

People's Process

in Post-disaster and Post-conflict Recovery and Reconstruction



UN-HABITAT
United Nations Human Settlements Programme



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Foreword

Over the last few years UN-HABITAT, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has been heavily involved in the recovery and reconstruction efforts following conflicts and disasters in several countries in the region. In every occasion, UN-HABITAT has advocated a *seamless transition* from the emergency phase to the recovery phase. Once a disaster or a conflict takes place, the country affected as well as the international community are very keen to assist in the emergency situation from the humanitarian point of view by providing the country and the NGOs their both financial and in-kind contributions. It makes possible for the aid agencies to take a swift action to help the affected people by distributing food, water, medicine, blankets and temporary shelter materials (tents and plastic sheet), etc. In the *seamless transition*, we have to think about how to make use of those materials provided under the emergency phase instead of dumping them in the process of moving from emergency to reconstruction phase.

There is a need to conduct emergency operation giving due consideration to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, even bearing in mind the future development plan in the framework of a *seamless transition*. For instance, temporary shelter materials should be reused to construct permanent houses as UN-HABITAT demonstrated in Pakistan. Also, the location of temporary shelters should be decided in considering not only the location of future permanent houses but also infrastructure to be constructed, and based on the past structure of communities. Furthermore, there is a need to examine and study the flexibility of using contributions earmarked on the emergency phase for reconstruction. It is our future challenge to clearly define what the *seamless transition* is, by showing concrete means to realize it.

Furthermore, recent experiences have demonstrated that the agencies get heavily involved in the transition phase, building temporary housing consuming considerable time and money, while the affected people sit and watch. The challenge for UN-HABITAT to address is, how to launch the recovery soon after a disaster or a conflict, involving the affected people?

In all the projects that UN-HABITAT has been implementing, we have advocated an approach where the affected people were placed at the centre of their recovery process. This has proved that the most effective method of recovery is when people have a control of their own recovery process. We have also been the advisors to Governments on this policy. While we have a strong methodology in the implementation, one shortcoming was that it has not been consolidated into a document that can be used as a Guideline. Therefore it was decided to bring the key actors together to brainstorm the approaches with the objective of developing a guideline on the People's Process of Recovery.

A workshop was held in Fukuoka in January 2007 with 12 key UN-HABITAT staff members from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia and The Philippines. This Guideline is an outcome of the deliberations of the workshop. This guideline will serve as a "ready-reckoner" for post-disaster and post-conflict recovery programme implementers. At the same time, it addresses some of the implementation policy issues and provides guidance in the methodologies to be applied. For example Community Action Planning has been practiced by UN-HABITAT for nearly two decades, but its application to conflict and disaster recovery situation has not been documented before. This guideline attempts at presenting the complex process of recovery in a simple and practical manner. We have learned lessons from the past disasters where Governments', development agencies' and humanitarian organizations' responses were not coherent, causing confusion and delays in recovery. Therefore in anticipation of effectively responding to future disasters, with a firm policy and approach, this guideline is published for the use of all interested stakeholders. Additionally, the intention is to launch the recovery programme from the DAY ONE following a disaster.

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ACRONYMS

CAP	Community Action Planning
CBO	Community Based Organization
CBDM	Community Based Disaster Management
CBRA	Community Based Risk Assessment
CC	Community Contracts
CDC	Community Development Council
CG	Construction Groups
DM	District Manager
DMC	Disaster Management Committee
DRC	Disaster Response Committee
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Geographic Positioning System
LA	Local Authority
LG	Local Government
MIS	Monitoring Information System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPM	National Project Manager
PG	Primary Group
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

1 INTRODUCTION



Asia and the Pacific Region, Prone to Disasters

1.1 Disaster Prone Asia-Pacific Region

A large number of countries in Asia and the Pacific region are prone to disasters of various kinds. The impact of disasters on people in terms of loss of life and assets, and impediment to development is colossal. Common forms of disasters are earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods, land/mud slides and cyclones. In the recent past, the scale of destruction of disasters had been massive due to the intensity and the lack of preparedness. During the last decade, UN-HABITAT, ROAP has responded to the calls by Governments and donors to assist people in reconstruction following conflicts and disasters. This has, on the one hand given UN-HABITAT an opportunity to assist the affected people rebuild their lives rapidly, whilst on the other hand, a position to advocate for progressive policies on reconstruction and recovery.

1.2 ROAP's Response

During the last decade ROAP has been involved in post conflict and post-disaster recovery projects in several countries in Asia. In the implementation of these projects, the underlining principle has been to place the affected people at the center of the process. This means mobilizing the affected communities to take decisions on their recovery and supporting them. UN-HABITAT, ROAP strongly believes that unleashing the potential of the people is the only way in which all the affected people can recover in a short time. People have been able to cope with extreme difficulties and have demonstrated a relentless ability to improve their lives in the face of extreme circumstances. In the post conflict and post-disaster scenario, their ingenuity and creativity need to be directed for the rebuilding of their lives and their physical assets.

What are the keys to unlocking this huge potential of people? Firstly, organise the people to gain confidence to cross the psychological threshold; secondly, empowerment through mobilization; thirdly, security, a place to call their own; fourthly, some form of financial assistance to get them started; and lastly, technical advice to build better housing. These will complete a cycle of support to the people to rebuild their lives and their homes. The feeling of achievement, pride, dignity and security will elevate the families to a level higher than their pre-conflict or pre-disaster existence.

1.3 Principles

The following key principles form the basis of the recovery strategy:

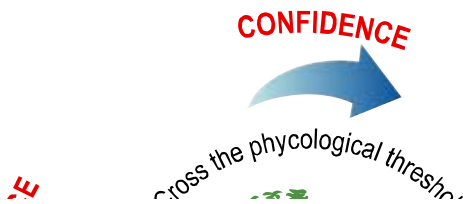
- **Respect** the primacy of the needs of the families
- **Recognise** people's organizations and their capacities, and strengthen mutual respect and dialogue
- **Ensure** security, protection and right to a "place to live"
- **Responsibility** for recovery rests with the Families and Communities
- **Cultivate** a spirit of peace-building and community cohesiveness
- **Devolve** decision-making to the point of action

- **Support** to the authorities is essential for the people to take recovery into their own hands
- **Generate** a process that would allow every family in need to build a basic secure home, which can be improved incrementally over time
- **Design** the recovery investment to remain with the community as far as possible

1.4 Seamless Recovery

Recovery literally means getting people back on their feet and enabling them to rebuild their lives. Rebuilding lives involves overcoming trauma, rebuilding their shelter, securing income-earning opportunities, getting back to jobs, getting children back to school and a host of other essential things.

Seamless recovery has NO transition. Relief and recovery start at the same time on DAY ONE. It is NOT about transition from one static phase to another. It is recovery starting from the very beginning along with supply of relief. Relief in the form of food, clothing, blankets, lamps, heating material and water has to be supplied while at the same time organizing people to rebuild their lives. Seamlessness is achieved by collapsing the two processes into one.



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