



Asian Disaster Preparedness Center's
approach to supporting the post-2015 framework for DRR

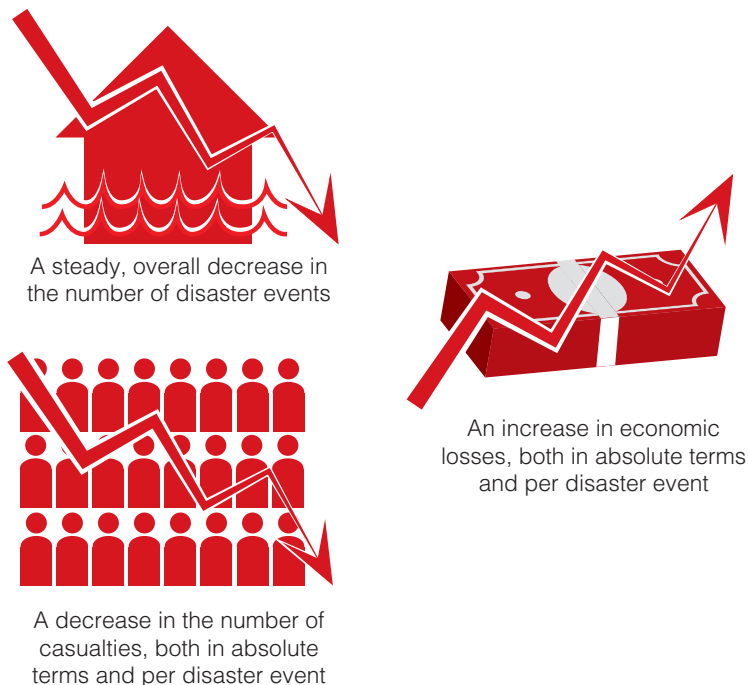
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ADPC's approach to supporting the post-2015 framework for DRR

1. Introduction

The Hyogo Framework for Action has been the global blueprint for disaster risk reduction (DRR) over the course of 2005–2015. It has provided an international framework for actions to strengthen the resilience of nations and communities. In evaluating developments during the period 2005–2014, there are three main trends, which have been observed across the Asia-Pacific region, namely:



Source: EM-DAT data, based on ADPC's own calculations (February 2015)

Broadly, these trends suggest that whilst DRR stakeholders have achieved substantial progress in protecting human lives, there are still significant steps to be taken towards strengthening economic resiliency across the region. In particular, there is a clear need to reduce the exposure and vulnerability of economic assets to disaster risk whilst continuing to strengthen the ability of communities across the Asia-Pacific to cope with, and prepare for, disasters. Asian Disaster Preparedness Center has identified a requirement for future DRR projects to place a greater focus on critical public infrastructure and enhancing business resilience by engaging more readily with the private sector in order to provide a greater return on investment. In this way, DRR actors and agencies can look to address key areas of weakness, whilst providing further tangible successes in reducing the negative impacts of disasters across the region.

2. About ADPC

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) is a leading regional resource center on disaster risk reduction in Asia-Pacific. Since its establishment in 1986, ADPC has gained the trust of national governments through effective and long-lasting partnerships with countries in the region. As an independent non-profit organization, ADPC focuses on supporting countries across Asia-Pacific to address their priorities on disaster risk reduction in synergy with global and regional frameworks through a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction. This approach encompasses the utilization of scientific knowledge and technology to better understand risk, the institutionalization of systems to build resilience, as well as the application of risk-reducing measures across a range of development sectors and different national contexts within the Asia-Pacific region.

3. ADPC Strategy 2020

The ADPC Strategy 2020, launched in 2011, outlines how ADPC's proven experience, skills and capacity in DRR and CCA can be harnessed to address the challenges, issues and opportunities facing communities across the Asia-Pacific. This strategic document provides a clear roadmap for the organization's overall direction and activities over the next decade. The purpose of the ADPC Strategy 2020 is to focus on tangible DRR impacts and serve as the compass for the 'what and how?' of ADPC's engagement with countries and key partners. The strategy focuses on articulating the comparative advantage and added value that ADPC offers in view of providing specialist disaster risk reduction support and climate change adaptation interventions to its partners across Asia. Furthermore, the ADPC Strategy 2020 demonstrates the organization's responsiveness, dynamism, and effectiveness in delivering comprehensive, quality solutions to existing, identified challenges whilst outlining the Center's proactive approach to resilience-building across the fast-changing fields of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Under this strategy, ADPC has established three core program areas through which it can focus on delivering its various regional and national initiatives. The three core program areas are:

Science: focused on building the enhanced capacity of countries in the utilization of science-based information to understand risk (e.g., developing innovative tools for risk and vulnerability assessments)

Systems: concentrated on strengthening systems for effective management of risk at all levels in countries, especially at sub-national and local level (e.g., establishing effective early warning systems, assisting in the development and strengthening of legislative/regulatory frameworks)

Application: aimed at improving and establishing the utilization of risk reduction measures in development (e.g., practical training, technical assistance)

4. ADPC's contribution to Hyogo Framework for Action

Through the impacts of its numerous projects, programs and initiatives, ADPC has made a valuable and lasting contribution to the current Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) process across each of the HFA Priority Action (PA) areas. With support from its development partners, ADPC has provided more than 20 countries with technical services and capacity building to strengthen their resilience against disasters. In line with the HFA framework, ADPC's work across the Asia-Pacific has helped to:

- (PA1) Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
- (PA2) Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
- (PA3) Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
- (PA4) Reduce the underlying risk factors.
- (PA5) Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

ADPC has assisted in promoting disaster risk reduction as a national and a local priority – in line with HFA's PA1 – by focusing on enhancing the institutional capacities of government agencies in its partner countries. Governments have benefited from expertise provided by ADPC towards prioritizing disaster risk reduction at the national level. As an example, throughout 2010, ADPC worked closely with governmental bodies in Bangladesh and Myanmar to facilitate the formulation of key urban planning guidelines. These efforts produced successful, tangible results. The guidelines that were developed in Bangladesh, following a rigorous review of the relevant development policies and land-use plans of different cities, were endorsed by the Ministry of Housing and Public Works in 2014, which implemented them as an official planning instrument to be referred to by land-use planners. Meanwhile, in Myanmar, guideline documents developed with help from ADPC were incorporated into the country's national land-use policy.

In the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, ADPC worked to enhance coastal community resilience through strengthening early warning systems for coastal hazards, and developing guidelines for land-use planning and coastal zone management. Since 2012, ADPC has consolidated these efforts, supporting governments, local authorities and communities in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Vietnam to build their resilience to minimize disaster risks by enhancing early warning systems for coastal hazards. Key interventions included improving the capacity of national hydro-meteorological services to help local authorities improve response plans and evacuate people from vulnerable areas. Furthermore, the respective response capacity to hydro-meteorological hazards of communities was significantly enhanced through social mapping as well as evacuation and response drills and simulations, directly correlating with the need to identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning outlined under HFA's PA2.

ADPC also provided technical assistance and facilitated knowledge sharing to meet the needs of affected countries following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, in line with the PA3 aim of using knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels. This culminated in the Regional Study on the Socio-Economic Impacts of the 2004 Tsunami, documenting damages and losses in different sectors across the five most seriously affected countries of India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. ADPC has continued its support in these partner countries by providing guidance to key sectors as well as delivering training and capacity building materials for government officials.

ADPC has worked alongside public sector and governmental partners to encourage private sector engagement in DRR in order to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels. In line with PA3, this has helped to foster more holistic societal resilience across ADPC's partner countries. In Thailand, ADPC has worked with the Royal Thai Government to encourage Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to embed disaster risk reduction into their core business activities. Technical assistance provided by ADPC in terms of business continuity planning (BCP) helped to improve the resilience of these businesses, which are often the most vulnerable to disasters. ADPC also partnered with The Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP), Thailand to consider innovative ways of developing understanding of the importance of disaster preparedness amongst SMEs including incentivizing the uptake of effective risk reduction measures and assessments. ADPC's work in 2014 demonstrates the steps taken towards engaging the private sector in resilience building: the Center trained Thai SMEs on business continuity planning and engaged more than 250 enterprises and business associations to promote effective legislation, incentives and capacity development in the field.

Through its work to reduce regional vulnerability and exposure to disaster risks, ADPC has actively helped to address the underlying risk factors highlighted in HFA's PA4. With support from the Royal Norwegian Government and the Norwegian Meteorological Institute, ADPC has made efforts to enhance coastal resilience in Da Nang in mid-central Vietnam providing technical assistance to strengthen the area's disaster risk management capacity. Assistance given to Vietnam's National Hydro-Meteorological Services under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has helped coastal communities to better respond to flash flooding via improved local-level early warning systems and knowledge dissemination. In 2014, ADPC helped put in place or improve early warning systems in five countries across the region. Interventions such as these over the past decade have reduced levels of risk exposure brought about by the presence of people, property or key infrastructure in hazard zones. Furthermore, these interventions target the characteristics of communities that impede their ability to cope with hazards, such as poorly constructed buildings, lack of awareness or knowledge, and absence of established emergency procedures, which make them vulnerable to disasters.

ADPC has contributed significantly to building country-level and regional institutional arrangements and capacities to anticipate and prepare for post-disaster needs assessment and recovery adapted to specific country requirements. Comprehensive support was given to the governments of India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam to strengthen the tools, procedures, and capacities for national and sub-national post-disaster needs assessment and to integrate 'building back better' as a core feature of recovery planning. Whilst generally helping to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response, ADPC's work has had notable impacts in these areas of preparedness for post-disaster needs assessment and recovery planning after disasters. Alongside its various community-based initiatives, these actions, implemented together with the governments of its partner countries, demonstrate ADPC's commitment to building a culture of safety and resilience (PA3) and improving disaster preparedness (PA5) at all levels.

Furthermore, PROMISE (Program for Hydro-Meteorological Disaster Mitigation in Secondary Cities in Asia), implemented by ADPC since 2005 with funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has sought to reduce vulnerabilities arising due to climate change whilst strengthening hydro-meteorological mitigation measures in six cities in Bangladesh (Chittagong), Indonesia (Jakarta), Pakistan (Hyderabad), Philippines (Dagupan), Sri Lanka (Kalutara), and Vietnam (Da Nang). This multi-country urban risk management project has provided sustainable outcomes by enhancing capacities and assisting the countries in integrating disaster risk reduction into development plans at community, city and regional levels.

Also, in parallel with PA5, ADPC has looked to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response across national, sub-national and local levels. With the support of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA) and the American Red Cross, ADPC worked with government agencies and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to enhance local and regional disaster preparedness and response capacities of 10 countries in Asia under the Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER). Focusing on Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, the program resulted in the institutionalization of sustainable disaster preparedness training programs and emergency response systems in these countries.

Furthermore, under the umbrella of PEER, ADPC established a benchmark system for enhancing community-level first responder capacity in disaster-prone communities: Community Action for Disaster Response (CADRE). Also under PEER, the Hospital Preparedness for Emergencies (HOPE) helped to greatly enhance the capacity of hospitals and medical facilities to manage mass casualty incidents. Overall, 1,430 community first responders and 1,687 hospital personnel were trained, and there are now 488 new instructors qualified to conduct CADRE training along with 282 HOPE national instructors. CADRE graduates demonstrated their value during major incidents such as the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh in April 2013 and in the Philippines during the Typhoon Haiyan response in 2013. Meanwhile, the impact of HOPE has been the culmination of its implementation over the past 14 years and its evolution to meet the changing needs of healthcare facilities across the region.

5. Challenges, gaps and priorities

Although significant progress and positive steps in reducing disaster risk and building resilience have been taken by ADPC and its partners in the past 10 years, a number of challenges, gaps and priorities have been observed and noted over this period. These gaps need to be addressed in order for the DRR agenda to move forward in an effective manner.

There is a clear need to continue efforts focused on improving understanding of disaster risk. For instance, in view of the private sector, ADPC's work revealed that most SMEs perceive disasters as external risks and believe that risk reduction including business continuity planning would increase the costs of their operations. This underlined the need for international partners such as ADPC to support governments and the public sector in raising awareness of the importance of risk-sensitive practices in order to foster greater private sector engagement in DRM. Working across a range of sectors in this way can help achieve more holistic strategies for enhancing societal resilience at a regional level.

Challenges also remain to strengthen the ability of governments and institutions to manage disaster risk. This was underlined most prominently in ADPC's activities by a clear need to mainstream DRR and CCA into sectoral development planning. There is a need for improved coordination among relevant domestic and regional agencies as well as more financial resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of DRR initiatives. Despite progress, ADPC found that low levels of inter-agency coordination in view of development planning process, as well as a lack of engagement at the top tier of decision-making within governments, were key barriers to regional resilience building efforts. Lack of institutionalization at the national level and inadequate capacity at the sub-national level also continue to hamper the progress of DRR interventions.

A key barrier in harnessing greater investment in economic, social, cultural and environmental resilience is that governmental agencies and institutions widely consider DRR and CCA interventions as beyond their remit or outside their predefined responsibilities rather than as an investment that can provide long-term benefits. Notably, although there have been a number of initiatives to scientifically identify disaster risk in many countries, the actual use of information and data generated for DRR or development decision-making processes has been limited. DRR practitioners and decision-makers still lack the understanding of how useful risk information can be. The absence or the insufficient availability of accessible, useable risk information limits the ability of development planners to ensure the integration of risk in development plans and programs. In terms of building effective social resilience, a key challenge is to create a more inclusive DRR agenda including addressing gender gaps and promoting this as a cross-cutting issue throughout resilience-building across Asia-Pacific. This was apparent in the lower number of female participants compared with male participants enrolled in ADPC's capacity building and leadership programs. The need for greater gender-inclusivity is a consideration that ADPC can readily address alongside its organizational and country partners.

Furthermore, ADPC will continue to work alongside its partners to invest in economic, social, cultural and environmental resilience. Education and awareness raising should underline that the implementation of structural and non-structural measures may mean incurring short-term costs, but ultimately are an investment in survivability and can prove to be the foundation for a safer, more resilient region. In view of enhancing preparedness for effective response, and building back better during the recovery and reconstruction phase, ADPC has noted the need to address gaps in co-ordination between different levels of government for effective communication of early warnings within a short period of time before a hazard or disruptive event occurs. For instance, a lack of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for DRM activities across the region has been highlighted as a key barrier to achieving enhanced interoperability and integration between resilience-building partners. This is compounded by a lack of institutionalization of SOPs at the national level and the lack of capacity at the sub-national level, both of which are factors that continue to hamper progress of DRR interventions. Further support is needed for countries to scale up this process and to improve dissemination of early warnings from local authorities to communities at risk. Greater coordination among relevant national agencies and more financial resources are needed to develop a more integrated and sustainable mode of DRR over the coming decades.

6. ADPC's commitment for the post-2015 framework for DRR

The challenges discussed in section 5 – identified based on lessons learned over the previous decade – are the reference points in determining ADPC's future areas of focus. Furthermore, ADPC's activities will look to address the areas of priority identified under the post-2015 framework for DRR:

Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

ADPC will focus on improving hazard identification and data collection, producing comprehensive guidelines for partners undertaking risk assessments, and continuing to develop practical tools for the application of risk assessments to better inform decision-makers. Furthermore, ADPC will step up its efforts in advocating the practical application of risk assessment results for national and local development, whilst strengthening the understanding of stakeholders on disaster risk through effective awareness raising and advocacy.

Priority 2: Strengthening governance and institutions to manage disaster risk

ADPC will embark on assessing the capacity of its partner countries on DRR at all levels of government. This will enable the Center to assist partners in developing and strengthening their institutional frameworks and capacities on DRR. Specific actions will include assistance in the development of legislation related to DRR and improving national and sectoral strategies, plans, policies, and frameworks as well as developing the countries' capacities to collect and utilize historical disaster data. ADPC has identified a clear need for effective coordination and cooperation mechanisms and coping strategies on DRR, to enhance existing sub-national disaster risk management arrangements and capacities and, in doing so, consolidating

DRR/DRM institutionalization and contextualization across the region's national governance systems. Beyond the public sector, ADPC will strengthen the capacity and human resources development of private sector and nonprofit organizations on DRR. ADPC will look to support governments in developing legislation and incentives that promote improved resilience of the private sector and particularly SMEs, which are the backbone of the Asia-Pacific economy.

Priority 3: Investing in economic, social, cultural and environmental resilience

Broadly, ADPC intends to develop good practice models of economic, social, cultural and environmental resilience for wider replication across the region. ADPC aims to encourage greater public investment on disaster and climate risk management as well as risk-informed investments on the part of businesses since they can help work towards holistic economic resilience and sustainability. ADPC will develop a comprehensive strategy on mainstreaming DRM into social, cultural, environmental and economic development planning and implementation. Holistic community-based disaster risk management approaches and strong institutional frameworks can assist in strengthening local-level resilience including maximizing gender-inclusive approaches to disaster prevention, preparedness and response.

Priority 4: Enhancing preparedness for effective response, and building back better in recovery and reconstruction

ADPC will strengthen post-disaster needs assessments and recovery planning systems and capacities, and integrate good public investment management techniques into recovery implementation by working alongside relevant partners so as to impart expertise while identifying solutions that are applicable to each local, national or regional context. ADPC aims to expand the scope and scale of its established work focused on community-based disaster risk reduction, developing comprehensive disaster response systems and strengthening effective end-to-end community early warning systems. Furthermore, ADPC will encourage and facilitate public-private partnerships on disaster risk reduction. ADPC will support the use of business continuity planning in the private sector, particularly amongst SMEs, to prevent and mitigate business disruptions.

ADPC will look to consolidate its commitment to the post-2015 framework for DRR by addressing each of these areas in its updated ADPC Strategy 2020 to be launched in 2015.

7. The role of the RCC in the post-2015 framework for DRR era

The Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) on Disaster Management is a unique forum for the representatives of national disaster management organizations of 26 countries in the Asian region to share lessons learned and best practices in disaster risk reduction. Through the RCC, ADPC will be able to assist member countries to prepare for the post-2015 development agenda and global climate change adaptation arrangements.

Crucially, the RCC places value on promoting peer advocacy amongst regional partners and the exchange of experiences concerning risk reduction and resilience building within the Asia-Pacific region. The RCC provides a consultative mechanism for guiding implementation of DRR in the Asia-Pacific region, promoting co-operative DRR programs on a regional and sub-regional basis whilst guiding the work of ADPC and its future directions.

The RCC, which meets on an annual basis, has played a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of the HFA. In addition, it has served as an important forum for senior government officials in preparing for, and following up on, the outcomes of the Asian Ministerial Conferences on DRR (AMCDRR). In view of the post-2015 framework for DRR, the uniqueness of the RCC mechanism in operationalizing 'south-south' cooperation and intra-regional DRR interventions will be capitalized on by ADPC and its partner countries. In doing so, the priority areas identified under the new framework can be actively addressed in practical and tangible ways in order to build disaster resilience across the Asia-Pacific.

8. Conclusion

ADPC's comprehensive approach to reducing disaster risk, encompassing science, systems and application, parallels with the aims and objectives of the post-2015 framework on DRR in working towards a more holistic mode of DRR over the coming decades. The Center's science-based core programs look to strengthen the capacity of partner countries and organizations to assess and understand risk. Furthermore, programs focused on systems help develop the necessary tools and mechanisms needed to effectively manage risk. Meanwhile, application-oriented initiatives help facilitate the effective adoption and utilization of risk-reducing measures across the activities of ADPC's various country and organizational partners.

ADPC will utilize the valuable platform of the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan in March 2015 to assist in the review of its strategic direction. At this seminal event the Center will seek inputs from in-country experts and key actors to plot key gaps, challenges and priorities across the Asia-Pacific region. This mapping exercise will serve as a needs-based assessment, which can determine key areas of focus in view of the region's future DRR efforts and resilience building. The outcomes of this process will be used to inform the revision of the ADPC Strategy 2020 ahead of the 12th annual meeting of the RCC (to be held in Bhutan, June 2015) in order to seek the approval of committee members. This collaborative process, combining ADPC's own technical expertise and proven experience with crucial inputs from its in-country partners, underlines the organization's commitment to supporting the post-2015 framework for DRR over the coming decade.

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