

**Government - NGO Collaboration for Disaster Reduction and Response:**

**The India (Orissa) Experience**

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**Introduction**

Successful disaster reduction strategies involve careful efforts to combine knowledge, technology, expertise, institutional capacities, management skills, and practical experience for optimum results, which would not be possible without proper collaboration between the two key players: state and civil society. The state can effectively link up knowledge, technology, skills, resources, expertise offered by specialist institutions with grassroots experience, organisational capacity, participatory management skills, community based initiatives of NGOs for disaster reduction. NGOs can be innovative, rooted to the ground, and participatory in their approach while government can replicate best practices for larger impact.

**Significance of NGO involvement in development and disaster reduction**

The role of NGOs assumes significance in view of their wider engagement in civic and development initiatives. Factors such as disillusionment with centralised structures; emphasis on pluralism, expanded civic engagement; and collaboration amongst multiple actors explain this change in perception. The growing importance of NGOs can also be attributed to the realisation that neither the state nor the market can fully address enormous problems facing the world today. Over last few decades, NGOs have become important players in the development process across the globe, engaged in wide ranging activities starting with community development to training, policy research, and advocacy. Their organisational flexibility, informal work style, and close engagement with grassroots communities enable them to deliver services to people at lower costs. They supplement government initiatives by acting as a conduit between development programmes and beneficiaries, informing and

sensitising people about their rights and entitlements. Their ability to mobilise people and understand people's concerns enables them to better articulate problems encountered by people.

Today, NGOs play an important role in disaster response and mitigation in different regions. Many international NGOs specifically focus on providing humanitarian aid to disaster victims. Local NGOs in South Asia have also played an active role in disaster management in recent years. In India, NGOs played a significant role in emergency response and rehabilitation following recent disasters: the 1993 earthquake at Latur, which killed 7601 people, the 1999 Orissa super cyclone which killed 8931 people and the 2001 Gujarat earthquake which killed over 13,000 people.

### **Rationale for stronger GO-NGO collaboration for disaster reduction**

*Replicating micro-level initiatives:* The community-focussed approach, which is the main strength of NGOs, can be a limitation without conscious efforts to replicate successful micro-level initiatives for wider impact. This can be achieved only through continuous dialogue and engagement between state and NGOs, which would create greater understanding amongst them and facilitate policy changes for replication of micro-level experiments.

*Optimal use of resources.* In Asian countries, where limited resources, logistic and infrastructure facilities cause many problems, optimal use of available financial and human resources, organisational energies and support systems is a must for timely disaster response and effective disaster reduction measures. This can't be achieved without effective GO-NGO partnership.

*Check Overlapping, Duplication, & Confusion.* Timely response to natural disasters remains a difficult task in South Asian countries, where a majority of people live in dispersed rural settlements with inadequate communication facilities. Involvement of multiple actors, especially NGOs, makes it possible to reach humanitarian aid to marooned victims and initiating restoration work in cut-off zones. However, without coordination, such engagement of multiple

actors could result in duplication, over lapping, and confusion. Adequate coordination of efforts made by govt. and NGOs can only ensure proper sharing of responsibility in the disaster response process.

*Supplement Govt's Response with Sector-focused Initiatives.* Experience in Orissa and in other parts of India shows that NGO focus on sector-specific issues such as livelihood, community organisation, community asset creation, women group formation, etc. accelerates social and economic recovery after disasters. Such initiatives meaningfully supplement larger infrastructure reconstruction initiatives of the government. Similarly, while the state follows a universalistic approach in supporting victims, NGOs could adopt a community-oriented approach and cater to needs of vulnerable groups who otherwise find it hard to cope with the impact of disasters.

*Strengthen Community-Based Disaster Preparedness.* In South-Asia poverty and low awareness explain higher human casualty and deeper adverse impact of disasters. Techno-intensive solutions for disaster response and reduction are hard to adopt in view of higher economic costs and uncertainties surrounding their adaptability to local socio-cultural situations. Success of disaster preparedness in such contexts depends more on effective community-based approaches to risk reduction and management, in which NGOs have a bigger role to play.

In brief, without proper collaboration between Government and NGOs, initiatives in disaster response, mitigation, and reduction will not bear any fruit. There is always a strong co-relationship between successful project implementation and effective GO-NGO collaboration (ANGOC study, 1988). The experience of GO-NGO collaboration for disaster response in Orissa should serve in putting the issue in a broader perspective.

### **Learning from experience: GO-NGO collaboration in Orissa**

*Background.* A brief discussion on the socio-economic and political context in Orissa is necessary to understand the dynamics of GO-NGO relationship in the

state. One of the poorer states of India, Orissa has a predominantly agrarian economy with limited industrialisation and urbanisation. About 70% people (over 25 million) live in rural areas and earn their living from agriculture. About 22% people belong to Scheduled Tribes and 16% of people belong to Scheduled Castes. Spread along the eastern coast of India with a coastline of 500 kilometres, Orissa is vulnerable to frequent natural disasters. While people in coastal areas suffer floods and cyclones, people in the western region suffer chronic drought conditions.

*NGOs and Disaster Response.* Until recently, except some INGOs such as Red Cross, Oxfam, and CARE, NGOs played a small role in disaster response. The little attention paid to NGOs in the Orissa Relief Code could be seen as both cause and effect of the limited role hitherto played by NGOs in the disaster response process. NGOs emerged in large numbers in the 1980's in the state and took up community development work in interior areas. The twin cyclones of 1999, however, radically changed the scenario when NGOs responded to the disaster by engaging themselves in emergency response as well as rehabilitation.

*1999 Super Cyclone.* On 14<sup>th</sup> October 1999, the southern coastal parts of Orissa suffered a cyclone that killed over 50 people and inflicted heavy damage on housing and infrastructure. Next came the super cyclone, which hit the state on 29<sup>th</sup> October. A total of 8,931 people and 4,40,000 livestock perished as a 36-hour long spell of super heavy winds and incessant rain destroyed houses, felled trees, and ravaged infrastructure including bridges, roads, telecom and power systems. Storm surges and flash floods in rivers submerged hundreds of coastal villages. Over 18.9 million people were affected, as over 2 million houses collapsed and over 1,843,000 hectares of crops were destroyed. The state was simply not prepared for such a massive disaster.

*NGO Response to 1999 Cyclone.* NGOs active in Orissa responded to the 1999 cyclone in three phases: immediate, short-term, and long term. In the immediate phase, the NGO response focused on emergency food relief, carcass disposal, temporary shelter, emergency medical aid, debris removal and habitat restoration, trauma counselling, and raising awareness for reconstruction. The

second phase, actually an extension of the initial relief phase, focused on interim food security, restoration of community assets, revival of schools, social mobilisation and group formation. The third phase focussed on livelihood restoration, multi-purpose cyclone shelters, and community based disaster preparedness.

**Immediate Phase:** After the Cyclone, NGOs active in Orissa carried out relief operations and supplemented government efforts in dealing with the unprecedented disaster. About 40 local and international NGOs set up an emergency response network called Orissa Disaster Mitigation Mission (ODMM) to their coordinate relief and restoration work. ODMM ran a control room at the state capital and shared information with the government regarding problems faced in affected areas. Another NGO network formed earlier called Orissa Development Action Forum also played an active part in emergency response. NGOs ran community kitchens in hundreds of villages providing cooked food to people. Professional NGOs utilised such food relief to initiate immediate restoration activities in partnership with local communities, which included clearing village roads, schools, cleaning water sources, disposing carcasses, etc. Alongside the State Health Department and visiting medical teams from other parts of the country, NGOs provided medical aid to the ailing cyclone victims by running mobile health camps. Preventive measures taken by NGOs included distribution of medicine, and efforts to raise disaster health awareness amongst people by organising community health camps. The government provided temporary shelter building materials to all affected families. Some NGOs also distributed temporary shelter materials among people soon after the cyclone.

Rejuvenating people's spirits and raising awareness about reconstruction challenges was an important part of NGO intervention. Death and devastation had filled the victims with a sense of gloom. Cases of depression and trauma were reported in many affected villages. Some NGOs tried to raise people's depressed spirits by organising street theatres and participatory cultural shows, while some others set up Trauma Care Centres and undertook trauma counselling in worst affected villages. Some NGOs ran Legal Aid Centres to sensitise people about their rights to compensation offered by the Govt. NGOs

also played a crucial role mobilising volunteers for relief work. ODMM set up a Volunteers Hub at the state capital and ran a volunteers base camp at Erasama, the worst hit area to facilitate volunteers' participation in relief activities. While smaller NGOs withdrew from the affected area after the relief phase, the bigger and sincere NGOs continued their rehabilitation efforts in the cyclone-hit areas beyond the immediate phase.

**Sort-Term Rehabilitation:** Major NGO short-term rehabilitation activities included food security, creation of community assets, reviving schools, social mobilisation and group formation, etc. INGOs and local NGOs initiated Food for Work (FFW) programmes in affected villages to provide people with interim food security and facilitate restoration/construction of community assets such as water sources, irrigation facilities such as canals and earthen check-dams, roads, and other civic infrastructure. Vegetative regeneration through backyard and community nurseries was also initiated by some NGOs. During this period, some NGOs carried out participatory impact and need assessment studies to prepare rehabilitation action plans.

Children received special attention of NGOs, as efforts were made to ensure community based rehabilitation of orphan children at Mamata Grihas (transit houses). Many NGOs set up community day care centres for orphan children where widows and single women worked as matrons. Some NGOs took notable initiatives to send children back to their classroom by setting up temporary sheds and providing textbooks to students. An experience-sharing workshop was organised at Erasama involving parents, teachers, and government officials to identify problems suffered by children in cyclone-hit areas. Some NGOs encouraged children's participation in creating activities to relieve their trauma.

The uniqueness of developmental NGOs lay in their emphasis on community based initiatives. NGOs formed village development committees to coordinate restoration and rehabilitation initiatives at the community level. Functional groups comprising women, farmers, water users, and youth were also formed to carry out specific tasks. These efforts strengthened a rights-based approach to rehabilitation, and diverted people's attention away from relief aid, which

helped in accelerating reconstruction activities.

Longer Term Rehabilitation: NGOs that could mobilise resources went ahead with long-term rehabilitation initiatives even as others withdrew from the scene. Restoration of farm and non-farm livelihoods, construction of schools cum cyclone shelters, and initiatives to strengthen community based disaster preparedness were highlights of rehabilitation efforts made by NGOs.

NGOs tried to restore livelihoods of worst affected farming families by extending support to farmers' groups in the form of seeds, implements, tillage, irrigation facilities, and training. Some NGOs including CARE took special measures to restore non-farm livelihoods, which focused on fishermen, handloom weavers, artisans, etc. Others facilitated income-generating activities by artisans, craftsmen, and the poor. Promoting micro-credit activities among women groups and facilitating their participation in income generating activities formed a part of the rehabilitation efforts of some NGOs. Massive plantation activities were also carried out by NGOs. The severe impact of the cyclone was attributed to the destruction of buffer forests between land and sea in coastal areas over last few decades. The cyclone had felled an estimated 90 million trees, wiping off the green cover. NGOs received support from government and other resource providers in carrying out community, avenue, and backyard plantations in affected areas. An important contribution of NGOs was in providing the poor families with dwelling units. While some local NGOs facilitated community construction of low-cost dwelling units for very poor families, larger NGOs and faith organisations constructed dwelling units for poor and vulnerable families in some worst affected villages. The major shelter reconstruction programme, however, is being implemented by the state government, which would benefit 600,000 cyclone-affected families.

NGOs have supplemented their rehabilitation efforts with disaster preparedness initiatives. Prominent NGOs have undertaken construction of over 60 Schools-cum Cyclone Shelters. These efforts supplement government initiatives to construct about 150 multi-purpose cyclone shelters with resource received from various sources. These infrastructure building activities are

backed by efforts to strengthen community-based disaster preparedness through activities such as awareness raising, training, local volunteer mobilisation, contingency planning and institution building at the grassroots, in which NGOs play a major role.

*GO-NGO Collaboration after 1999 Cyclone-New Learning.* After the cyclone, coordination of efforts and collaboration between government and NGOs overcame initial confusions to mature during the rehabilitation phase. Recognition for the sincere role of NGOs contributed to the process. Highlights of GO-NGO collaboration included regular coordination meetings at Block and District levels to monitor rehabilitation process, joint experience sharing, planning and vision building exercises. UNDP's efforts to prepare a database on NGO initiatives and interaction with NGOs facilitated information sharing and planning.

Problems experienced in ensuring GO-NGO coordination during relief operations could be attributed to several factors. The government had no previous experience of working with so many NGOs in a disaster situation as NGOs never before took part in disaster response on such a large scale. The absence of a clear framework for information sharing and coordination of NGO activities made it difficult for the government to identify who deserved facilitative support and who not. As bigger NGOs stole media attention because of superior documentation skills, smaller NGOs received neither media attention nor funds. Some non-existent NGOs took advantage of this confusion and managed funds from donors keen to contribute. However, as time progressed, credible NGOs continued their efforts as the rest withdrew from the scene. NGOs on their part felt the government was indifferent to their efforts and failed to offer support they needed. A major frustration among NGOs was due to the absence of any institutional mechanism for regular consultation between the government and NGOs. To address such concerns, the government set up an NGO Coordination Cell and placed a Secretary in charge to guide NGOs, researchers, and volunteers coming from outside the state, and facilitate interface between NGOs and government departments. The process proved invaluable, and prepared ground for institutionalised GO-NGO coordination for



disaster preparedness and response through OSDMA in later days.

*OSDMA, NGOs, 2001 Floods, and After.* The setting up of Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA) as an autonomous nodal agency for coordinating efforts relating to disaster response, preparedness, and reduction created space for stronger institutional coordination with NGOs. OSDMA developed own database on NGO initiatives for disaster response and preparedness and held regular consultations with them for sharing of information, problems, and plan future course of action. Closer collaboration between NGOs and OSDMA benefited both. It enabled OSDMA to assess capacity building needs, identify problems, and prepare action plans for strengthening disaster reduction measures, and helped NGOs to share their problems with and receive support from the government in carrying out rehabilitation activities in cyclone-hit areas. The 2001 floods were an acid test for this process, which the government and NGOs successfully passed. Emergency coordination among government departments, state headquarters and district administration, and with NGOs ensured quick and efficient response to floods. This was possible due to several steps taken by government and NGOs. NGO initiatives to strengthen community based disaster preparedness, which involved training, contingency planning, formation of village task forces enabled people to better cope with floods.

OSDMA's current activities focus on reconstruction of damaged infrastructure (roads, schools, irrigation facilities, cyclone shelters) and preparation of disaster management policy, plans, and steps needed to strengthen disaster preparedness in the state. It continues to collaborate with NGOs in addressing problems wherever necessary, especially with regard to community disaster based disaster preparedness. OSDMA and NGOs have worked together to raise public awareness on disasters and worked towards greater consensus on various issues and challenges related to disaster management. Such initiatives have facilitated sharing of problems, challenges, and vision building for collaborative steps for disaster reduction initiatives in the state.

### **Removing barriers to GO-NGO collaboration**

Several barriers have to be removed to strengthen GO-NGO collaboration. Common misperceptions that government and NGOs hold against each other have to be removed. NGOs see government as keen to restrict freedom of NGOs through authoritarian control, insensitive to civil society concerns, and opposed to transparency and accountability. The government views NGOs as more vocal and less active, opposed to any move to ensure transparency and accountability, donor driven, obsessed with sectoral issues, over critical of govt. policies, and blind to macro-challenges of development.

Second, the painful legacy of colonial rule in India and other Asian countries accounts for adversarial relationship between state and civil society. The colonial laws and bureaucracy were seen as instruments of exploitation and weapons to curb civic freedom. After decolonisation, over-arching bureaucratic structures emerged as nationalist governments played a central role in the development process. Too much burden on the state and rising social expectations led to tensions between government and people, in which NGOs were perceived to have some role. Though NGOs played an important role in bridging resource and capacity gaps in the development process, their tendency to present themselves as an alternative to government created differences between the two.

Third, the "holier than thou" attitude of NGOs adversely affects meaningful GO-NGO cooperation. Both sectors have their respective strengths and weaknesses. Any effort to hide weaknesses and overplay strengths by one sector is sure to cause heartburn on the other side.

Fourth, even as all NGOs talk of collaboration, few make conscious efforts to share information and engage with the state and other institutions. Some NGOs prefer to practise isolationism as they feel close proximity with the government may affect their freedom. On the other, while some govt. officers understand NGOs better because of regular interaction, others find it hard to interact with NGOs due to a lack of familiarity. The absence of proper institutional and regulative frameworks puts both government and NGOs at a disadvantage. NGOs fail to receive administrative support while the government fails to

benefit from skills, grassroots learning of NGOs in planning and implementing disaster reduction and development activities.

Fifth, factors such as prolonged relief work beyond a reasonable time limit and differential aid provisions by NGOs during the post disaster period creates confusion among NGOs and irks the government, as it affects reconstruction/rehabilitation work. Rehabilitation initiatives of the government and developmental NGOs also suffer as some NGOs and philanthropic organisations continue to provide humanitarian aid to people beyond the immediate phase.

Sixth, a lack of knowledge regarding skills and capacities of NGOs prevents meaningful engagement between government and NGOs in collaborative initiatives. Though continuous interaction with NGOs facilitates better appreciation of NGO skills and capacities, without concrete steps to prepare stronger database on resources, skills and capacities of NGOs, optimal use of capacities and resources can't be possible.

Seven, some NGOs feel that despite greater convergence of views between government and NGOs on pressing matters such as disasters, GO-NGO partnership in the true sense is neither feasible nor desirable, as this may affect the watchdog role of NGOs. It is commonly believed that collaboration and advocacy can't go together. However, adversarial relationship need not be a natural by-product of advocacy. On the contrary, sincere issue-based advocacy may create greater understanding between government and NGOs. In fact, cosy relationship between an NGO and a government department could weaken accountability and breed corruption.

Eight, adequate coordination and networking among NGOs indirectly affects GO-NGO collaboration as competition, confusion and conflict among NGOs and with networks affects their credibility and reduces their bargaining power. In Orissa, the two NGO networks that responded to the 1999 cyclone were not free from internal bickering. Smaller NGOs hate bigger NGOs for their domineering attitude, while bigger NGOs look down upon their smaller counterparts for their

poor institutional strength and avoid sharing a common platform with them on larger issues. Civil society networks led by charismatic individuals often wear a partisan ideology and suffer "leader trashing" at lower levels (Carmen Sirianni, 1995).

Finally, NGOs are treated as outsiders in the present political-bureaucratic environment in India as in most Asian countries. In a democratic set up, the government often sees itself as the sole representative of people's voice, and does not wish to NGOs as equal partners because of their weak representative character. In some developing countries, foreign funded NGOs are seen as agents of global players and any criticism of policies by them is treated as moves to destabilise the government. NGOs oppose any government regulation of NGOs on grounds that it would curtail their freedom and prevent them from their watchdog role. However, the absence of any regulation explains the presence of so many "fly by night" NGOs who tarnish the image of the voluntary sector. A way out of this deadlock can be found only if mechanisms for regulation of NGOs are set in place without affecting their freedom and pluralism.

### **Creating enabling environment for GO-NGO partnership**

Experience shows GO-NGO relationship can take different forms: adversarial, dependence, and collaborative, the last one being mostly the case in democracies. Within an inclusive institutional framework, GO-NGO relationship can be established in many ways: non-intervention, active encouragement, guidance, partnership, to co-option and control (John Clark, 1993). Areas of GO-NGO cooperation that needs further attention include: institutional and legal framework, incentives, sectoral collaboration, NGO role in policy-making, etc. An enabling policy environment is sure to strengthen GO-NGO partnership for disaster reduction and social development. A number of steps need to be taken to strengthen GO-NGO collaboration, focusing on issues such as: 1) capacity building support needed by NGOs for disaster management; 2) norms for partnership, consultation, and coordination; 3) stage and type of collaboration.

Steps Needed for Stronger GO-NGO Collaboration for Disaster Management:

- State and NGOs should overcome their historical differences; see their respective roles as mutually supplementary and not as competing alternatives (John Clark, 1993); and work towards greater establishing greater synergy in efforts for optimal use of resources;
- Make efforts at information sharing and social audit to strengthen transparency and accountability, which would raise their credibility and prepare ground for mutual respect and collaboration;
- Set minimum parameters for humanitarian aid and standardise people's rights and entitlements to rule out confusion among NGOs and with the government;
- Prepare adequate data base on NGO skills, capacities, resources and needs so that the government could identify support NGOs who would play a role in strengthening skills and capacities of grassroots NGOs in disaster management;
- Take steps to bridge 'learning gaps' by documenting disaster experiences and successful response stories for wider dissemination among people;
- NGOs should engage in issues-based advocacy and the government encourage the same to strengthen disaster preparedness and reduction initiatives;
- NGOs should take steps to strengthen alliances and networking amongst them in order to scale up their initiatives in disaster management;
- Finally, NGOs should bring in changes their governance structure in order to strengthen their representative character and enhance their credibility and institutional stature in eyes of people and the government.

## **The Total Disaster Risk Management Approach: An Introduction**

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### **Background**

I am pleased to present the provisional concept of Total Disaster Risk Management or TDRM, which has been developed through the initiative and support of the ADRC and UN-OCHA Kobe office.

The development of this concept is in response to the need for improved disaster management in all levels amidst the increasing prevalence of disaster risks in the world.

The focus of this concept on disaster risks presents a fresh approach to understanding disasters, their nature and underlying causes, preventing their harmful effects, as well as seeking opportunities from their occurrences.

As the title connotes, the concept is in its dynamic development stage. At the moment, instead of a locked definition, its essential features are presented thereby allowing new views and comments to be incorporated.

As a background, the development of the TDRM concept assumes greater importance and relevance now as governments, organizations, sectors and communities become more aware of the increasing prevalence of disaster risks in their midst.

In Asia, millions of people remain vulnerable to natural and human-made hazards, and their vulnerability grows relatively fast.

In the past five years, unprecedented disasters have impoverished millions of people and caused economic damages in terms of billions of dollars. As a consequence, disasters effectively set back social and economic development

at the national and local levels.

In view of this, promoting coordination and collaboration and searching for innovative and more effective approaches in disaster reduction and response have become a shared priority in Asia.

The TDRM concept is a direct outcome of the Consultative Meeting on Regional Cooperation in Disasters convened by ADRC and UN-OCHA Kobe office, in collaboration with USAID OFDA and UNDP Nepal, in Katmandu last July.

The meeting concluded that the impact of disasters would increase dramatically in the near future.

It also recommended that the TDRM Approach be immediately pursued to minimize loss of life and property.

### **The TDRM concept paper**

The draft concept paper that has been disseminated to invite comments and inputs includes four sections: (1) Review of current approaches to disaster management; (2) the development of risk management concepts; (3) the essentials of total disaster risk management; and (4) the community and total disaster risk management.

The draft was written with three objectives in mind: (1) To search for more effective approach to disaster management; (2) to minimize the impact of disasters; and (3) to help sustain development investments in disaster-prone countries in Asia.

### **Review of current approaches to disaster management**

The first section, which is a review of the current approaches to disaster management, emphasizes three important messages.

The first message is that natural disasters are not natural, but rather man-made. Disasters are the consequences of natural hazards and human actions or inaction. In this context, it is conveyed that human societies have the capacity to recognize the risks and factors that could lead or cause disasters, as well as the appropriate interventions to control or manage them. In other words, disasters can be prevented or, at least, their destructiveness minimized. Thus human action or inaction to high risk and vulnerability to natural hazards could spell the difference.

The second message is that significant progress has been made in disaster management, moving from ad-hoc relief to developmental approach. The basic concept of the disaster cycle that has been widely used in the last ten years has complemented this approach.

The third message is that community action and management of the disaster cycle are important, and that disaster relief and development are linked.

### **Development of risk management concepts**

The second section provides an overview of the development of risk management concepts. It traces the origins of risk concepts, presents the terms and concepts related to disaster risks, explains the concepts of hazard, vulnerability in relation to risk, and defines the process of risk analysis and risk management,

Moreover, this section describes the propensity of the disaster potential of natural hazards to increase in view of the growing susceptibility and vulnerability of populations to natural hazards, among others. As disaster potential increases, the coping mechanism of many societies tends to become less effective. This, therefore, underscores, the importance of developing the TDRM approach in response to the current state of disasters worldwide.

### **Essentials of TDRM**



Section three discusses the essentials of TDRM. Two objectives of TDRM are presented: (1) To prevent or mitigate disasters through the enhancement of local capacity and capability, especially in recognizing and reducing disaster risks and possibly transforming them into development opportunities; and (2) to enhance coordination among communities to participate in the decision-making process for disaster management.

As its essential features, TDRM focuses on the underlying conditions of risks generated by unsustainable development, which lead to disaster occurrence. It also endeavors to minimize, if not prevent, disaster losses and to maximize development opportunities. Moreover, its thrust is to increase the capacity of the communities to recognize, manage and reduce risks, and, consequently, the occurrence and magnitude of disasters.

Towards this end, the TDRM Approach must adopt a holistic framework that ensures the effectiveness and quality of disaster risk management interventions. It should also be comprehensive, integrating the disaster risk management approach in all phases of the disaster cycle and ensuring the involvement and contributions of the community and various sectors and fields of disciplines.

Moreover, the following enabling mechanisms are important in order to attain TDRM objectives at the national and local levels:

- A clear and comprehensive policy that defines the objectives and commitment of the organization, community or government to total disaster risk management in relation to development strategies and goals. It should address all aspects disaster management, including preparedness for response, and ensure that mitigation is given proper priority.
- A strategic planning process that enables risk reduction measures to be adopted in both development and disaster management contexts. This will facilitate the development of disaster risk management plan, its integration into local development plans, and the establishment of focal points for coordination, among others.
- The establishment of organizational structures and systems that would facilitate coordination of stakeholders and concerned agencies and

organizations at various levels could ensure efficient and effective implementation of total disaster risk management programs. This involves the establishment of a focal unit and person for coordination of disaster risk management activities, and the identification and provision of resource requirements, including funds and trained personnel.

- Capacity for risk reduction, as an enabling mechanism, allows for the cross-sector integration of risk reduction measures through effective programs for priority sectors and communities at risk.

The disaster risk management process is presented comprised of six systematic steps for problem definition, analysis, decision-making, implementation and monitoring and review:

- First, establish the disaster risk context. This step establishes the strategic, organizational and risk management context.
- Second, identify the disaster risks. This step identifies what, why, and how hazards or certain events or occurrences could translate into disasters
- Third, analyze the disaster risks. This step determines the existing controls and analyzes disaster risks in terms of likelihood and consequences in the context of those controls. The analysis should consider how likely is an event to happen, and what are the potential consequences and their magnitude.
- Fourth, assess and prioritize the disaster risks. This step compares estimated levels of risk against the pre-established criteria and ranks disaster risks to identify disaster management priorities. (Acceptable vs. treat risk)
- Fifth, treat the disaster risks. This step involves identifying a range of options for treating the priority risks, such as options for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery, selecting intervention options, planning and implementing intervention strategies.
- Lastly, monitor and review. This is important since few risks remain static and the disaster risk system and plan must remain relevant.

In general, this process aids decision makers in determining possible outcomes

of risks and undertake appropriate measures to control or mitigate their impact. In this regard, disaster risk management promotes good disaster management practice, and therefore, should be integrated into disaster management plans, programs and activities.

### **Community and TDRM**

The fourth and last section elaborates on the importance of participative, community approach in TDRM.

The effectiveness of disaster risk management interventions could be ensured when the community and people at risk are directly involved in disaster risk management.

Through the participative approach, the determination of risks and the intervention measures are not imposed on the community, but rather accomplished by the very people concerned.

Community involvement not only allows problems to be defined correctly and responsive measures to be designed and implemented, but also allows people to respond to disasters more efficiently and effectively with existing local resources.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, four points are emphasized.

- Natural Disasters as a terminology is misleading. The public must understand that hazards and disasters have much to do with human knowledge, behavior and actions.
- TDRM is a development issue requiring long-term strategic planning and allocation of funds. TDRM must be an essential part of development programmes.
- To promote TDRM, commitment to disaster mitigation and improved

disaster response is emphasized.

- TDRM enables national governments to have a holistic and comprehensive knowledge and information on disaster risks and vulnerabilities, and allows the government coordination body to ensure disaster preparedness and response.

The pursuit of the TDRM, with special regard for community involvement, is in consonance with the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: A Strategy for Disaster Reduction for the Year 2000 and Beyond.

With the current state of disasters in Asia, the need for improved disaster management in all levels is increasingly viewed as a development priority in the region. The development of the Total Disaster Risk Management Approach is a significant stride forward, towards addressing this priority need.

**NGO and UN-OCHA**

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**Introduction**

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or UN-OCHA is mandated to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies; advocate for the rights of people in need; promote preparedness and prevention; and facilitate sustainable solutions.

Because of its unique nature - coordination of humanitarian assistance - UN-OCHA has a special role to play with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), who are key players in the humanitarian community. They are among those who are on the front line for delivering the food, often on behalf of the United Nations and other organizations, fund projects and advocate for humanitarian issues. The UN-OCHA in particular, greatly values the role and involvement of NGOs in humanitarian assistance. They deliver humanitarian assistance. NGOs and UN-OCHA collaborate in many aspects and mutually benefit from each other, both at headquarter level and in the field.

**Policy development**

NGOs participate in policy development work with UN-OCHA through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The IASC is the collective voice of the international humanitarian community. Regular meetings in New York and Geneva provide a unique forum for the UN and NGOs as well as Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) for coordinating all aspects of inter-agency work, discussing operational and policy issues on current emergencies as well as rehabilitation and recovery projects.

Three international NGO consortia are members of the IASC: InterAction, a Consortium of 160 member organizations, the US largest coalition of relief, development and refugee agencies; the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), an advocate network of NGOs, and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), an alliance of NGOs involved in emergency humanitarian assistance. Other relevant NGOs are regularly invited to participate in IASC meetings on an ad hoc basis to share information on their activities.

NGOs have been at the centre of recent policy initiatives on staff security, the use of armed escorts, military-humanitarian relations, and various other matters. On the issue of access and security, UN-OCHA is well placed in all instances to have an influential role and serves as an entry point for NGOs to political and other UN bodies. Humanitarian action, in the United Nations context, is closely related to political, military, human rights, and socio-economic and environmental aspects of crises.

### **Advocacy**

Advocacy, one of the three pillars of UN-OCHA's work, is an indispensable tool for promoting the awareness of and respect for international humanitarian principles.

NGO expertise in advocacy, both at the national and international level, is vital to the success of humanitarian action. For example, through the Sphere Project, NGOs have developed a humanitarian charter and have articulated minimum standards and best practices in humanitarian action.

In the field, UN-OCHA and local NGOs advocate humanitarian principles and the protection of civilians in countries affected by conflict. NGOs also act as powerful advocates by speaking out on humanitarian issues.

UN-OCHA collaborates with NGOs in designing and implementing targeted advocacy campaigns and joint initiatives.

An example of this partnership has been the Round Table jointly organized in Brussels by UN-OCHA and Voluntary Organizations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), a consortium of 100 NGOs throughout Europe that are active in the field of humanitarian aid, including emergency aid, rehabilitation, disaster preparedness and conflict prevention.

This initiative took place on the day of the launch of the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) 2002 on the theme "Reaching the vulnerable". Participants included UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ruud Lubbers; UN Humanitarian Coordinators from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South-Eastern Europe; as well as NGO representatives from, among others, Agro Action, Action contre la Faim, and Care International. They discuss access to the vulnerable and the respective roles of the UN and NGOs in humanitarian assistance.

The session was attended by representatives of major Belgian and international NGOs, such as Medecins sans Frontieres Belgium, Caritas Belgium, Handicap International, International Rescue Committee, World Vision, COOPI, JOIN; UN agencies; and the Belgian Government.

Furthermore, NGO are involved in advocacy campaigns on internally displaced persons (IDPs). They also participate in inter-agency missions organized by the Unit on Internal Displacement that has been established within UN-OCHA. The objective of these missions is to identify problems faced by IDPs and ways to strengthen the international response to internal displacement.

## **Coordination**

NGOs have an important role to play in response to natural and man-made disasters. They are involved in UN-OCHA's coordinating work at different levels: strategic thinking, information, and implementation of projects. They have good knowledge of the local situation and their logistic capacity complements UN-OCHA's coordinating role.

## **Military and civil defence assets**

The NGO community is part of the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel to Military and Civil Defense Unit, as well as the Consultative Group on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA), the decision-making bodies of MCDU's work.

The NGO umbrella organizations are also members of the ongoing international process of formulating guidelines for the use of military and civil defence assets for humanitarian purposes in complex emergencies, with the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) on the current Drafting Committee and ICVA and INTERACTION as members of the upcoming Review Committee of the process.

An increasing number of NGOs are among the participants in the MCDU-run UN Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) training programme and work with both international and local NGOs during exercises.

## **Consolidated appeal process**

UN-OCHA involves local and international NGOs in the preparation of the CAP, which reflects the way the UN and its humanitarian partners, the Red Cross, local and international NGOs work together in the field.

Local and international NGOs participate in collaboration with the country teams in the Common Humanitarian Assistance Programming (CHAP), one of the CAP's major strategy-setting instruments for consensus building.

NGOs are operational partners in implementing the projects in the field.

NGOs also participate in CAP field training workshops, representing one third of the participants. They benefit from this inter-agency platform available for common analysis and strategy formulation, increased training on humanitarian principles, programming and project cycles.



## **UN-OCHA - NGO partnership in the field**

*Asia.* In the Tibet region of China, UN-OCHA launched a programme of almost US\$800,000 in 1999 through an NGO to help farmers recover from heavy snowstorms and severe winter conditions. The aim of the project is to reintroduce animals, sheep in particular, as well as resistant crops. The Association for International Solidarity in Asia, an Italian NGO, implements it.

In Indonesia, UN-OCHA channels funds provided by the United Kingdom - a total of £750,000 - to local NGOs to implement community assistance and capacity building projects. The agreement allows local NGOs to request start-up funding for their community-based projects, up to a maximum of US\$100,000 per project.

In the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) a similar UN-OCHA managed NGO funding mechanism has been functioning since 1999. The fund, with the support of SIDA, provides bridging finance up to US\$150,000 per project for resident international NGO's to retain a presence in the country pending funding from major donors. In addition, the fund seeks to support projects that reinforce local coping mechanisms.

In Afghanistan, there is a long tradition of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and NGOs. NGOs do not only play an important role in terms of policy-making and strategic thinking, but their joint resources and projects also represent an enormous monetary value, in particular in the non-food sectors. They are often the ones that deliver and execute on the ground. Their role is vital as executing agencies and implementing partners.

In 2002, the UN looks forward to working with the NGO community on a number of key common challenges:

- To maintain a large and complex humanitarian operation to save lives and sustain the livelihoods of approximately 5-6 million Afghans in need inside Afghanistan;
- To address continued security concerns;

- To build local government capacity;
- To establish UNAMA (integrated UN mission) and assess its implications for the humanitarian programme; and
- To bridge the classic gap between relief and development.

*Latin America.* UN-OCHA's regional office for Latin America has been working with the Forum of International NGOs of Ecuador in maintaining and updating a web site with information on international cooperation for relief activities for the population affected by recent activity (since 1999) of Tungurahua volcano. This web site has facilitated information sharing and coordination between all the NGOs and international organizations.

During the recent United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC) mission to Honduras - in response to the emergency caused by the tropical storm 'Michelle' - an Internet list was established to facilitate information-sharing between UN organizations and NGOs providing relief assistance.

The information received from the different stakeholders was presented in a matrix, sorted by municipalities, describing the type of relief assistance provided by each agency. ECHO, IOM, World Vision, CARE, Save the Children, and other international organizations and NGOs participated actively in this initiative.

*Africa.* In Angola, the majority of humanitarian projects are implemented by international NGOs. Although increasing numbers of national organizations are interested in implementing programmes, many do not have the necessary resources. A 2002 project "coordination, security and support services", implemented by CARE, aims to build the capacity of local organizations and to provide financial support for local organizations' projects through a Trust Fund. CARE will also assume full responsibility for the management of the Trust Fund.

In Sudan, UN-OCHA has set up a coordination structure with 35 international NGOs within the context of the Operation Life Line Sudan (OLS). UN-OCHA

facilitates security of humanitarian workers from NGOs. UN-OCHA also negotiates agreements for these NGOs with Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on the modalities of intervention – codes of conduct on the ground, standard operations and various Memoranda of Understanding on the use of telecommunication equipment, etc.

In Uganda, UN-OCHA commissioned a British NGO, Oxfam, and the Kabarole Research Center to carry out a study on Needs Assessment on Resettlement of Internally Displaced People in the Rwenzori Region. Current problems faced by displaced persons and possibilities for resettlement were studied.

### **Environmental emergencies**

NGOs have an important role to play in response to environmental emergencies and natural disasters with environmental impacts, since many are working locally and can provide important information on local ecosystems and environmentally sensitive areas in the event of an emergency. NGOs also frequently have strong links to the local community and a good sense of local sensitivities and priorities with respect to environmental issues, which can be important considerations in establishing response priorities when environmental emergencies strike.

UN-OCHA works primarily with international environmental NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Green Cross, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth, along with other agencies and partners, to ensure a strong international safety net for preparedness and response to environmental emergencies. Many of these have local chapters and strong ties to locally based NGOs working in areas where emergencies strike, thereby serving as an important source of information and expertise. Furthermore, links with local NGOs are established upon arrival at an emergency site, during assessment missions, and their experience and technical expertise in establishing appropriate response strategies and priorities are tapped.