Concept Note

Plenary Session: National Perspective on Disaster Risk Reduction; Sendai and Beyond

Background: India, due to its, physiographic and climatic conditions is one of the most disaster prone areas of the World. Nearly 59 per cent of the landmass is prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity. More than 40 million hectares (12 per cent of land) is prone to floods and river erosion. Of the nearly 7,500 km long coastline, close to 5,700 km is prone to cyclones and tsunamis. Nearly 68 percent of the cultivable area is vulnerable to drought. Large tracts in hilly regions are at risk from landslides and some are prone to snow avalanches. Vulnerability to disasters/emergencies of CBRN origin also exists. The interjection of the above hazards with human induced vulnerabilities such as concentration of people and assets, unplanned development, expanding population, industrialization and social and economic equities result in frequent disasters.

As a result of improvements in early warning systems and better community preparedness, disaster mortality, particularly with regards to hydro-meteorological hazards, is declining in India. The ten year moving average from 2006 to 2015 shows a clear decreasing trend of mortality.[1] But it is pertinent to note that during this period there was no major earthquake. Though loss of lives has been greatly reduced due to better preparedness and improved early warning capabilities, economic losses and the number of people affected are increasing over a period of time

The global assessment report (GAR) 2015, produced by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) estimates the expected average annual losses due to disasters in India to be about US $ 9.8 billion. In the year 2015 alone India suffered from 19 major natural disasters, particularly weather related disasters causing an economic loss of over US $ 3 billion. The increasing trend of the number of people affected and economic losses has the worst impact on the developing and least developed countries resulting in decades of development efforts wiped out in a few hours. Hence Disaster Risk Reduction, for a country like India, is not a choice but a need.

Sendai Framework and Disaster Risk Reduction: The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction has incorporated explicit recommendations for disaster risk reduction by focusing on four priority areas: understanding risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster reduction for resilience and Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Seven targets set by the framework such as reduction in losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries will measure the outcome of the efforts for reduction of disaster risk. The ten-point agenda for DRR given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi in the recently concluded Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), emphasizes the need to focus on mainstreaming DRR, to focus on reducing the risk for all, build local capacities, bringing greater international cohesion in disaster response and leveraging technology for risk mitigation and management.

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[1] During the time period 1999 to 2005, the 10-year average mortality peaked in 2005 at 7,851 and was at its lowest in 2015 at 2,223.

Disaster Risk Reduction in India: Issues and Challenges

Disaster risk reduction in India, which has been topping the list of the worst affected nations in disasters in the recent past, is important not only in the context of the country but also in the regional as well as global context. Post Indian Ocean tsunami, over a period of more than a decade, India has taken several initiatives including creating legal and institutional mechanisms for DRR. Disaster laws and policy instruments, setting up of special purpose vehicles at the National, State and District levels, focus on training and capacity building, improved early warning capabilities, enhanced communication networks and special projects for community based disaster management are some of the key initiatives undertaken. But are these initiatives enough to achieve the targets set up SFDRR? How are we going to face the emerging challenges and extreme weather events caused by climate change? What special measures need to be taken to combat the exponentially growing risks created by built environment, urban floods, heat island effects and unregulated development in the urban areas? How to integrate disaster risk reduction measures with Sustainable Development Goals and adaptation and mitigation for climate change impacts? The real challenges lie in quantifying the Sendai Targets, understanding risk at the macro and micro-levels for planning, revamping the existing mechanisms/ creation of new institutions to fight the ever increasing risks, aligning development programs with the larger objective of risk reduction, regulation and enforcement of techno-legal regimes, building local capacities, risk transfer through insurance and reinsurance, improving early warning and emergency communication capabilities and achieving a socially and economically inclusive risk reduction. The above challenges are compounded due to variations in the level of development among the Indian States and regions. The plenary session will focus on the above challenges and highlight the broad themes to be covered during the technical sessions.

SESSION PLAN

Chair: Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member NDMA
Co-chair: Shri.
Opening Remarks – By Session Chairperson/Co-Chair. (5 minutes)
✓ Presentation on
   Sendai priority areas, government of India's initiative in Disaster Risk Reduction, Prime Minister's ten-point agenda on DRR, and highlights of the broad themes to be covered in the subsequent technical sessions- Dr. V. Thiruppugazh, Advisor (Policy and Planning), NDMA (30 Minutes)
Open House (20 Minutes)
Closing Remarks – By Session Chairperson/Co-Chair. (5 minutes)