



## **Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and the Pacific**

**Note by the secretariat prepared for the**

**Asia-Pacific Meeting on  
Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction:  
Changing Mindsets through Knowledge**

**Sendai, Japan, 22-23 April 2014**

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## **I. Overview**

This note provides background information on disability and disaster risk reduction and the respective normative frameworks. It considers key elements of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and provides a brief overview of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) in the Asian and Pacific region. It also outlines the next steps towards the development of the post-2015 DRR framework. Terms that are commonly used in the fields of disaster risk reduction and disability are listed with definitions in Annex 1.

## **II. Introduction: disability and disaster risk reduction**

### **A. Asia-Pacific disaster trends**

Asia and the Pacific is the most disaster prone region in the world. It is most seriously affected by all types of disasters, including those caused by climate change. It is estimated that over the past decade, 2.5 million people in the region have been affected by disasters and almost 800,000 have been killed (ESCAP and UNISDR, 2010). A person living in Asia and the Pacific is almost twice more likely to be affected by a disaster than a person living in Africa. This greater likelihood rises to almost six times when compared with a person living in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 30 times in the case of comparison with a person living in North America or Europe.

This trend is also reflected in the region's disaster-related economic losses. In 2011, losses caused by disasters in Asia and the Pacific represented 80 per cent of the global losses due to disasters, even though the region only generated a quarter of the world's GDP. Furthermore, according to the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012 (ESCAP and UNISDR, 2012), the vulnerability and exposure of people and assets to disasters is rising in countries of Asia and the Pacific. With rapid economic growth, cities, key infrastructure and businesses are growing very rapidly in areas prone to natural hazards. For example, cities on or near coast lines are exposed to disasters such as typhoons, storm surges and tsunamis. Losses have grown more than 16 times in value since 1970, while GDP increased only 13 times (ESCAP and UNISDR, 2012).

Disaster losses severely affect small-scale business owners and those employed in the informal sector, marginal farmers and poor households as they tend to lack buffers against sudden, external shocks. For example, Typhoon Ketsana caused USD 4.3 billion in damage in the Philippines, with 90 percent of the losses sustained by poor urban households (ESCAP and UNISDR, 2012).

### **B. Persons with disabilities and disasters**

Asia and the Pacific is also home to around 650 million persons with disabilities, who constitute an estimated 15 per cent of the overall population in the region. This represents nearly two thirds of the world's population of persons with disabilities.

The number of persons with disabilities is expected to rise over the next decades due to the unprecedented pace of population ageing and the close linkage between ageing and disability. The number of older persons in the region is projected to increase from 490 million in 2013 to 1.3 billion by 2050. In East and North-East Asia, one in four persons will be aged 60 and over by 2030, and one in three persons will be aged 60 and over by 2050. It is estimated that in some fast-ageing countries, such as China and the Republic of Korea, 80 per cent of persons with disabilities will be aged over 60 years by 2050 (ESCAP, 2012).

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by disasters. Estimates from the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011 indicate a mortality rate of 0.8% for the general population, as compared with 3.5 per cent for persons with disabilities (Japan Disability Forum, 2013).

Persons with disabilities are at higher risk due to a combination of factors. The physical and information environments are usually not designed to address accessibility needs. Such inaccessible environments exert overwhelmingly disabling effects on mobility, access to knowledge and comprehension. Thus, persons with disabilities are more likely to have poorer access to services, knowledge, community networks and other resources. With regard to disasters, the implications are life-threatening: inaccessibility renders difficult or impossible the making of informed decisions and the taking of timely and swift action in preparing for, and responding appropriately in the face of, disasters. This is a clear instance of simple “omission” that has disastrous consequences.

Many persons with disabilities live in relative invisibility and isolation and may not be recorded in any official register. Unless community members proactively seek them out and address access issues, they might not be included in risk and needs assessments, and community preparedness drills, even where such drills exist.

Furthermore, disasters create new numbers of persons with disabilities. For example, following the Haiti earthquake in 2010, it was estimated that 200,000 people acquired various types of impairment, out of 3 million who were affected, while 100,000 to 150,000 people died (ESCAP and UNISDR, 2012).

The first-ever United Nations global survey of how persons with disabilities cope with disasters (UNISDR, 2013) revealed that only 20 per cent could evacuate immediately without difficulty in the event of an immediate disaster. However, with sufficient time, that percentage almost doubles. The survey found that early warning public service announcements are often issued in formats and language that are not accessible. In most cases, evacuation routes, emergency exits/entrances, shelters and relief facilities cannot easily be used by persons with disabilities, even if they could immediately leave the place of danger. Hazards quickly become disasters when vulnerability is higher and there are no mechanisms in place to strengthen resilience.

The concept of, and approach to, disaster management have evolved; these are now more integrated and holistic, reflecting a deeper understanding of the impact that disasters have on people and their heterogeneous communities. The results of the

UNISDR 2013 global survey, as indicated by Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction on International Day for Disaster Reduction, 13 October 2013, “are shocking” in providing the timely revelation “that the key reason why a disproportionate number of disabled persons suffer and die in disasters is because their needs are ignored and neglected by the official planning process in the majority of situations ... this survey ... provides us with a new insight into how to build a world more resilient to disasters for both disabled and able-bodied people.” (UNISDR, 2013).

The survey also reveals that the majority of respondents either faced difficulties in moving away from danger or had communication difficulties. Most respondents had neither a personal disaster preparedness plan nor were they aware of a disaster management plan in their city/town/ community. Interestingly, half the respondents expressed a wish to participate in community disaster management. For Asia-Pacific, it is noteworthy that over half (55 per cent) of the 5,450 respondents to the survey were from this region.

The survey underscores that the current approaches to DRR continue to exclude one of the most at-risk communities (UNISDR, 2013).

### **C. Disability-inclusive disaster reduction, safety for all**

Disaster risk reduction that reflects a disability perspective and is inclusive of persons with diverse disabilities will not only save persons with disabilities, but also have wide-ranging benefits for all other social groups. This challenges all actors who have responsibility for any aspect of disaster risk reduction to look at what they do from the perspective of a user who is blind, who is deaf, who has learning disabilities, is a wheelchair user or who has multiple disabilities, as could be the case of increasing numbers of older persons. The design and planning of systems, protocols, signage and other means of public communication, standard operating procedures, and infrastructure that are disability inclusive have to be much clearer, as well as be considerably easier and safer for a wider range of users than is the case today in much of Asia-Pacific. Design, planning and preparation that address the access rights and needs of persons with disabilities, in accordance with universal design principles and available technical specifications, would pave the way to a gold standard for resilience building.

Communities would be better prepared for survival when systems, infrastructure and services are structured to fulfil accessibility requirements. For example, ensuring access to early warning announcements by blind or sight-impaired persons would benefit all other print-disabled persons, as well persons who have low or no literacy skills. Furthermore, designing evacuation protocols that persons with cognitive impairments can follow in an emergency requires a far higher degree of clarity that would facilitate use by most other community members in a panic situation, especially children and people who are not familiar with the locality. Designing disaster preparedness for persons with diverse disabilities would yield benefits in terms of the higher standards of clarity, usability and safety adhered to.

Disaster risk reduction would thus benefit from “universal design”. This concept refers to the design of products, environments, programmes and services so that they may be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design for particular groups or in specific conditions. Furthermore, evidence indicates that applying a universal design approach is not as costly as is often presumed, especially if it is considered at the planning stage rather than via retrofitting. For example, some studies conclude that costs for accommodating accessibility regulations are small in relation to a country’s gross domestic product (as low as 0.01%) and providing fully accessible facilities increases building costs by as little as 0.5% to 2%, if planned, designed and implemented from the outset (Wiman and Sandhu, 2004; Metts, 2000; Plantier-Royon, 2009).

#### **D. Post-disaster --- investing in the social sector**

A window of opportunity is available through post-disaster recovery and reconstruction measures for investing in disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction by allocating more resources under the overall umbrella of the social sector, such as for education, health and social protection.

Post-disaster recovery and reconstruction investments have in many instances been quite substantial because of contributions by donors, financial institutions and government contingency funds. In most countries, such post-disaster recovery and reconstruction investments have tended to be quite uneven between the economic and social sectors and miss the opportunity to address disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction. In Bangladesh, for example, while the social sector suffered 55 per cent of the damage and loss from Cyclone Sidr in 2007, it was only accorded 22.6 per cent of the funds in the needs assessments (Government of Bangladesh, 2008). This discrepancy in funding for economic recovery, as compared with that for social recovery, reflects and worsens widening levels of inequity. It also underlines the importance of dedicating more resources to the social sector not only in the post-disaster recovery process, but more importantly as an essential component of a country’s long-term inclusive and sustainable development strategy.

The 2008 Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar presents an interesting contrast. Women accounted for 61 per cent of deaths. Women were also affected differently during the recovery: as caretakers, women had most of the responsibility for sick and injured family members, while having less access to formal recovery assistance. Furthermore, the death or disability of a spouse resulted in women becoming their families’ sole sources of income. While the social sector suffered 24.1 per cent of the damage and losses from Cyclone Nargis, it was accorded 85.7 per cent of funds in the needs assessments (Tripartite Core Group, 2008). Giving higher priority to investing in the social sector was used for achieving a balanced, long-term social and economic recovery.

### **III. Global and regional policy frameworks and disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction**

#### **A. Disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)**

UNISDR defines disaster risk reduction as “the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.”

Strong commitment to promoting disaster risk reduction has been expressed by national leaders at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe, Japan (2005) and re-affirmed at the Asian Ministerial Conferences on Disaster Reduction (five held since 2005), as well as in regional and sub-regional workshops.

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), adopted in 2005, as an outcome of the Second WCDR provides a comprehensive approach to reducing disaster risks. The expected outcome is “The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries”. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) system provides a vehicle for cooperation among governments, organizations and civil society actors to assist in the implementation of the HFA. As part of this, HFA Progress Reports are prepared and submitted by member states and inter-governmental organizations on a biennial basis. The objective of the review process is to serve as a mechanism for collecting and receiving continuous feedback from countries. It also serves to assist in assessing progress, gaps and challenges in the efforts to implement the HFA.

Although the HFA refers to vulnerability and highlights the increased vulnerability of certain groups, including women and children, no reference is made to persons with disabilities. This omission exists despite the fact that: (a) all social groups --- be they women, children, slum dwellers, migrants, ethnic minorities or others, and regardless of economic and social status --- have members who live with disabilities; (b) globally, it is estimated that one in six person lives with some form of disability, and with population ageing, combined with other factors, the numbers of persons with disabilities are increasing.

#### **B. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

The participation of persons with disabilities in all development endeavours, including disaster risk reduction, is highlighted in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Article 11 of the CRPD states that:

“States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with

disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.”

Also pertinent is article 9 of the CRPD which refers to the accessibility, for persons with disabilities, of the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.

In addition, article 32 of the CRPD highlights the need to ensure that “international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities”.

States Parties are mandated to report periodically on the implementation of the Convention. A review of reports from 11 member States in the region<sup>1</sup> reveals limited progress on implementing Article 11. Some parties report that efforts were made to meet the special needs of persons with disabilities after disasters occurred, for example the Government of China, after the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan Province, provided priority resettlement to persons with disabilities affected by the disaster. It also provided medical care and rehabilitation services to those who became disabled in the course of the disaster. Government efforts included the establishment of a rehabilitation centre and five assistive device service centres for persons with disabilities in the area. In Mongolia, in cases of natural hazards, such as “dzud” or particularly severe winter, disability benefits are prolonged by at least one year, and households with persons with disabilities are provided with family medical kits.

However with few exceptions such as putting in place procedures for evacuation of persons with disabilities<sup>2</sup> little work has been reported on involving persons with disabilities in planning and preparedness activities, and implementing disability-focused preparedness or risk reduction activities.

### **C. Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific<sup>3</sup>**

At the regional level, to build more disability-inclusive societies for 650 million persons with disabilities, the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (hereinafter referred to as the Incheon Strategy) was adopted by Governments at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons,

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<sup>1</sup> As of 15 April 2014: Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, Cook Islands, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Turkmenistan.

<sup>2</sup> Armenia and the Republic of Korea.

<sup>3</sup> As contained in ESCAP resolution 69/13 of 1 May 2013 on Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

2003-2012, held at Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 29 October to 2 November 2012. It was subsequently endorsed by all 62 Governments of the ESCAP membership through Commission resolution 69/13 of 1 May 2013. The Incheon Strategy provides the region and the world with the first set of regionally-agreed, disability-inclusive development goals.

**Box 1. Goal 7 Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management<sup>4</sup>**

**Target 7.A** Strengthen disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction planning

**Target 7.B** Strengthen implementation of measures on providing timely and appropriate support to persons with disabilities in responding to disasters

**Core indicators**

- 7.1 Availability of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction plans
- 7.2 Availability of disability-inclusive training for all relevant service personnel
- 7.3 Proportion of accessible emergency shelters and disaster relief sites

**Supplementary indicators**

- 7.4 Number of persons with disabilities who died or were seriously injured in disasters
- 7.5 Availability of psychosocial support service personnel that have the capacity to assist persons with disabilities affected by disasters
- 7.6 Availability of assistive devices and technologies for persons with disabilities in preparing for and responding to disaster

The Incheon Strategy builds on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. It comprises 10 goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators. Goal 7 is on ensuring disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management. The targets and indicators for Goal 7 are contained in Box 1.

The Incheon Strategy is a regional framework that guides policy making and action in the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. Its overall purpose is the improvement of the quality of life and fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities. The ESCAP secretariat is mandated to report every three years until the end of the Decade in 2022, on progress in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and the Incheon Strategy.

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<sup>4</sup> Excerpted from the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, targets and indicators for Goal 7.

A survey that ESCAP sent to all its regional members and associate members concerning the implementation of the Incheon Strategy and availability of national baseline data (mid-April to June 2013) showed that Goal 7 was one of the goals with the lowest data records. Responses were received from 25 countries and areas.<sup>5</sup>

In particular, the following countries reported having data for at least one indicator under Goal 7: Brunei Darussalam; China; Cook Islands; Georgia, Macao, China; Myanmar; Northern Mariana Islands; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Thailand; Turkey; Tuvalu. In addition, the following countries responded positively on the availability of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction plans: Brunei Darussalam, Georgia, Northern Mariana Islands; Republic of Korea; Thailand.

Of direct relevance are key findings from the UNISDR 2013 Survey on Living with Disabilities and Disasters. They indicate that the vast majority of respondents (86 per cent) from 137 countries stated that they had not participated in community disaster management and risk reduction processes currently in place in their communities.<sup>6</sup>

Some governments have adopted inclusive policies; however, the policies remain to be implemented. Stigma and discrimination associated with disability prevail, resulting in the denial of basic rights and services, including access to shelter and relief.

#### IV. New paradigm on disaster risk reduction

The Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Resilient Community, Resilient Nation laid a strong foundation for addressing disaster risk reduction through a comprehensive approach.

The new paradigm for the post-2015 phase envisages goals that are integrated, multi-sectoral, positive and aspirational, as for secure, healthy, wealthy and resilient communities and nations, with a direct and mutually reinforcing link to the proposed post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and specific targets. The Rio+20 Summit<sup>7</sup> was the major milestone for recognizing disaster risk reduction in the sustainable development agenda. The Rio+20 outcome – The Future We Want, calls for stronger political commitment to ensure that disaster risk reduction and building the resilience of communities and nations are addressed with a "*renewed sense of urgency in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication*" --- this strengthened the momentum on

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<sup>5</sup> **East and North-East Asia:** China; Macao, China; Mongolia; Republic of Korea. **North and Central Asia:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Uzbekistan. **Pacific:** Australia, Cook Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Tuvalu. **South-East Asia:** Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand. **South and South-West Asia:** Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey.

<sup>6</sup> UNISDR (2014).

<sup>7</sup> Rio+20 Summit is the short name for the [United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development](#), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012.

building disaster resilience within the framework of a green economy and sustainable development, with more integrated and coordinated approaches. It also brought in several innovative approaches to enabling greater integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at all levels. Significantly, this included the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into national development strategies and investment, strengthening of local governance, and stronger partnerships with civil society. There is a fresh opportunity to capitalize on green economy paradigms that provide political support, as well as additional resources to strengthen risk governance capacities, including those accounting for disaster loss and assessing risk (United Nations, 2012).

## **V. Disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR): situation analysis**

There are standards and principles drawn from the Sphere Handbook<sup>8</sup> and the CRPD that can be used to guide the design and implementation of disability-inclusive risk reduction strategies (WHO, 2013), as follows:

### **A. Equality and non-discrimination**

Emergency risk management should be inclusive of all those in need, particularly those who are most vulnerable, such as persons with disabilities. Discrimination on the basis of disability means “any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation.”

### **B. Accessibility**

Persons with disabilities should have “access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas.”

### **C. Participation and dignity**

Persons with disabilities have the right to participate in the assessment, design, implementation and monitoring of emergency programmes; make their own choices; and be recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make before, during and after an emergency.

### **D. Resourcefulness and capacity**

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<sup>8</sup> The Sphere Project and its Handbook are well known for introducing considerations of quality and accountability to humanitarian response. Initiated in 1997 by a group of humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, they aimed to improve the quality of their actions during disaster response and to be held accountable for them.

Many persons with disabilities have resources, knowledge and capabilities to make meaningful contributions to emergency risk management. They also have the right to receive support and assistance to develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities required to prepare for, and protect themselves from, hazards, and to maximize their ability for survival and recovery following an emergency.

The following suggestions on ensuring disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction are inspired by two main sources:<sup>9</sup>

1. **Identification and data** concerning persons with disabilities are necessary for designing and implementing disability-inclusive DRR policies and programmes. **Strengthen** national information systems to be disability inclusive. **Use** participatory and vulnerability capacity assessments to collate information on persons with disabilities and to identify existing risks.
2. **Consultation with, and representation of**, persons with disabilities are required in the management of disasters and the development of DRR strategies. **Strengthen** the capacity and resources of disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs) and actively **involve** them in all stages of disaster management.
3. **Specific types of support** are needed for persons with disabilities in emergencies. **Ensure** inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster relief. **Reach** agreement on minimum standards for disability-inclusive relief. **Train** relief workers on disability-inclusive relief work. **Include** disability audits in evaluations. **Design** and **implement** accessible and inclusive warning systems, information and physical support.
4. **Knowledge, skills and awareness** concerning disability must be improved to counter negative stereotyping of persons with disabilities. **Engage** persons with diverse disabilities. **Train** staff members and volunteers on how to communicate with, engage and support persons with disabilities in emergencies. **Raise** awareness of disability issues within communities. **Identify** local champions to support community-level disability inclusive DRR.
5. **Engagement** of persons with disabilities in developing DRR strategies is key to ensuring that these are effective for everyone in the community, including persons with disabilities.

There are some good practices and lessons learned on DiDRR, as well as normative research on what could be done to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are appropriately considered. Their main feature is effective collaboration with DPOs or other civil society organizations. Examples of such experiences are highlighted in Box 2.

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<sup>9</sup> The recommendations are drawn from or take into consideration information as contained in the references cited for WHO, 2013; and Sightsavers, 2012 (background documentation for the Global Thematic Consultation on the post-2015 development agenda: Addressing Inequalities).

## Box 2. DiDRR experiences in the Asian and Pacific region

**Japan:** An accessible evacuation manual in Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) multimedia format for tsunami and heavy rain disasters has been created in Japan by the Assistive Technology Development Organization (ATDO) for persons with intellectual disabilities. The multimedia manual explains the need for evacuation in the event of a natural disaster. It is designed so that it may be adapted to include familiar surroundings in the respective locality that the user may easily recognize in the planned evacuation route. Dissemination of the manual is planned in more locations in Japan and in the Asian and Pacific region. ATDO also plans to produce a manual for use by communities affected by typhoon and heavy rain disasters.

**Viet Nam:** Malteser International and its local partners have increased the participation of persons with disabilities in community-based disaster risk management through using a manual on inclusive disaster risk management. This was achieved through a pilot project implemented in 47 villages in Quang Nam province, which created the manual to complement a national project on community-based disaster risk reduction. The project clearly showed that decision makers needed to be more aware of inclusive disaster risk management. To address this need, the project will conduct advocacy activities and train government staff members and trainers.

**Bangladesh:** the Center for Disability in Development led a project on disability-inclusive DRR which examined the impact that disasters had had on persons with disabilities, in order to adapt DRR processes.

**India:** through the Emmanuel Hospital Association and various disaster preparedness projects, local community volunteers, healthcare and educational institutions, as well as government and civil society organizations were trained on how to make disaster risk management disability inclusive.

**Indonesia:** the choice of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to use a football stadium in Banda Aceh for distributing food and water proved to be more inclusive than standard shelters.

**Pakistan:** the World Bank earthquake disability project took an integrated approach to reducing vulnerability and poverty and targeted capacity building of DPOs and networks to ensure support could be provided to persons with disabilities.

**Philippines:** the National Library, National Council on Disability Affairs, and civil society organizations are embarking on an initiative to archive the stories of survivors of Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), including those with disabilities. The stories to be collected will be copyrighted by each author (interviewee). At the outset, the archives will be stored in accessible format and shared at the community level. Next, the National Library will coordinate and share the stories through a digital library network to preserve them for future generations and to share them with the rest of the world.

**Thailand:** the Council of Persons with Disabilities Thailand was involved in national emergency and preparedness planning. The Royal Thai Armed Forces involved persons with disabilities in all planning meetings and arranged training sessions for rescuers on how best to support persons with disabilities.

## VI. Towards a post-2015 DRR framework

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities for Disasters ends in 2015. UNISDR has been requested through United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 66/199, A/res/67/209, and A/res/68/211 to facilitate the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (the Hyogo Framework for Action 2 or HFA2 “Managing risks to achieve resilience”), which will be considered at the Third WCDR in Japan from 14 to 18 March 2015. A timeline for the post-2015 DRR framework is contained in Annex 2. The emerging trends of the HFA2 discourse emphasize achievement of the outcome of secure, healthy, wealthy and resilient nations and communities with three strategic goals, namely:

- Risk prevention and the pursuit of development pathways that minimize disaster risk generation;
- Risk reduction, i.e., actions to address existing accumulation of disaster risk;
- Strengthened resilience, i.e., actions that enable nations and communities to absorb loss and damage, minimize impact and bounce forward.

Disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction fits well into this HFA2 context. In this regard, it is important to integrate DiDRR appropriately into public policy emanating from the overall context of strengthening resilience.

Consultations on the draft of HFA2 started in 2013 with the drafting of the “Proposed Elements for Consideration in the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction”. The second round of HFA2 consultations are ongoing and have identified seven key areas for consideration:

1. Building community resilience – turning vulnerability into resilience;
2. DRR, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Integration;
3. Local actions;
4. Vulnerability, gender equality;
5. Addressing underlying causes of risks;
6. Governance and Accountabilities;
7. Engaging the private sector.

For 2014, in Asia and the Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan, 21-23 April 2014), will be the key forum for promoting the sharing of DiDRR knowledge and practices.

In addition, other regional meetings and activities include the Second Expert Group Meeting on Improving Disaster Data towards Resilience in Asia and the Pacific, also to be held in Sendai, Japan, in October 2014.

There are opportunities associated with these key fora to advocate and feed into the development and adoption of an outcome document on DiDRR, to be submitted to the 2014 Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management (Suva, 2-4 June 2014), the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR (6AMCDRR) (Bangkok, 22-26 June 2014), as well as to

feed into the regional, subregional and global intergovernmental preparatory processes towards the development of HFA2, which has the potential to be the world's first disability-inclusive global DRR framework.

The Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APCDRR) is held every two years and brings together Ministers in charge of disaster risk management, governments, communities and other stakeholders from the Asian and Pacific region to reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of the HFA. The theme for the 6AMCDRR is: "Promoting investments for resilient nations and communities", with three sub-themes:

- Enhance resilience at local levels;
- Increase public investments for disaster and climate risk management to protect development gains;
- Private sector role – public and private partnerships for disaster risk reduction.

Possible outcomes include: a declaration on DRR and HFA implementation 2014-2015, supported by Stakeholder Statements of Commitment; formal inputs by the region on the draft HFA2 document; proposal for engaging with stakeholders for the 3WCDR and obtaining commitments for HFA2 implementation; and a compilation of sound practices in Asia and the Pacific on how to do DRR, especially to address the issues brought up in HFA2 consultations as the region's contribution to 3WCDRR and to shape the implementation of HFA2.

The final draft of the post-HFA framework will be submitted for consideration at the 3WCDR (Sendai, Japan, 14-18 March 2015). Several thousand participants are expected. The main objective of 3WCDR is generate a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document (HFA2). The United Nations Secretary-General will submit a report on the 3WCDR to the United Nations General Assembly, with a recommendation for the United Nations General Assembly to adopt the HFA2.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Governments in the Asian and Pacific region have recognized the importance of disability-inclusive DRR. Initial steps are being taken in this direction, yet clearly much more needs to be done.

The Asia-Pacific Meeting on Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction: Changing Mindsets through Knowledge, to be held in Sendai, Japan, on 22 and 23 April 2014 will provide an opportunity for both Governments and civil society organizations in Asia and the Pacific to consider the issues in some depth as a step forward in promoting the inclusion of the disability dimension in the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.

The outcome of the April 2014 Sendai Meeting will be shared with those listed below for consideration and follow-up action, as appropriate, in opportunities that exist for further advocacy and consultations, and importantly the drafting of the HFA2 and the post-2015 development agenda:

1. UNISDR;
2. ESCAP members and associate members;
3. Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022;<sup>10</sup>
4. Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations.

In follow-up to the April 2014 Sendai Meeting, it is envisaged that the ESCAP secretariat will continue to advocate disability inclusion in the post-2015 DRR framework and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. It will do so through further building its partnership with the above-mentioned entities. In this regard, the secretariat, in cooperation with its partners, will seek to harness opportunities presented in the coming months to make a distinct difference to the survival and quality of life of 650 million persons with disabilities and their communities and nations in the most populous and most disaster prone region in the world. Those opportunities include the following:<sup>11</sup>

- 2014 Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management (Suva, 2 to 4 June 2014);
- 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Bangkok, 22 to 26 June 2014);
- DESA Forum on Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (New York, USA, 11 June 2014).

Disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction saves all lives. For disaster resilience, everyone must be part of the solution.

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<sup>10</sup> See Annex 3 for the membership of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.

<sup>11</sup> See Annex 2. Towards a post-2015 DRR Framework.

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## **Annex I. Definitions and terminology**

### **Accessibility**

In the case of a facility, readily usable by a particular individual; in the case of a programme or activity, presented or provided in such a way that a particular individual can participate, with or without assistive devices (auxiliary aids); in the case of electronic resources, accessible with or without assistive computer technology.

### **Acceptable risk**

The level of potential losses that a society or a community considers acceptable, given existing conditions (social, economic, political, cultural, technical and environmental).

### **Adaptation**

The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or fully uses beneficial opportunities.

### **Biological hazard**

Process or phenomenon of organic origin or conveyed by biological vectors, including exposure to pathogenic micro-organisms, toxins and bioactive substances that may cause loss of life, injury, illness or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

### **Building code**

A set of ordinances or regulations and associated standards intended to control aspects of the design, construction, materials, alteration and occupancy of structures that are necessary for ensuring human safety and welfare, including resistance to collapse and damage.

### **Capacity**

The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within a community, society or organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals.

### **Climate change**

1. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as: "a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use".

2. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”.

### **Community Based Disaster Risk Management (DRM)**

A process where at-risk communities are actively engaged in all stages of DRM, in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their capacities. This means that people are at the heart of decision making and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities, including those who are the most vulnerable.

### **Contingency planning**

A management process that analyzes specific potential events or emerging situations that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses to such events and situations.

### **Coping capacity**

The ability of people, organizations and systems, using available skills and resources, to face and manage adverse conditions, emergencies or disasters.

### **Corrective disaster risk management\*<sup>12</sup>**

Management activities that address and seek to correct or reduce disaster risks which are already present.

### **Critical facilities**

The primary physical structures, technical facilities and systems which are socially, economically or operationally essential to the functioning of a society or community, both in routine circumstances and in the extreme circumstances of an emergency.

### **Disability**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

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<sup>12</sup> \* = The asterisk denotes an emerging new concept that is not in widespread use but is of growing professional relevance; the definition of such a term remains to be widely consulted upon and may change in the future.

Source: <[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/7817\\_UNISDRTerminologyEnglish.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyEnglish.pdf)>

**Disaster**

A serious disruption to the functioning of a community or society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which the affected community cannot cope with using its own resources.

**Disaster risk**

The potential disaster losses, in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period.

**Disaster risk management**

The systematic process of using administrative directives, organizations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

**Disaster risk reduction**

The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

**Disaster risk reduction plan\***

A document prepared by an authority, sector, organization or enterprise that sets out goals and specific objectives for reducing disaster risks, together with related actions to accomplish these objectives.

**Early warning system**

The set of capacities needed to generate and disseminate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities and organizations threatened by a hazard to prepare and to act appropriately and in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of harm or loss.

**Emergency services**

The group of specialized agencies that has specific responsibilities and objectives regarding serving and protecting people and property in emergency situations.

**Exposure**

People, property, systems, or other elements present in hazard zones that are thereby subject to potential losses.

**Extensive risk\***

The widespread risk associated with the exposure of dispersed populations to repeated or persistent hazard conditions of low or moderate intensity, often of a highly localized nature, which can lead to debilitating cumulative disaster impacts.

**Geological hazard**

Geological process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**Hazard**

A dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**Impairment**

In the context of health experience, an impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function.

**Intensive risk\***

The risk associated with the exposure of large concentrations of people and economic activities to intense hazard events, which can lead to potentially catastrophic disaster impacts involving high mortality and asset loss.

**Knowledge and information**

Information through various channels may be interpreted differently, based on the knowledge that the recipient has. Knowledge is a determining factor in making decisions. For example, an early warning to urge evacuation is evaluated by individuals based on their knowledge. The decision that each individual makes may differ, if the individuals do not have the same knowledge base for making a decision.

**Mitigation**

The lessening or limitation of the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters.

**Natural hazard**

Natural process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**Preparedness**

The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.

**Prevention**

The outright avoidance of adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters.

**Recovery**

The restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors.

**Residual risk**

The risk that remains in unmanaged form, even when effective disaster risk reduction measures are in place, and for which emergency response and recovery capacities must be maintained.

**Resilience**

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

**Response**

The provision of emergency services and public assistance 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.

**Risk**

The combination of the probability of an event and its negative consequences.

**Risk assessment**

A methodology to determine the nature and extent of risk by analyzing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability that together could potentially harm exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend.

**Risk management**

The systematic approach and practice of managing uncertainty to minimize potential harm and loss.

**Sustainable development**

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

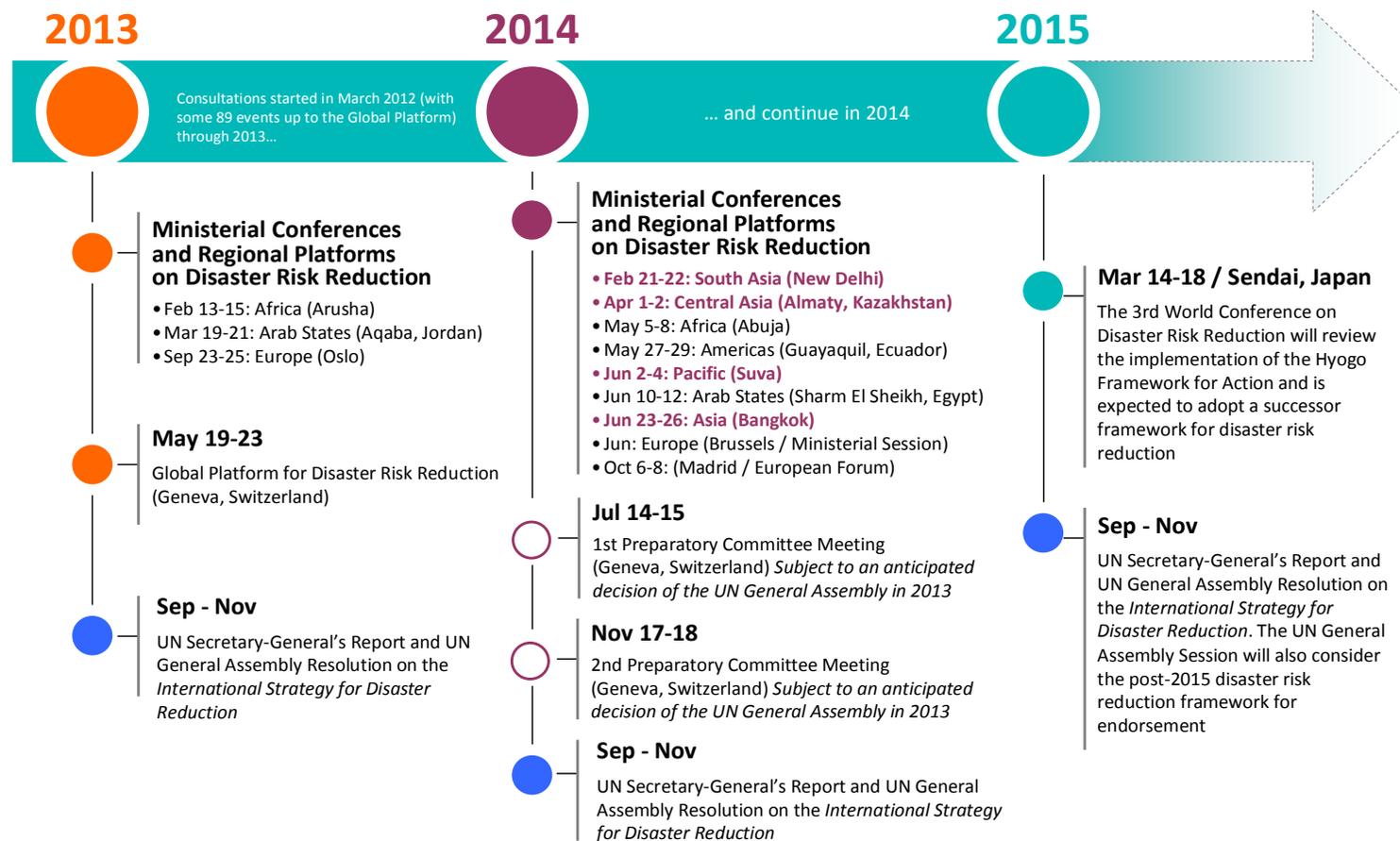
**Universal design**

Designing programmes, services, tools, and facilities so that they are useable, without modification, by the widest range of users possible, taking into account the diversity of abilities and disabilities that exist in the general population of potential users.

**Vulnerability**

The characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard

## Annex II. Towards a post-2015 DRR framework<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: UNISDR <<http://www.preventionweb.net/posthfa>>. The SAARC HFA2 Consultation (New Delhi, Feb 21-22) has been added to this UNISDR diagram.

**Annex III. Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022**

**Composition of the Working Group on the  
Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022  
First 5 years of the Decade (2013-2017)**

**Members**

**15 Government Members:**

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. China
4. Fiji
5. India
6. Indonesia
7. Japan
8. Kiribati and Samoa share a seat (Samoa: first 2.5 years; Kiribati: second 2.5 years)
9. Malaysia
10. Mongolia
11. Pakistan
12. Philippines
13. Republic of Korea
14. Russian Federation
15. Thailand

**15 Civil Society Organization (CSO) Members:**

1. Asia and Pacific Disability Forum
2. Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability
3. ASEAN Disability Forum
4. Asia-Pacific DPO United
5. Central Asia Disability Forum
6. South Asian Disability Forum
7. Pacific Disability Forum
8. Disabled People's International Asia-Pacific
9. Inclusion International Asia-Pacific Region
10. World Blind Union Asia-Pacific
11. World Federation of the Deaf Regional Secretariat in Asia and the Pacific
12. World Federation of the Deafblind Asia and the Pacific
13. World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry
14. Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) Consortium
15. Rehabilitation International Asia Pacific Region

## Observers

### **1 Government Observer:**

1. Myanmar

### **3 CSO Observers:**

1. ASEAN Autism Network
2. Christian Blind Mission
3. Community-based Rehabilitation Asia-Pacific Network