

## Concept Note

### **Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response and to Build Back Better in Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction**

#### Background

Response is defined as actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected. Effective, efficient and timely response relies on disaster risk-informed preparedness measures, including development of the response capacities of individuals, communities, organizations, countries and the international community. Recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation are a set of activities undertaken for restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, restoration of basic services, restoration or construction of critical infrastructure. It is imperative that we build back better, so that the recovery and reconstruction efforts are sustainable and disaster resilient. It is believed the disaster opens a window of opportunity for building back better with improved standards.

Sendai Framework insists on the need for effective response through a range of measures such as: strategies, policies, plans, improving early warning capabilities, involvement of stakeholders, creation of public awareness, improving the resilience of the existing and new infrastructure, training and capacity building and regular disaster preparedness, response and recovery exercises. Building back better according to the framework is incorporation of disaster risk management into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes, using the opportunities during the recovery phase to develop capacities that reduce disaster risk in the short, medium and long term, including through the development of measures such as land-use planning, structural standards improvement and economic and social sustainable development of affected areas.

#### **Response, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Recovery in India**

While a shift in focus from relief centric disaster management towards prevention and mitigation is important, India due to its vast geographical diversities, hazard profile, vulnerabilities has been focusing on improving post-disaster response and reconstruction, through various institutional mechanisms, policy and legal instruments, scientific and technological applications, augmentation of trained manpower and financial allocation. National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) with over 18000 people has become the largest trained force in the world fully dedicated for response. The State Disaster Response Forces (SDRF) and Fire and Emergency Services, primarily responsible for response in the states, have also improved their capacity in terms of equipment and expertise over a period of time.

NDMA, NIDM and NDRF and other state institutions have been carrying out trainings and drills on a continuous basis to build capacity to all stakeholders including home guards, civil defence volunteers and communities. Improved early warning capabilities of IMD, as seen in the case of cyclones Phailin and Hud Hud, have helped preparedness measures such as timely evacuation resulting in saving the

lives of thousands of people. The roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders have been clearly spelt out in the National, State and District Disaster Management Plans.

India has undertaken some major reconstruction and recovery programs over a period of two decades. Three major reconstruction programs undertaken: Post-earthquake reconstruction in Maharashtra and Gujarat and post-tsunami reconstruction in Tamil Nadu proved the capacities of the state and central governments in building back better. Some of the lessons learnt such as Owner-Driven Reconstruction from Gujarat have become global best practices. Comprehensive reconstruction programs undertaken post-Kosi flood and post-Uttarakhand floods were based on the philosophy of using the window created by the disaster for ushering in development.

### **Issues and Challenges**

Though the capacity for effective response has improved over a period of years, building local capacities still remains a major challenge. Urban floods are emerging as a new challenge. Early warning for floods with clear indication of the likely inundation levels also is an unmet need. Responding to CBRN disasters, forest fires, oil-spills and other forms of human induced disasters needs better preparedness at all levels. Social media has become a powerful tool to disseminate real time information and get details about rescue and relief needs. We saw in the recent disasters a surge of massive voluntary movements to help the affected people. The role of government in such efforts is not well defined yet. In addition harnessing the power of social media and crowd sourcing of information are also challenges for the states and central government.

The post-disaster period is complex, poorly understood, least anticipated, and is characterized by the implication of a wide range of people who have a vested interest.<sup>1</sup> Building back better needs a clear post-disaster reconstruction and recovery policy, a universally acceptable methodology for assessment of the post-disaster needs, a sound way to mobilize financial resources, providing technological solutions for low cost construction using locally available materials, creation of sustainable livelihoods and reconstruction of the houses and infrastructure with disaster resistant standards and the ability to continue the process of rebuilding for nearly a decade. While India offered many valuable lessons regarding building back better, there are many lessons to be learnt from the experience of other countries, particularly in urban reconstruction where there is very little experience within the country barring the exception of Gujarat earthquake reconstruction.

In the technical session 4 some of the above challenges and issues in response and reconstruction will be discussed with a view to enhance response capabilities and build back better in the aftermath of disasters.

### **SESSION PLAN**

**Chair:** *General N.C. Marwah, Member, NDMA*

**Co-chair:** *Shri. Arjun Katoch, Member, Advisory Committee, NDMA*

Opening Remarks – By Session Chairperson/Co-Chair. (5 minutes)

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<sup>1</sup> Gwenaël Jouannic, Denis Crozier, Tran Duc Minh Chloe, Zéhir Kolli, Fabrice Arki, Eric Matagne, Sandrine Arbizzi and Laetitia Bomperin, paper presented in FLOODrisk 2016 - 3rd European Conference on Flood Risk Management.

✓ Presentation on

Preparedness and early warning system- Dr. K.G.Ramesh, DG- IMD- 15 Minutes

Strengthening of response system (NDRF, Civil Defence, Home Guards, Fire Services, evacuation planning, mock drills and India Disaster Resource Network- Mr. R.K. Pachananda, DG,NDRF- 15 Minutes

Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Post-disaster needs assessment, psycho-social rehabilitation- Shri. Krishna S. Vatsa, UNDP, New York- 15 Minutes

Open House (20 Minutes)

Closing Remarks – By Session Chairperson/Co-Chair. (5 minutes)

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