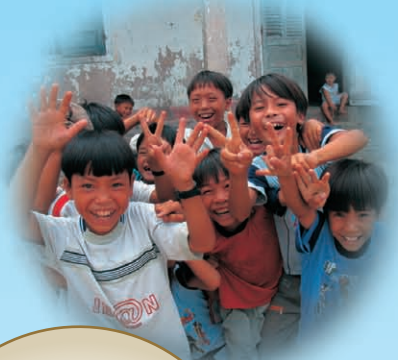


Asia Regional Task Force

Urban Risk Reduction



With an increasingly complex and urbanizing world, sustainable urban development and management present considerable challenges and potentials for reducing urban vulnerabilities and risks.



DECISION-MAKING
Appropriate governance and decision making system lie at the core of risk reduction in urban areas. Special focus should be given to vital infrastructures like schools, hospitals and key public buildings.

ECONOMY
Urban areas are often considered as the economic hub of the region or country, and therefore result in concentration of vital infrastructures.

RESILIENCE
In spite of different threats, communities have their inherent capacities to cope with different types of disasters. Community resilience should be considered as an asset for risk reduction in urban areas.

POVERTY
The socio-economic opportunities provided by Asian cities enable people from a wide range of income brackets to interact and live, but also create vulnerabilities resulting from lack of access to urban goods and services.

The forces and processes that constitute 'urban activity' have far-reaching and long-term effects not only on its immediate boundaries, but also on the entire region in which it is positioned. The causes of urban growth are varied and complex, but among the main ones are economic and environmental pressures driving people to seek a living in urban areas.

CLIMATE CHANGE
Climate change is becoming a threat to the urban environment. The uncertainty that arises due to climate change needs to be considered in the overall urban risk management framework.

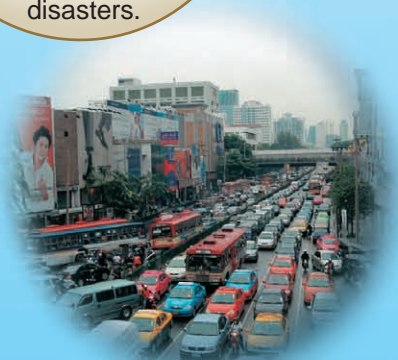
POPULATION
Urban areas are characterized by high density population, which results in higher exposures. Combination of high vulnerability and exposure causes higher degree of urban risk.

CATASTROPHIC RISK
Cities in developing countries of Asia face cascading vulnerabilities that go beyond the original risk or hazard. The relevance of low probability and high consequence events should be recognized.

URBAN PLANNING
The tendency of cities to be located and expanded on river banks or coastal areas for economic reasons makes them more vulnerable to disasters.

MEGACITY GROWTH
Asian megacities are increasingly becoming the concentration of physical, economic, social, political and cultural assets, which are being exposed to different types of disaster risks.

ENVIRONMENT
The urban eco-system is characterized by interplay of the built, natural and socio-economic environment, which separately and collectively generate much of the risk that cities face today.



For more information, please contact:

UN/ISDR Hyogo Office, Hitomirai-kan 5F, 1-5-2 Wakinohama Kaigan-dori, Chuo-ku, Kobe city, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan
Phone: +81 (0)78 262 5550, Fax: +81 (0)78 262 5554, E-mail: ISDR-Hyogo@un.org

BACKGROUND: FOCUS ON URBANIZATION IN ASIA



Urban vulnerability is increasing

Urbanization is a complex process of development, economic growth, population increase, and other associated elements. It is accelerated by the rapid globalization, expansion of economies, and continuous migration from the rural areas. These compounded effects are causing increasing vulnerability, which is reflected in different major disasters in recent past. Urban population increase is projected from 2.9 billion in 1990s to a staggering 5.0 billion by 2030. By then, 1 in 4 persons will live in a city of 500,000 people; and 1 in 10 persons will live in a city of 10 million population.



Asia as the epicenter of urban growth

The pace of urbanization in the developing world is led by countries in Asia, such as Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam. The high population density in Asian cities is creating additional vulnerabilities, as reflected, for example, in the informal settlements. In the Asian mega cities like Manila, Mumbai and Jakarta, a significant percentage of the population lives in these informal settlements, and are exposed to different types of hazards such as floods and typhoons. Population density, combined with effects of climate change, is creating new risks in urban areas of Asia.

THE TASK FORCE

To facilitate interactions and collaboration among different stakeholders to further support the implementation of the HFA, the Asia Regional Task Force on Urban Risk Reduction was established in January 2008. As the thematic initiative on urban risk reduction in Asia within the ISDR system, the Task Force is coordinated by the UN/ISDR Hyogo Office in Kobe. The Task Force is currently represented by 16 member organizations and is open for expansion.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Task Force is to enhance decisive actions to reduce risk and increase community resilience in urban areas in the Asia region. To achieve this goal, specific objectives are:

- To act as an advocacy vehicle to major urban policy bodies
- To provide a platform for collective information and knowledge development and sharing
- To facilitate interactions and cooperation among related organizations and stakeholders

The Task Force is not an implementing body, but promotes the collective activities of its member organizations. It works in line with the HFA for the region.

SOME ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

- HFA Reporting on Urban Risk in the Asia Region as input to the process of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Development of inventory of urban risk reduction initiatives in the Asia Region
- RADIUS plus 10 project
- Production of a HFA Guideline for local governments
- City profile and good practice compilation

Three main categories identified as the Task Force activities:

Policy and Advocacy

- * Identifying priorities for urban DRR and gap analysis
- * Developing policy advocacy paper and participation in the key regional events

Knowledge Management

- * Developing and maintaining knowledge base of experts, resources, tools and activities
- * Setting standards and codes of practices

Promoting Synergies and Cooperation

- * Promoting joint implementation of its member organizations
- * Joint training and capacity building programs



MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

ADPC, ADRC, CITYNET, EMI, IRP Secretariat, JICA, Kobe University, Kyoto University, NSET, SEEDS, UNCRD, UNDP, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNISDR, UNU and WHO