Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2)

Report from 2013 Global Platform Consultations

October 2013

UNISDR

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Introduction

The Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 19 to 23 May 2013. One of the primary purposes of the Session was to provide an opportunity for participants to contribute their thoughts and suggestions on the future of disaster risk reduction post-2015. These contributions are building on the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and providing substance for a successor framework beyond 2015, also known as HFA2.

The discussion on the HFA2 at the Global Platform was the culmination of consultations by stakeholders over the course of 2012-2013 including at regional level platforms. Further consultations, discussions and presentations were made during the sessions at the Global Platform For example, a whole day of HFA2 consultations with stakeholders was held on 20 May. Two informal plenaries discussed HFA2 on 21-22 May, and many events had HFA2 as a backdrop.

This document provides a synopsis of the discussions held during the Global Platform and the documents submitted in support of those consultations. It is meant to provide a summary distillation of what was said and does not, therefore, include detail of all the interventions. It gives the gist of the issues raised and proposals made with a view to developing HFA2.

Findings

All the noted interventions are organized around twelve categories. This has been done in order to facilitate readability and to provide the reader with a coherent narrative. They are:

    I.   The Importance of Community-level Involvement
    II. Targeting and Including the Most Vulnerable Populations
    III. Women as Leaders
    IV. Children and Youth: New Generation of Opportunity
    V. Health
    VI. Integrating Climate Change Adaptation, Development and Disaster Risk Reduction
    VII. The Role of Science
    VIII. Knowledge-Sharing and Education
    IX. Capacity-Building: Financing, Risk Assessment, Preparedness and Early Warning
    X. Private Sector Involvement in Disaster Risk Reduction
    XI. Political Will and Leadership
    XII. Governance, Accountability, Transparency and Inclusiveness

It has been accepted almost universally that HFA2 should build on the achievements of HFA and other international agreements. The efforts to implement HFA will have to continue. Accordingly, this document assumes some knowledge of what HFA has already accomplished.

I.   The Importance of Community-level Involvement

Throughout the discussions, and in many of the supporting documents, participants emphasized the central importance of focusing on local communities and of involving them in disaster risk reduction planning and implementation. This was reiterated continually. Disasters affect people and people live in communities, whether in urban settings or in more isolated surroundings. Community resilience is

thus fundamental, and HFA2 needs to be more people-centred by giving this top priority. Disaster risk reduction must be located where people are hurting.

People have gained experience in dealing with disasters because they have had to, and the knowledge and expertise they have acquired is invaluable to effective disaster risk reduction. This local knowledge, including wisdom obtained from indigenous populations, is a welcome supplement to scientific knowledge. Measures must be taken under HFA2 to ensure that local knowledge and expertise play a central role in disaster risk reduction planning and implementation at all geographic and political levels.

While there is already some community participation in disaster risk reduction, it has been relatively low as compared with the possibilities available for it to grow. This participation needs to be measured in order to facilitate identifying the areas where it can be increased. One important way to increase participation is at the grass roots level, promoting local awareness of the HFA2 and enlisting community support for its goals and measures. Others are to document local experiences better and to make a principle out of giving priority to local DRR mechanisms in national planning.

More specifically, community participation in disaster risk reduction planning and implementation needs to be formalized and institutionalized, and doing this requires leadership. For that, local governments need to be empowered more fully under HFA2 and provided with the resources they need to mobilize and organize their constituent populations.

This means that the relationship between central and local governments regarding disaster risk reduction has to be an important focus of HFA2, as does managing that relationship. The relationship needs to be built from the bottom up, with community ownership of disaster risk reduction as one of its guiding principles. In a practical sense, this entails providing various incentives for de-centralizing disaster risk reduction planning and budgets, thereby providing a material basis for implementing the principle of local priority.

One difficulty that comes to the fore when taking this approach is that local environments are always multi-risk when seen from the ground rather than from the heights of central planning. A way to deal with this initially is to make disaster risk reduction planning a multi-stakeholder affair, including perspectives from everyone in the discussion and identifying ways that local populations have responded to disasters in the past and are handling them in the present.

Some thing to keep in mind in this regard is that a very large proportion of disasters (92% by some estimates) are relatively small and recurring (also known as extensive risk). Even though people experience these events as part of their daily lives, the cumulative effects of recurring disasters are generally greater than they are for one-off, larger ones. These small disasters, which are far from seeming small to the people who suffer them, very often go unreported and are therefore invisible beyond the specific localities where they occur. People who are used to having recurring disasters ignored may be wary of any outside intervention. Paying more attention to these smaller, frequently occurring events may lessen local resistance to proactive preparedness programmes and to coordinated mitigation efforts.

Moreover, by including communities more completely in planning and implementing these programmes from the start, their sense of ownership of disaster risk reduction will be enhanced. Community ownership is thus extremely important to achieving disaster risk reduction at the local level, and HFA2 must take this into account.

A number of suggestions have been made on the role of culture in disaster risk reduction. It was suggested that indigenous knowledge be joined with science to inform disaster risk reduction at the

community level and to enhance resilience so that disaster risk reduction can benefit from traditional practices that have proven themselves over time. These practices tend to be more respectful of nature and may contribute to devising nature-based solutions. Local governments can encourage this and should be empowered to do so.

Culture plays an irreplaceable role as a source of meaning and identity for communities and individuals. Cultural sensitivity is essential to making disaster risk reduction effective, particularly in raising awareness and in disaster risk reduction education at all age levels. Programmes have to be tailored to the communities where they will operate, so the language used to inform must respect people's cultural norms and practices as much as possible. Otherwise there may be resistance to the measures proposed. This entails making a serious effort to understand the influence of culture on shaping perceptions of risk and then adapting that understanding to each community, a formidable but essential task. Local governments can take a leadership role in this effort.

Urbanization has profound effects on the communities and this is a topic requiring much research, reflection, and practical action. Because it is expected that 80% of the world's population will live in cities or their agglomerations by 2050, the multi-faceted problems this entails for disaster risk reduction need to be enumerated and investigated, and responses must be attempted even if at first they are only provisional. Urbanization must be a concern of HFA2. It is not a subject that can wait.

Communities in urban areas are suffering the burgeoning effects of urbanization, while rural communities suffer from isolation. Both, however, can benefit from local early warning systems and need to be educated in disaster preparation and response using those systems. This education must be done using simple, accessible language that connects directly with the particular circumstances of each community. Likewise, local risk information needs to be improved, along with disaster damage and loss data, and public access to this information must be enhanced.

Thus, while the overall impacts of disasters may at times appear intractable, there are nonetheless any number of actions that can ameliorate many of these issues and provide immediate help to actual people. By starting with the people themselves, in the communities where they live, these actions can be identified and implemented successfully.

II. Targeting and Including the Most Vulnerable Populations

The principle of giving priority to the community level and of having a people-centred HFA2 must be joined to a more specific target of attention within the general category of 'people', namely, the most vulnerable sections of the population. These vulnerable groups, which include poor people, people with disabilities, the elderly and the sick, along with minorities, children and indigenous populations, are likely to be affected most strongly by disasters and yet they have the least ability to prepare for or respond to them.

HFA2 needs to enable and encourage full participation of people disproportionately affected by disasters and should embody the principles of social inclusion and human rights. The perspectives of the most vulnerable should be included in both disaster risk reduction planning and implementation, and their contributions should be incorporated in a community-wide integration of disaster risk reduction. Their representatives should also play a major role, including leadership, in national disaster risk reduction arrangements. In conjunction with this, the relationship between disaster risk reduction and human rights needs to be explored and practical measures taken to strengthen it.

To these reasonably stable vulnerable populations we should add the people who have been displaced by disasters. These people do not simply disappear. Many have been resettled, but since in most cases they have lost their traditional livelihoods, resettlement has often increased their poverty

and vulnerability even though it might have reduced their exposure to disaster. HFA2 should address displacement pragmatically as well as programmatically, promoting better knowledge about displaced people while helping to provide them with habitable lodging.

In this regard, HFA2 should encourage and enable universal design for all new building during disaster recovery, for example after earthquakes and flooding. This type of design is intended to reflect the interests of the entire community, particularly people with disabilities along with the elderly and the infirm. Its principles include equitable use, i.e. accessibility for people of diverse abilities; flexibility to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences; simple and intuitive usability; perceptible information; tolerance for error so as to minimize the adverse effects of accidents or unintended use; low physical effort so that people of differing strengths can all use the structure; and enough size and space to accommodate everyone's approach and use. In this effort, persons with disabilities, along with the elderly and the infirm, should be encouraged to contribute their knowledge and perspectives, as they should be in all risk reduction undertakings.

One of the difficulties in helping vulnerable populations participate in disaster risk reduction, particularly those mired in poverty, lies in moving them from simply responding to disasters to taking a more proactive, prevention and preparedness-oriented stance. In a larger sense, there is a need to connect disaster risk reduction with various parts of the MDGs, which would contribute to integrating disaster risk reduction with development, a topic taken up later in this document. For their part, national governments must be more generous in sharing their resources with under-resourced communities within their borders, while rich countries need to share more with poor ones to sustain and expand disaster risk reduction.

Poverty, especially the extreme kind, is one of the important underlying factors to be dealt with in reducing disaster risk. Very poor communities and their populations tend to live in the most dangerous and least desirable parts of the planet and do not have the wherewithal to build themselves protection from natural hazards. They have little control over land use management and are also disproportionately subject to human-made disasters such as pollution because they are relatively powerless to resist toxic materials dumping and unsafe methods of raw materials extraction and industrial production. Improvements in governance, particularly with respect to accountability, inclusiveness and equity, would be an important first step in alleviating the problem of lack of control.

Likewise, poor communities are the most likely to be affected by wars, which tend to occur overwhelmingly in relatively poorer countries and regions. Moreover, they are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The people who are most affected by disasters are not primarily those who created the problems. Being poor and vulnerable is not the only risk problem; we need to keep in mind the affluent generators of risk.

One ameliorative task was to look at the impact of reporting on some countries (particularly poorer countries and Small Island Developing States) in the design of an international instrument like the HFA2. Some new thinking in terms of reporting, purpose, outcomes, direct benefit and more practical support to countries regarding disaster risk reduction would be beneficial.

III. Children and Youth: New Generation of Opportunity

Children depend on adults for personal development and even for survival and international agreements to protect them and to ensure their human rights. As far as HFA2 is concerned, they deserve a double categorization inasmuch as their dependency overlaps both spaces. At the Global Platform children asked to be treated as an independent stakeholder group with specific needs and interests that are uniquely their own. For one thing, their status is inevitably transitory, since they

will eventually turn into adults, and for another, they most strongly represent the future, which is where the focus of HFA2 resides.

Equally important, their vulnerability as children is undeniable and so they must be given special attention with regard to disaster risk, to the extent of giving them a voice where appropriate and including them in disaster risk reduction plans at all times. Their potential for contributing to the discussions has only rarely been recognized or utilized.

Moreover, disaster risk reduction education should be centred on children and youth first of all, with programmes to educate them in these matters beginning at a very early age both in their schools and in their communities. Since education in general is crucial to building a more resilient future, focusing on disaster risk reduction for children and accompanying this with practical measures to assure the preparedness and safety of their schools, will impart the importance of resilience at an early age and thereby provide a strong basis for educating the wider community.

The category of youth has its own special place in planning for HFA2. While the definition of youth is perhaps flexible, it designates those who are no longer as dependent as children but who are just approaching or starting out on their adult lives. It includes students in higher education, young professionals and young workers, many of who have established age-specific groups reflecting their specific interests.

Youth also provides drive, activism and connections to a wider social movement (through social media and other technology-savvy means of communication). Including youth in all deliberations about disaster risk reduction planning and implementation is therefore crucial to HFA2, since the whole point is to help make the future better than the present.

Children and youth each have their own interests, needs and capacities. Each group has contributions to make to disaster risk reduction, and each must have its place in HFA2. This is part of what was meant when participants said that HFA2 needs a human face.

IV. Women as Leaders

For too long women have been excluded from high-level disaster risk reduction deliberations in many countries, either relatively or completely. While this is changing, HFA2 should provide clear entry points for women's leadership everywhere in dealing with both climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, since it is self-destructive to exclude or diminish opportunities for them to contribute their particular perspectives and expertise. A critical step to achieve this is to ensure the full respect and implementation of the various treaties and other legislation on women's rights that have been formulated and agreed upon both nationally and internationally. HFA2 should include this as one of its strongest recommendations.

Women are the anchor in communities – their knowledge and expertise in mobilizing communities into action to reduce risks of potential disasters is fundamental. Therefore disaster risk reduction capacity building programmes should draw upon grassroots women's organizations, and in turn women should have full access to information and decision-making in prevention and preparedness strategies.

A stronger women's role in HFA2 and in disaster risk reduction generally needs to be defined specifically, and one of the most important tasks in formulating HFA2 strategy will be to provide that definition. Women must be enabled to take on leadership roles in disaster risk reduction and space must be made for them to do that as part of their overall involvement in deliberations.

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In support of this, research pertaining to disaster risk reduction should be gender dis-aggregated so that issues affecting one gender more than another can be identified and gender-specific interventions devised. If HFA2 is to be more inclusive of women, this is a minimal requirement, since knowledge is the basis for effective action.

V. Health

Everything connected to disaster risk reduction has health implications, and these must be addressed explicitly in HFA2. Not only do disasters damage people's health, which requires *ex post facto* response and recovery, but also the very possibility of people undertaking disaster risk reduction requires that they be reasonably healthy. Health is thus not only an immediate concern when there is a disaster, it is also one of the important underlying disaster risk factors and is essential to preparedness. The HFA2 would need to recognize impacts of disasters on the well-being of people as well as underline how to manage health risks through stronger health systems. HFA2 would also do well to acknowledge the global risks of outbreaks (for example of infectious disease) and pandemics and the complex impacts these have on socioeconomic stability.

Health should not be considered separately. It is always connected to other issues such as poverty, development, food safety, social justice and the like, and the same is true for its relationship with disaster risk reduction. Therefore, HFA2 must strongly recommend that disaster risk reduction plans and projects be undertaken in collaboration with the health sector at all political and geographical levels, and that health concerns be included in all deliberations.

More specifically, health indicators should be included in all disaster risk reduction assessments in order to ascertain the potential health impacts of specific disasters. Likewise, the International Health Regulations (IHR) should be referred to in HFA2.

VI. Integrating Climate Change Adaptation, Development and Disaster Risk Reduction

Climate change is arguably the most important underlying disaster risk factor and is implicated in the increase in disasters worldwide. Drought, desertification, flooding and environmental degradation, (such as deforestation, erosion and loss of biodiversity) are all affected by climate change and have far-reaching consequences in terms of food and water security. It is therefore crucial that in HFA2, disaster risk reduction efforts not be isolated from climate change mitigation and adaption measures.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are extremely vulnerable to climate-related disasters have shown that they can achieve better economies of scale in disaster risk reduction when they band together. As countries and communities whose contribution to climate change has been small, and as those who suffer its adverse effects most severely, it is not surprising that SIDS have introduced innovation approaches to addressing disaster risk reduction and climate change impacts together.

Clearly, disaster risk reduction needs to be based on science. The climate information provided by hydrological and meteorological institutes plays a pivotal role in development planning and investment. At the level of international cooperation, initiatives such as the Global Framework on Climate Services hosted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), can help anchor the HFA2 in an applied approach to science.

The need to bring the applications to the local level was repeated continually during the Global Platform consultations as was the need to build on the experiences of local government, urban and rural communities where, in many places, the practice of addressing climate change and disaster risk together is already well-established.

Collaboration must be facilitated among the groups and organizations concerned with each. Designating clear roles and responsibilities are crucial to this. Combined resilience plans can be used as the basis for shaping governance and implementation mechanisms. Joint advocacy projects raise public awareness and engage the hearts and minds of the general population. The orientation should be towards identifying areas where reducing greenhouse gas emissions can help reduce disaster risk.

Ways of financing all this at all geographic and political levels should be explored, with an emphasis on equity and coordination, while joint planning should work on identifying and implementing the governance and coordination requirements for an integrated approach. Approaches such as these are worth considering in the formulation of the HFA2.

Integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is just the beginning. Furthermore, a holistic approach with regard to this integration must also recognize and act upon the relationship between disasters and economic development, which is in turn affected by climate change. Integrating disaster risk reduction with development planning is the topic to which we now turn.

Disaster risk reduction is a development issue. Communities that are vulnerable to disasters and unprepared for them stand to lose their livelihoods and economic infrastructure more readily than do communities that are better off and better prepared. Any progress made in bringing a community out of poverty will therefore be fragile and in danger of evaporating if disaster risk reduction measures are not undertaken. In short, economic development cannot hope to be sustainable if risk reduction mechanisms are not in place and working well. Moreover, with the economic losses from disasters expected to double by 2030, the burden of disaster risk falls most heavily on communities least able to support it and who have the most to lose in proportion to their economic circumstances.

Reduction of risk is at the core of development because it reaches across many sectors that are implicated in poverty reduction. If this is taken seriously, then there is every reason to incorporate disaster risk reduction in development plans and programmes of community development. HFA2 must make a strong plea for doing so and outline methods for achieving this integration. Part of the task will be to connect disaster risk reduction more closely with the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals as well as with other global development frameworks.

There were a number of topics brought up in the discussion that amplify the above points. First of all, it was noted that development must also mean human development. If economic development is not good for people in general, then for whom is it good? This implies that progress in development must not be measured or otherwise evaluated primarily or solely in terms of increased GDP but rather in light of the satisfaction of pressing human needs and other qualitative criteria.

Throughout all of this, we have to keep in mind that spending on disaster risk reduction is an enabler and an investment in the future, not a cost to be minimized. Even keeping to the narrowest definition of development, i.e. growth in monetary GDP, this is a necessary principle that should be kept in mind when planning public and private sector investments. Again, development can never be sustainable if it is at continual risk of being destroyed by disasters.

VII. The Role of Sciences

Evidence based science is essential to disaster risk reduction, not only for predicting events but also as the basis for creating technology that can make risk reduction more effective. In addition, if decision-making is to be risk-informed, good science is necessary. The kind of knowledge and

information science supplies is key to identifying new risks and thus to devising disaster risk reduction plans.

Scientific evidence is needed for making decisions associated with climate change, which as we have seen is an underlying disaster risk factor. Making changes to agricultural patterns, for example, requires a solid basis in knowledge, and science can provide this. Collectively identifying trends, creating scenarios of future natural conditions, etc., all depend on the availability of good science. Without science's orientation toward the future, decisions tend to be made on the basis of knowledge of past experience, which is a limited perspective in a world in thrall to climate change and other environmental, social and economic shifts.

It is this availability that was the topic of some discussion during the meetings. Science needs to come out of the universities and into communities. More effort is required to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and policy-making. But there are barriers, for example scientists' performance criteria differ according to the varying environments they inhabit. Academic incentives are based on receiving grants and publishing articles in academic journals, which often is not linked nearly enough to public policy needs.

Another issue raised was the uncertainty of certain types of scientific predictions and model making. Although climate science, for example, has made great strides in the accuracy and credibility of its predictions, there is always an element of uncertainty inherent in its work. This does not mean, however, that because science does not know everything, it follows that it knows nothing, so disaster risk reduction must use whatever knowledge scientists can provide. It has been said that science is a series of successive approximations to reality, and so the "quest for certainty" may lead to paralysis in practice. Bridging the gap between science and policy, therefore, requires making decisions in an environment of relative uncertainty, using the best knowledge available but not waiting until "all the facts are in".

VIII.   Knowledge Sharing and Education

Scientific knowledge needs to be made available to decision-makers. This is part of the more general task of knowledge sharing, an issue that we will now address. It is an important issue not only because scientific knowledge needs to be shared with policymakers, but also because all kinds of knowledge must be disseminated to communities and to the population in general so that everyone can understand and respond effectively to the disaster risks they face.

Sharing knowledge accelerates implementation because, with knowledge brought in from the outside, communities and governments do not have to "reinvent the wheel", i.e., they can learn from each other's experiences and from the results of those experiences. It is also important to share "worst practices", inasmuch as learning from the failures of others can help people avoid making the same mistakes. Benchmarking can be used, grounded upon shared knowledge and experience, to communicate, recommend and encourage implementation of "best practices".

To be most effective, knowledge sharing must have standards that are based upon agreed criteria. Standards will increase the reliability and communicability of what is shared and will provide the framework for a common terminology and language. These standards should extend to indicators, which should be oriented towards results. An example of where this would be immediately useful is in sharing knowledge about building codes and land use. This could be part of a common knowledge base that that UNISDR is managing through the Prevention Web.

Equally important, access to knowledge and information urgently needs to be facilitated and expanded. For instance, communities must have rapid and unimpeded access to information derived

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from early warning systems, while small-scale, recurring disasters need to be reported and given attention. In addition, general disaster risk reduction information must be downscaled and customized for local communities to make it more readily useable.

Expanded access should therefore employ cost-effective, accessible and user-friendly technology for knowledge sharing, making sure that the language it uses is simple, straightforward and easily comprehended. As a model for this, HFA2 must itself be easily absorbed and should express complex ideas as simply and clearly as possible, which is an ongoing challenge. HFA2 should likewise be disseminated so that it reaches all populations, regardless of their economic condition and location.

The diversity of interests, needs and backgrounds among the people engaged in disaster risk reduction, as well as across the various sectors and geographic locations directly affected by disasters, means that knowledge sharing must be multi-lateral and inclusive. One way of promoting this is by encouraging peer exchanges among professional organizations across sectors. Another is to recognize the diversity of the disasters themselves and to tailor knowledge sharing accordingly. For instance, information about building codes is most relevant to earthquakes, while knowledge about health effects is of immediate concern when there are floods. Likewise, knowledge of the impact of drought on livelihoods is pertinent because of drought's long-term effects on agriculture.

Multilateral knowledge sharing is helpful in addressing the underlying risk factors of disasters by extending ownership of disaster risk reduction across sectors, facilitating collaboration to identify the drivers of risk that result from combinations and overlaps among various spheres of activity. It is also essential for dealing with trans-boundary issues related to disasters. It thus helps people create multi-faceted, integrated programs to reduce underlying risk factors while preparing for and responding to disasters that transcend borders.

Multilateral knowledge-sharing feeds into education almost naturally, underpinning efforts at raising public awareness and providing the substance of what is taught about risk reduction in schools as well as in the wider community. Since one of the purposes of the HFA is to advocate for all society to be educated in disaster resilience, the way that this education takes place is of immediate concern.

Risk sensitive education is a priority at all levels of the school system and needs to be incorporated in curricula beginning in the earliest school grades, continuing through secondary and higher education. This would honour the principle, noted earlier, of recognizing children and youth as the pathway to the future regarding disaster risk reduction. School education, however, tends to be structured vertically, with teachers providing knowledge and students absorbing it. While this may be effective in its context, it is not easily transmissible outside the school and into the wider community. Ways must be found to promote and facilitate horizontal learning among peers, whereby the participants in this learning both provide and receive knowledge and information as a form of knowledge sharing.

On a very practical level, efforts must be made to ensure that all new schools that are built are 100% safe and that they can withstand foreseeable disasters that might befall the communities in which they are located.

IX. Capacity-Building: Financing, Risk Assessment, Preparedness and Early Warning

Knowledge sharing, education and safe schools depend on having the capacities necessary to make them function. For all aspects of disaster risk reduction, building these capacities where they do not exist or are inadequate is an overriding concern that must be addressed more fully in HFA2. In particular, it was emphasized that discussions about capacity-building move from questions of "what" to questions of "how".

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The discussion supported strengthening capacity-building for both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at the national and local levels. To this end, and along with better knowledge-sharing, the participants encouraged providing improved guidance on how to access financial resources and engage more closely with scientific and technical institutions. They counseled concentrating on incorporating resilience into urban planning and into building infrastructure such as dikes and dams, thereby enhancing capacity for implementing disaster risk reduction measures in regions susceptible to disastrous flooding. The need to build safe housing and schools was noted, as well as resilient medical and health facilities and safe water and sanitation facilities in urban areas.

Participants emphasized the importance of early warning systems, counseling their strengthening at the national as well as at the community level.

Financing capacity-building is always a challenge, particularly in the current global economic crisis, and resource mobilization is an issue faced by everyone. Nonetheless, participants stressed the importance of reversing funding imbalances to improve the ratio of investment in disaster risk reduction compared with the cost of disaster response. They also encouraged promoting direct funding to communities to finance reducing their disaster risk. The point was made that both national and local strategies should be devised for disaster risk reduction financing, and that national strategies should focus on reinforcing local ones.

Two interconnected points were made during the discussion that shaped everything else said about risk assessment. The first was that disaster risk reduction activities should all be based on thorough risk assessment, and the second was that this assessment must be made obligatory by governments. Apparently this was so widely supported that the question became - what are the constraints standing in the way of this happening?

National disaster risk management plans can take a holistic, multi-risk approach, thus reinforcing what was said elsewhere about how the environment at the community level is always characterized by multiple, simultaneous risks. More specifically, all project feasibility studies should include risk assessments, while another stressed that risk assessments must be integrated with environmental risk assessments. Likewise, emerging risks such as urbanization need to be assessed along with those that have been the traditional focus of risk reduction.

Better risk reporting and information is needed to improve decision-making, particularly with regard to preparedness, early warning, recovery and reconstruction. The insurance industry could contribute its expertise to help develop the tools necessary for improving risk assessment.

X. Private Sector Involvement in Disaster Risk Reduction

There needs to be much greater participation of the private sector in disaster risk reduction. This was shown clearly at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform with large plenary discussions and events around the role of the private sector in reducing risk. The motivation is clear. Since business infrastructure and personnel are vulnerable to disasters, companies have a vital interest in risk reduction and should recognize that interest. Furthermore, the future of risk, or future exposure, is in the hands of those making investment decisions – which in the vast majority of cases is in the hands of the private sector. Private sector engagement and inclusion in HFA2 specifically is a must.

There are many potential benefits of increased private sector engagement. Building resilience will help protect investments. A wider range of technical expertise can be called upon to find innovative solutions to the build-up of risk. Multinational companies can help deal with cross-boundary hazards due to their presence in many countries. Their technical capacities can complement those available to the public sector and thereby strengthen risk reduction projects, making them more effective.

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Elements of the private sector such as the insurance and construction industries in particular can take the lead in fully integrating with disaster risk reduction activities. Public-private partnerships need to be a central part of political messaging. In particular, the expertise of the insurance industry in risk assessment and underwriting can be very useful. Though it needs to be recognized that insurance companies act when there is a market for their services. Stimulating or finding the incentives that leads to sound risk assessment and insurance setting will be key. The public sector also needs to generate that market and incentives where it does not exist

More general than the necessity of providing a market for insurers is the need to make a strong economic case for greater private sector engagement. A central argument in any such case is that it is much less expensive to prevent or prepare for disasters, by a ratio of seven to one, than it is to respond to and recover from them. But more than this is that by reducing risks, particularly extensive risk (or regular small potential disasters) a business will be much more competitive in the long run.

While this means that risk reduction should be incorporated into business planning, it also indicates the need for businesses to involve in broader efforts in order to create a more secure environment both for themselves as an enterprise as well as in the communities where they are located. Businesses have to move beyond viewing any involvement in disaster risk reduction as a matter of corporate social responsibility, although it is certainly at least that, and to deepen their involvement accordingly. Again, it was emphasized that spending on disaster risk reduction should be seen as an investment and not as a cost; it is a matter of foresight. Disaster risk reduction should therefore become part of the core financial strategies of business corporations.

There is also a strong role for small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in promoting disaster risk reduction. Since SMEs tend to operate more locally than multinational corporations, their day-to-day involvement with their communities is closer and their awareness of local issues is accordingly more detailed. They also have a strong interest in sustainability because it is not easy for them to pick up and move to another location to avoid disaster losses or to re-build from scratch. SMEs should therefore become champions of disaster risk reduction within their communities and should be key actors in local planning and implementation. Multinational corporations too can 'localize' their best practices by customizing the implementation of those practices in the communities where they work, in this way mirroring some aspects of the local community connectedness enjoyed by SMEs.

XI. **Political Will and Leadership**

Political will and leadership are essential for creating effective disaster risk reduction practices. The two are interconnected. Political will rests primarily with political constituencies, but it must be consolidated, prioritized and articulated by leadership. That leadership, on the other hand, is paralyzed if it is not grounded in the will of its constituency. Every aspect of this relationship depends in some way or other on popular awareness of disaster risk reduction. People need to know what investment decisions are made and how do such decisions raise the level of risk. Raising the awareness of these decisions and impacts is part of what is meant by leadership. For the risk reduction agenda to be given priority, this synthesis of political will and leadership is fundamental.

However, there is a large gap between talking about, and actually investing in, disaster risk reduction. While there has been considerable interest shown in reducing risk, accompanied by many statements of support, translating this into practical action has proved to be difficult and will require that governments make risk reduction a budget priority. Achieving this will require lobbying, made more difficult by the current vast multiplicity of issues in post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals. Lobbying for HFA2 needs to be very practical and focused in order to stand out.

Another issue to address is the problem of silo-based budgeting at the national level. Breaking down the silos is important and goes along with breaking down a general budgetary commitment to disaster risk reduction into its specific constituent activities. Again, this requires intensive lobbying. Nonetheless, achieving this is a crucial factor in transforming political will into effective commitment.

In a more concrete sense, national strategies and institutional frameworks should be coordinated internally between the national and community levels, an important governance issue. To achieve this, government financial strategies and legislation will need to be aimed at empowering local governments and at providing them with incentives. Therefore, local empowerment is essential because the enforcement of national policies depends heavily on community involvement.

XII. <u>Governance, Accountability and Transparency</u>

While governance can be conceived of in various ways, there is a sense in which the term refers generally to the way people organize themselves to achieve various goals, including how they decide who does what and who reports to whom. Governance boils down to accountability and transparency.

Accountability, which here implies holding people responsible for their actions and for doing what they say they are going to do, and should be one of the HFA2 main components. Through an inclusive accountability process, governance could be shared among stakeholders.

Accountability could be supported by voluntary peer review mechanisms that would contribute to improved monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring should have clear indicators and specific targets, which in turn would facilitate measuring outcomes and thereby strengthen the review and evaluation process overall. Better monitoring is needed in order to connect the national and international levels of disaster risk reduction.

Accountability and governance are essential to project continuity and is especially important to capacity-building. It was recommended that a tool be devised to help connect governance with capacity-building, rendering the latter more transparent and thus easier to monitor, evaluate, and modify. Clear determination of roles and responsibilities, which is a fundamental function of good governance, is also necessary, as is continuing evaluation of the ways disaster risk reduction projects and mechanisms impact on human rights.

Parliamentarians should have a larger role in governance inasmuch as they are the formal representatives of their constituent populations and thus have a certain legal weight. Parliamentarians can create disaster risk reduction awareness at the government level; can help to determine and decide on budget allocations and investment decisions; can create, maintain and refine institutional and regulatory frameworks; and can pass enabling legislation for disaster risk reduction. Moreover, because of their accountability to their citizens, parliamentarians have a responsibility to contribute to reducing risk.

Concluding Remark

The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2) consultations at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform in May 2013 was a significant milestone in the development of a new instrument. The discussions and debates reflected in this report add substance, reasoning and meaning to what can be in HFA2. The next step is to articulate these reflections in the ongoing consultations and development of HFA2. The substance in this report essentially provides an important contribution to the grounding and orientation for the content of HFA2.

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