



# Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery

**UNDP works with its partners on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and recovery in more than 100 countries, promoting the importance of investing in DRR and effective disaster recovery in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

## DISASTER AND DEVELOPMENT

There is a strong correlation between disaster and development. Inappropriate development can increase levels of vulnerability to disaster risk and disasters negatively affect poor countries' development. In countries with medium to low levels of income and weak governance, disasters exacerbate existing poverty and inequality and reverse development gains. Populations that are already socially, economically and geographically vulnerable are the most affected by natural hazards. The low resilience of the poor is further undermined by weak or non-existing social protections. While urban and rural areas are equally affected by disasters, poverty in rural areas often increases disaster risk because of the specific vulnerability of rural livelihoods. Constrained access to land, technology, credit and other productive assets means that poor rural households are largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihoods and subsistence, and thus are highly vulnerable to even small seasonal variations in weather. This inherent linkage between disasters and development makes reducing disaster risks – and particularly climate-related risks – an essential responsibility.

## PROMOTING PREVENTION

Human losses and destruction caused by disasters are not unavoidable tragedies. **Disasters are not natural** and their impact can be limited through comprehensive risk reduction measures across all sectors. Investing in DRR not only minimizes losses but also encourages the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For example, DRR promotes health and education by protecting public infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, poverty reduction by protecting economic activities and assets, and gender equality by



Victims of the worst floods to hit Pakistan in several years walk through water-filled streets in the northwestern city of Nowshera (© UN Photo/Amjad Jamal).

empowering women to play an active role in disaster risk reduction initiatives. Disaster recovery is seen by UNDP as an opportunity to rebuild better and avoid repetition of mistakes.

## DRIVERS OF RISK

Reducing risk requires identification and understanding of the risk factors that generate vulnerability and cause disasters. Societies at risk need the capacity to put in place effective measures to reduce their exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards, through early warning

## FAST FACTS

- **The 21st Century has been marked by escalating costs of disasters. Economic losses from disasters grew from an estimated USD 75.5 billion in the 1960s to USD 659.9 billion in the 1990s and USD 960 billion by 2009. The nearly 4,000 recorded disasters from 2000 to 2009 killed more than 780,000 people and affected more than two billion.**
- **DRR offers a high return on investment: one dollar invested in disaster prevention can save seven dollars' worth of disaster-related economic losses.**

systems, appropriate building codes, disaster-sensitive local development plans, and other measures. Without these, the rush for growth can trigger haphazard development that increases the risk of large-scale fatalities during a disaster. Trends such as increasing human settlement and investment in high-risk coastal areas are placing greater numbers of people and economic assets in the path of cyclones, storm surges and floods. Furthermore, climate change has the potential to exacerbate disaster risk, not only because of the expected increase in frequency and intensity of extreme climate events, but also through its impact on the drivers of vulnerability – including food insecurity, loss of ecosystems, and new patterns of migration.

## UNDP APPROACH TO DRR

UNDP's strategic guidance on DRR is provided by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and its five priority areas for DRR action:

1. Ensuring that DRR is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation
2. Identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks and enhancing early warning
3. Using knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience
4. Reducing the underlying risk factors
5. Strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response

UNDP helps partners achieve the MDGs by reducing disaster-related losses that could halt or reverse develop. For example, prior to the floods in Pakistan in 2010, UNDP supported a disaster risk management coordinator, trained 30 community volunteers and district coordination officers in the Jhang District of Punjab province in emergency response. As the disaster unfolded, the disaster risk management coordinator, the volunteers and the district coordination officers were able to save 1,800 people, as well as their belongings and many of their cattle.

UNDP's efforts focus on the national and sub-national levels, where it works with governments to establish disaster reduction as a national priority and strengthen basic institutional structures for disaster preparedness. UNDP has supported governments to put in place a solid institutional and legal basis for DRR and has strengthened key government institutions. In addition, UNDP works with countries that have already established DRR mechanisms to further these efforts by incorporating DRR into key development sectors and at all administrative levels.

## UNDP APPROACH TO RECOVERY

UNDP works with national governments and civil society in disaster-prone countries to develop capacities to manage the recovery process and to put the necessary

## UNDP IN ACTION - RECOVERY

- In Haiti, after the devastating January 2010 earthquake, UNDP established a cash-for-work programme that has to date employed 120,000 workers—more than 40 percent of them women. Furthermore, the Interim Haitian Recovery Commission approved more than USD 80 million worth of UNDP projects, paving the way for the organization to step up the long-term recovery process, including debris management and its successful cash-for-work initiatives.
- Immediate crisis response advisors have been deployed in several disaster situations, for example: in 2010 to Haiti in response to the earthquake and to Pakistan in response to the floods; in 2009 to Burkina Faso and Niger, in response to floods; in 2008 to Haiti following a series of hurricanes and to Myanmar following Cyclone Nargis; in 2007 to Bangladesh, following cyclone Sidr, to Liberia after a string of disasters, and to the Solomon Islands following a tsunami.
- As a follow-up to early recovery efforts, in 2008 UNDP helped the Indonesian government initiate a large longer-term recovery programme to strengthen disaster risk management capacity and supported the Mozambican government with risk identification and climate risk management, building on recovery activities following Cyclone Favio, which struck the country in 2007.

institutional, financial and technical capacities in place before a disaster. In response to a disaster, UNDP supports governments in the assessment of recovery needs and in the formulation of recovery plans and the implementation of programmes, from early to long-term recovery. With a focus on effective local-level recovery, UNDP supports recovery management and the delivery of critical services, stabilization of livelihoods and the restoration of community infrastructure for development. Furthermore, while restoring capacities to rebuild and recover from a disaster, UNDP takes measures to integrate risk reduction in the recovery process.

In particular, UNDP is the early recovery lead agency for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Early recovery is defined by the IASC as recovery that begins in a humanitarian setting, and seeks to build on humanitarian programmes and to catalyze development opportunities from the very first days of an emergency. In this role, UNDP works with IASC partners and governments to develop capacity and resources for early recovery programming. Furthermore, UNDP supports the UN Resident Coordinators and/or Humanitarian Coordinators in the coordination of early recovery activities with other partner agencies.

## UNDP FOCUS AREAS

UNDP's technical support and policy advice includes:

- **Risk assessment**
- **Urban risk management**
- **Needs assessment and sustainable recovery**
- **Capacity development for risk reduction and recovery planning**
- **Governance and institutional aspects of DRR**
- **Integrating DRR into development sectors**
- **Gender-sensitive DRR**
- **Climate risk management**

Synergies across these thematic areas support holistic disaster risk reduction and recovery strategies at the national level.

## AT A GLANCE: UNDP'S PORTFOLIO



**In 2010, UNDP and its partners work towards DRR and recovery in more than 100 countries with annual expenditures of over US\$ 150 million across all regions. In addition:**

- With over **200 full-time professionals** working in the area of DRR and recovery, UNDP draws from a rich pool of expertise to support its partners in their efforts to reduce risk, minimize the effects of disasters, and effectively manage disaster recovery.
- UNDP has placed **13 full-time national disaster reduction advisors** in high-risk countries around the world and jointly **funds four others with the World Bank.**
- UNDP has also placed **six full-time regional disaster reduction advisors** around the world to roll out DRR programmes, promote knowledge exchange, offer technical advisory services, and help mobilize resources.
- In 2009, UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery provided **technical support and funding to more than 40 UNDP offices** in high-risk countries.

## GENERATING KNOWLEDGE, SHARING EXPERTISE

UNDP encourages sharing of knowledge and experience through the development and facilitation of communities of practice at global and regional levels. In 2009, for example, development professionals used the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network to discuss opportunities and challenges of an integrated programming approach to DRR and climate change adaptation. As a knowledge-based organization, UNDP has developed a unique knowledge base, which is the key driver for policy innovation, programme development, and increasing South-South collaboration.

Furthermore, drawing on its experience in disaster recovery, UNDP supports the consolidation of tools generated in the recovery process. For example, UNDP and partner agencies have developed improved guidelines and capacities for multi-stakeholder post-disaster needs assessments (PDNAs) as well as a recovery framework to unify recovery planning under the leadership of the affected national government. UNDP also works with the World Bank and the European Commission to ensure effective transition from relief to development by improving capacity and coordination at national and international levels.

## UNDP IN ACTION

### *Mozambique*

In the wake of devastating floods in 2000, UNDP began the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach to DRR in Mozambique. UNDP's assistance included support to the establishment of the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC). UNDP deployed experts to INGC to increase capacity for coordinating disaster preparedness and response and a comparison of floods in 2000 and 2007 revealed positive effects: In 2000, record high precipitation and 2 cyclones resulted in unprecedented floods that left 800 dead, 500,000 homeless, and disrupted the livelihoods of over 1 million. The destruction in 2000 stands in stark contrast to that of 2007, when 29 people lost their lives and about 70,000 people were displaced. This is seen as a huge improvement, for which INGC is largely responsible. Ten years after a devastating disaster, Mozambique has become a regional leader in disaster preparedness, generating and sharing best practices on DRR in the region.

### *Kyrgyzstan*

The Kyrgyz village of Kyzlordo is particularly vulnerable to mudflows. Due to over-exploitation and over-grazing of land, in March 2007 the village secondary school and 52 houses were flooded after only 15 minutes of heavy rain. The village subsequently established a rural rescue team, which received training and equipment from UNDP. The team identified that the best solution to reduce the impact of heavy rainfalls would be the building of a 1 kilometer canal that would run through the village. In May 2008, when rains again prompted mudflows, the village did not experience any casualties, crop loss or infrastructure damage due to the presence of the new canal. Building on this experience, villagers have become confident that they can reduce disaster risks and have started planting trees to counter the effects of deforestation and land erosion in the community.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.undp.org/cpr/we\\_do/integrating\\_risk.shtml](http://www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/integrating_risk.shtml)  
[www.preventionweb.net](http://www.preventionweb.net)  
[www.unisdr.org/](http://www.unisdr.org/)  
[www.recoveryplatform.org](http://www.recoveryplatform.org)

United Nations Development Programme | One United Nations Plaza New York NY 10017 USA |

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