

Protecting Development From Disasters:

UNDP'S SUPPORT TO THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



Published by Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
United Nations Development Programme
New York

Design: Rodrigo Domingues

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COVER PHOTO: Urban growth had led poor communities to build their dwellings on floating rafts. When floods affected the region in 2008, disease outbreaks among these communities led many families to be relocated to temporary shelters.

Photo by: Borja Santos Porras/UNDP Ecuador

BACK PHOTO: Natural disaster in the eyes of Almaty Children in Kazakhstan

Photo by: UNDP Kazakhstan

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Foreword

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Disasters caused by natural hazards, such as drought, hurricanes or earthquakes, take lives, cause widespread human suffering, cost billions of dollars a year and literally wash away years of costly and hard-earned development gains.

Access to education and healthcare, stable employment and livelihoods, safety and security, as well as opportunities for women, are all threatened in countries that are prone to disasters. Costs are incurred during the immediate recovery period, but often it takes decades for a country and its population to recoup the full losses from a disaster.

To make matters worse, the vast majority of disasters hit developing countries already struggling to overcome poverty. While no single reason can be given for this, a combination of environmental and socio-economic factors make people living in poor nations more vulnerable to this kind of catastrophe than those living in developed countries.

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed hundreds of thousands of people, was a turning point for the international community. This event put disaster risk reduction higher on the list of development priorities. The tsunami made it painfully obvious of the urgent need for more robust measures to protect development achievements from natural hazards.

The deadly destruction caused by the event spurred a call to action to better prevent, mitigate and manage disaster risk. One of the immediate steps taken in its aftermath was the adoption by 168 UN Member States of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), committing to a substantial and widespread reduction in disaster losses.

But to achieve this ambitious target, action must be taken by a large number of national and international entities to build and sustain risk management capacity. With this in mind, the United Nations General Assembly tasked the United Nations Development Programme with assisting Members States in putting the priorities of the HFA into action.

By working with central governments, communities and a wide range of national and international in-country partners, UNDP helps countries to reduce disaster risk and thereby protect their development gains.

But much more remains to be done. Continued commitment and actions are required. In 2015 the HFA will expire, to be followed up by new international mechanisms for development and disaster risk reduction. As a contribution to the process of considering any follow-on mechanism, UNDP has undertaken a reflection of its work generally in the disaster risk field, and with specificity the last eight years of its support to the HFA. This report comprehensively outlines UNDP's engagement in implementing the HFA and illustrates successes, challenges and lessons learned as countries and communities move to become more disaster resilient.

The international community has a special opportunity to put disaster risk at the heart of both the post-2015 development agenda as well as the successor to the Hyogo Framework. I hope that this report and the experiences of UNDP over the last eight years can play a part in that critical undertaking, as well as contribute to improving disaster risk reduction and management for the benefit of the most vulnerable people living in countries affected by natural disasters.



Jordan Ryan



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