



EXTRACTS FROM EACH CHAPTER

Introduction

*This is a summary of the topics developed in the seven chapters of **Living with Risk - a global review of disaster reduction**.*

This version of the report is a 380 pages, preliminary one, intended for consultation. It includes a compilation of initiatives and reference information, all to be enhanced following the consultation. It focuses on disaster risk reduction as envisioned in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Therefore, it does not discuss specific experiences of disaster preparedness, response or recovery. It is mainly for practitioners in disaster management, environmental and sustainable development, for guidance, policy orientation and for inspiration.

It is a first attempt to collect and systematise information on disaster risk reduction initiatives, to look at the full range of activities, even though still limited geographically, with the goal to reach common understanding of the issues.

The review is based on examples of application, identifying trends where possible. It starts with the various contexts surrounding disaster risk reduction, followed by a chapter on risk trends and assessment. Sections thereafter describe the different elements of disaster risk reduction illustrated from global, regional and national examples; policy and institutional frameworks; knowledge and information management; and the application of specific measures, such as environmental management, land use planning, engineering protection of critical facilities, financial instruments and early warning systems. A section on relevant international agendas and the role of the different parts of the United Nations in disaster risk reduction provides for better understanding of the links between them all. Finally, the report outlines some of the challenges for the future by suggesting the need for specific target setting and monitoring of progress. The report provides users with reference material and serves as a directory on the many international, national and educational programmes dedicated to risk reduction.

All chapters in the report conclude with a section on future challenges and priorities.



Chapter 1. Living with risk – Focus on disaster risk reduction

1.1. Setting the scene – understanding disaster risk reduction

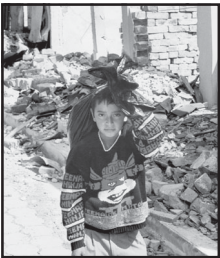
The power and drama associated with natural disasters have always fascinated people. Prior to the widespread use of global communications, disasters seldom had the possibility to influence decisions and events beyond the area of immediate impact. The initial reaction of people who were not immediately affected by the tragedy was to organize urgent specialized services or other forms of help to respond to the needs of the victims.

This chapter intends to set the scene and discuss the strategic shift from disaster management practices towards an integrated disaster risk reduction approach in the context of sustainable development. Further discussion on trends in disaster impact, hazard and vulnerability is developed in chapter 2.

- Natural disasters shaping the agenda
- The shift towards disaster reduction
- Reducing the impact of disasters in practice



- International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action
- International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
- Disaster risk reduction- a shared responsibility
- Understanding the meaning of disaster risk reduction
- The disaster risk reduction framework



Chapter 2 Risk awareness and assessment

Disaster risk is part of everyday. Awareness of risk is therefore a necessary condition to engage in disaster risk reduction. The focus on risk management, rather than on the disaster event, reflects a proactive attitude for dealing with potential threats to social and materials assets, before they are lost. The analysis and lessons learned from prior experiences of disasters help to define profiles of risk attached to people, activities and places that share attributes, in the face of particular potential sources of damage. Understanding risk relates to the ability to define what could happen in the future, given a range of possible alternatives to choose from. Assessing risks, based on vulnerability and hazard analysis, is a required step for the adoption of adequate and successful disaster reduction policies and measures

This chapter discuss briefly:

- The nature of risk, with emphasis on the linkages between hazards and vulnerability.
- The emerging trends in disaster impact, hazard and vulnerability patterns.
- Risk analysis and assessments with examples of application of these methodologies.
- Future challenges and priorities.



Chapter 3 Policy and public commitment: the foundation of disaster risk reduction

3.1. Institutional frameworks at national and local levels

Disaster risk management needs to be motivated and based within governmental responsibilities, but its success cannot be accomplished without the benefits of widespread decision-making and the participation of many others. Leading policy direction is crucial and legal foundations assure a continuing legitimacy, but it is the professional and human resources delivered on the ground that are a measure of success. For this to happen, there must be a systematic approach to relate local decision-making processes with larger administrative and resource capabilities such as those devised in provincial or state and national disaster plans and risk reduction strategies.

The various roles which policy determination, legal processes and the resulting evolution of organizations play in creating a sustained, public administration environment sensitive to the identification and management of risk are reviewed in this section. As both conditions and needs vary with geography, as well as with a wide range of professional interests involved some of the selected examples of these institutional frameworks are presented in broadly described regions, while others will reflect more topical emphasis. In all the cases though, the institutional processes involved and organizational lessons cited may hold a much wider appeal and relevance to emerging initiatives elsewhere. The discussion proceeds through the following headings:

- Introduction to emerging institutional frameworks for disaster reduction
- Policy frameworks in practice



- National planning processes, with multi-sectoral responsibilities and local participation
- Risk reduction plans, linked to specific responsibilities, policies, and practices

The following two sections of this chapter will discuss regional co-operation and community action, which both are complements to the national institutional frameworks.

3.2. Regional cooperation, interaction and experience

Hazards, like social affinities, often reflect regional characteristics grounded in the predominant geographic conditions. Historic and common political features also contribute to shared experiences within different regions or sub-regions around the world. Regional dialogue gives added depth and force to combined national interests, as much as regional institutions can tap and channel broader international expressions of intent into coordinated and better-suited, practical activities.

While the impetus may vary in different regions, natural hazards and the risks they pose to people who share geographic attributes present opportunities for neighbours to multiply their efforts in risk reduction.

They do this by sharing skills and experiences, and by combining resources to develop resilience to disasters. As disaster risk management encompasses a wider range of interests and abilities, there is a growing requirement for more political and professional interaction through multiple and innovative forms of regional cooperation. Regional cooperation embodies sensibility as much as solidarity.

A review of some examples of regional cooperation will show the scope of organizational frameworks employed to galvanize cooperation in disaster risk reduction. The fact that only few of these examples display organizational developments created expressly for the purpose of disaster risk management, highlight the extent to which risk issues pervade multiple dimensions of society and rely upon the work of many people

3.3 Community processes and actions

Risk reduction measures are most successful when they involve the direct participation of the people most likely to be exposed to hazards, in the planning, decision-making, and operational activities at all levels of responsibility. Local leaders, drawn from political, social and economic sectors of society need to assume a primary responsibility for the protection of their own community.

Community processes and actions to accomplish disaster risk reduction is much talked about, in theory, but it is much more difficult to realize in practice. There is however experience to suggest that the involvement of local residents in protecting their own resources is possible and can work – if sufficient attention and investment is devoted to the subject. The salient issues and examples which illustrate successful practice are presented under the following headings:

- The essential role of community action
- Community leadership and relationships
- Increasing community capabilities
- NGO and volunteer activities
- Building local self-reliance: sharing resources, building partnerships
- Dynamics of local collaboration
- Future challenges and priorities