set of joint objectives and activities that can be taken up under the issues and processes identified earlier by the participants. The aim of this session was to list broad areas for collaboration on DRR in Asia.

The main questions posed to the working groups were:

- What is the purposes and value of collaboration?
- What would be the objectives and activities for collaboration?
- What criteria would ensure a broad participation of stakeholders – across themes?
- How can NGO collaboration improve the linkages between DRR and climate change?

Summary of the workshop results - Issues and proposed activities

	Urbanization	Local Governance	Climate Change
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of NGOs and other stakeholders about safe building practices, risk-sensitive and land-use planning • Increasing preparedness and awareness of existing mitigation options • Disseminating basic planning and standards in urban planning and make them available to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating DRR/CC at local governance. • Strengthening capacity of local Governments to take lead in local development planning that takes DRR into account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compliment/ support local dev. Planning ○ making us/ them accountable • Raising awareness of communities on the role of local Governments/ NGOs and communities in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building skills and knowledge for understanding impacts of CC. • Education – formal and informal (facilitate integration of CCA into school curriculum and Education communities and their orgs, on long term risks of CC and adaptation). • Facilitate learning from each

	Urbanization	Local Governance	Climate Change
Standard Setting	<p>broader audiences, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of existing risk assessments against standards in urban planning. • Developing a training manual for local governments on Land Use Planning and DRR • Developing checklists for monitoring compliance of urban planning standards • Integrate land use planning into DRR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing local level indicators in context of DRR (HFA). 	<p>other – across regions through knowledge and information sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downscaling global data useful for risk and vulnerability assessments and planning
Coordination/ Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing CoC for ethical practice. • Ensuring participation of NGOs/ CSOs in urban planning. • Assisting in strengthening national and regional networks working in urban area/ issues • Triggering local Government action on risk assessments in urban areas • Helping Governments to enforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing local level advocacy coalitions • Wider dissemination of information on local governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forging links between communities and experts • Policy influencing at global, regional and national level <p>For CC community to recognize the role of DRR in tackling climate change adaptation Informing / supporting the CC community with evidence of impacts / vulnerabilities to CC at local level</p>

	Urbanization	Local Governance	Climate Change
	urban planning standards by highlighting cost of inaction.		

Please find the details of the working group discussions in Annex 3.

Proceedings of Day 2

Session 5: Recap from Day One and Input on Regional Mechanism

On the second day, Terry Cannon, University of Greenwich, UK gave a synthesis of Day One and set the context for further discussions. It was agreed that the agenda of Day 2 should be amended, based on the outcomes of Day 1. The main outcome of Day 1 was as follows:

1. Issues and challenges to DRR work in Asia identified
2. Processes to meet those challenges identified.
3. Agreement on the need for collaboration and coordination among DRR NGOs in Asia.

Following this agreement, the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation represented by Zenaida Willison gave a presentation on the different existing regional mechanisms among NGOs, Regional Centers, Government and UN Mechanisms as well as National and Thematic Networks in the region. The existing networks are engaged in capacity development on DRR at all levels but there are limited advocacy and forums for knowledge sharing among other regions in the South.

Session 6: Plenary – Mapping Asia Networks -Who is doing what and where?

Participants expressed the need to have a mapping session to know how many NGO networks exist in the region and what they work on. The participants felt that this exercise will help them understand the gaps in terms of issues that are being covered (and were identified in Day One) by various NGOs and their networks. *Please find a list of NGOs and their networks attached in the Annex*

It was agreed that while this is not an exhaustive list and does not cover all countries in Asia, it is a good starting point for creating a more detailed list.

Session 7: Working Group discussions on gaps and opportunities

After listing existing NGOs, their networks and areas of work, the participants went into working group discussions to identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration in DRR in Asia.

Please find below the main point from the discussions:

- One main observation was that most DRR is needed at the local and national level **and** therefore efforts of any regional network should focus on strengthening and in supporting that work. Existing regional networks should be engaged to develop a process for creating frameworks that invest in local level work on DRR.
- There is a need to identify what needs to be done by a strong civil society organization and a competent and capable network. The focus should be on creating a good interface between national, regional advocacy and global platforms on DRR.
- It was felt that there was no network that links development with climate change and DRR.
- The participants from all groups felt that there is a need to build up national network, to link the networks from national to regional, focused on strengthening local government, support national networks. Local government and civil society organizations to carry out DRR activities such as sharing of case studies, good practices, support on how to work with local government, strengthen capacities through capacity building programs and advocacy.
- The question on who will continue and maintain this process was raised. It was felt that someone has to perform the facilitation role in terms of planning and moving this momentum forward.
- Links with the Harbin Alliance: There is an opportunity to link with global initiatives in DRR and CCA such as the Harbin Alliance. (This alliance calls for strengthened conceptual and practical linkages between climate change adaptation and DRR in order to ensure that lessons as exchanged and responses are sustainable.)
- Answering to question on how the ADRR network operates - It is a network of NGOs that promotes coordination, information sharing and collaboration among NGOs and other stakeholder for effective and efficient disaster reduction and response in the Asia Pacific region. Membership is open to all civil society organizations, NGOs and individuals working in disaster reduction and response in Asia

Session 8: Recommendations and ways forward

Participants acknowledged that Asian NGOs should play a lead role in strengthening local capacity on DRR and set up a mechanism to link national and local level work on DRR with regional and global mechanisms. These envisaged mechanisms should be dedicated to the harmonization of climate change and DRR, one of the major concerns identified by participants. However there still needs to be further discussions on how other aspects of DRR can be covered.

Participants agreed that the most immediate follow up from this meeting should be to map existing DRR NGO networks in Asia. It was felt that it is necessary to have a dedicated person to coordinate and manage the work following this meeting.

The main agreements on follow up actions from the meeting were:

- Form a regional network specifically focused on advocacy for the harmonization of CCA and DRR, bringing on board all the relevant CSO networks and organisations in Asia. This network can link with the Harbin Alliance (a global network on CCA and DRR), and also the Global CSO Network on DRR.
- Strengthen existing networks. – One of the main challenges facing existing Asian networks is of resources and capacity. Therefore, a regional platform can be created to support the needs and strengthen the work of local and national civil society.
- It was unanimously agreed that while national civil society alliances need to be strengthened, new alliances need to be formed in countries, where none exist. These national alliances should form part of an Asia wide CSO network. In this way, voices of national civil society can be captured at the regional level.

Interim Regional Structure and Plans

Please find below the decisions taken at the meeting. It was decided that the current Steering Committee will be expanded and should take a lead role in taking the recommendations of this meeting forward:

- The group decided against forming a new or additional DRR network at this stage.
- The Steering Committee is now expanded to include new members. The new members include representatives from regional networks such as Duryog Nivaran, one representative from South Asia and one from South East Asia.
- Participants from South Asia voted for CNRS, Bangladesh as the new member of the expanded steering committee
- Participants from East Asia voted to PDRN, Philippines as the new member of the expanded steering committee.

- By October 2008, the new and expanded steering committee will work towards establishing a 'regional advisory committee' for networks and organisations participating in this two- day consultative meeting. **One of the functions of the new Steering Committee will be to write the Terms of Reference conduct a regional mapping of NGOs and identify immediate and appropriate actions for the regional advisory committee.** The new Steering Committee shall perform these tasks from June to end August 2008.
- One of the mandates of the 'regional advisory committee' will be to work towards strengthening national networks and engage regional level work on DRR with national and global effort. **The thematic focus of the regional advisory committee will be establishing a regional network on DRR and CCA with a focus on creating national level frameworks for DRR and CCA.**
- Existing networks, for example ADRRN will discuss the outcomes and recommendations of the meeting with their members. One of the objectives of doing this will be to know the interest of the respective networks to include the objectives of this Asian NGO alliance in its current mandate.
- Oxfam Hong Kong will be the focal point and will negotiate with its management to provide support to coordinate the regional advisory committee.

Session 9: Synthesis³

The main challenge for the regional advisory committee on DRR will be to empower advocacy, drive critical processes such as -capacity building on DRR, setting quality standards for better implementation of DRR programmes, enhance collaboration on DRR among NGOs and develop trust between fellow NGOs.

Participants felt that this two-day meeting saw open discussion, with no hidden agenda and met its expected outcomes.

³ The synthesis of the meeting was given by Dr. Terry Cannon of the Greenwich University. Dr. Cannon teaches development studies at the University of Greenwich. He is also the co-author of *At Risk: natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters*, a book that has become a well-established text in the field of disaster analysis.