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Policy Department of DG EXPO for the Committee on Development (DEVE)
Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy of DG IPOL for the Committee on the
Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

WORKSHOP

Towards a post-Hyogo Framework for Action: Strengthening disaster resilience for sustainable development

Tuesday, 20 January 2015, 10.00 - 12.30
European Parliament, Brussels

Altiero Spinelli Building A1E2

Background note

The aim of the workshop is to provide a forum for discussion between MEPs and the representatives of the Commission, the UN, academia and national organisations. In this way, the workshop constitutes the contribution of the European Parliament to the discussions leading to the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to take place in Sendai (Japan) in March 2015. The workshop is jointly organised by the Committee on Development and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

The context

The world is facing more frequent and more devastating natural and man-made disasters that trigger loss of life and economic damage and contribute to vulnerability, destroyed livelihoods and a failure to cope. However, there is evidence that investing in disaster preparedness, especially at the local level, can help save lives, substantially reduce losses and facilitate reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Acknowledging the need for coordinated global efforts in disaster risk reduction, the UN designated the 1990s the 'International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction'. In 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted the International Strategy of Disaster Reduction (ISDR) to serve as the strategic framework for international action in this area.

The next milestone, the [Hyogo Framework for Action \(HFA\) 2005-2015: 'Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters'](#), was adopted by 168 UN Member States as the blueprint for reducing global disaster risk. With the objective of building disaster resilience and making the world safer from natural hazards, the HFA focused on five priorities:

- ensuring that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation,
- improving the identification, assessment and monitoring of risk information and early warning,
- building a culture of safety and resilience at all levels,
- reducing the underlying risk factors in key sectors and
- strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

While undeniable progress has been made in many of these areas, the gap between policy and practice remains considerable. Response still takes precedence over prevention, preparedness and mitigation.

The European Union's contribution

The European Union has developed a comprehensive and integrated approach to DRR, both within the EU and in developing countries. The approach is set out in two key policy documents: the [European Consensus on Development \(2005\)](#) and the [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid \(2007\)](#).

In February 2009 the Commission also adopted two communications: the '[EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries](#)' and the '[Community Approach on the Prevention of Natural and Man-Made Disasters](#)', which addressed disaster risk within the EU. These were complemented in October 2012 by the [communication on resilience](#).

Revamping its own organisation in 2010, the Commission brought together Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid under DG ECHO's responsibility in order to improve coordination and response inside and outside the EU. Finally, the [new Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#), which came into force at the beginning of 2014, created a framework enabling EU Member States to better coordinate preparation, prevention and planning, and to provide a more coordinated and rapid response to European and global disasters.

The European Parliament contributed to discussions on DRR through its December 2013 [resolution on the 'EU approach to resilience and disaster risk reduction in developing countries: learning from food security crises'](#), which was based on a DEVE own-initiative report (rapporteur: Gay Mitchell). Among other recommendations, the resolution called for better linking humanitarian and development action to support resilience, especially in the most fragile contexts. Labelling DRR an essential component of resilience, Parliament emphasised the need to improve DRR strategies at all levels and recognised that a strong political commitment would be crucial for the effective implementation of resilience and DRR strategies and activities.

In the EU's disaster risk management and resilience agenda, significant achievements can be attributed to the Union's policies and financial support. As the EU advances towards the goal of a coherent policy on disaster risk management, it has produced numerous deliverables, including:

- preparing a cross-sectoral overview of risks in the EU, taking into account the future impact of climate change and climate adaptation measures, including multi-hazard national risk assessments;
- preparing guidance for disaster prevention based on good practices;
- working with Member States and international partners to collect and share data (an ongoing effort);

- mainstreaming disaster risk management in different EU policies and financial instruments, such as cohesion policy, transport and energy, research and innovation; and
- addressing cross-border impact through macro-regional projects and strategies, such as the Baltic Sea strategy, Danube strategy and regional maritime strategies.

The EU has also contributed to international DRR efforts. ECHO allocated over 20 % of humanitarian funding to DRR activities in 2013 and has mainstreamed DRR in more than half the projects it supports. ECHO's dedicated disaster preparedness programme, DIPECHO, has run for nearly two decades, helping vulnerable communities to become more resilient in particularly disaster-prone regions around the world.

Towards a new post-Hyogo framework for action

As the HFA is drawing to its close, a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction is being negotiated on the basis of a wide consultation process facilitated by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

The new 'Post-Hyogo Framework for Action' (HFA2) is expected to be adopted at the 2015 conference in Sendai. The [Zero Draft of the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) takes into consideration the review of the HFA and regional and national experiences gained over a decade. The goal set out in the Zero Draft is the 'prevention of disaster risk creation and the reduction of the existing disaster risk through economic, social, cultural and environmental measures which address exposure and vulnerability, and thus strengthen resilience'. While each state maintains the primary responsibility to reduce disaster risk, the text envisages a cooperative framework that involves all levels – from the local to the global – and a great variety of stakeholders working on implementation at these levels. The Zero Draft defines five main priorities – the pillars of the framework – which build upon those defined by the HFA:

- understanding disaster risk;
- strengthening governance and institutions to manage disaster risk;
- investing in economic, social, cultural and environmental resilience;
- enhancing preparedness for effective response; and
- building back better during recovery and reconstruction in the aftermath of a disaster.

In order to contribute to discussions on the post-Hyogo framework, the Commission has adopted a [communication on 'The post 2015 Hyogo Framework for Action: Managing risks to achieve resilience'](#). The text's recommendations include establishing a set of standards, guidelines and mechanisms under the new framework. These are intended to bolster implementation and monitoring (peer review) mechanisms; lead to a more open data policy; improve risk and crisis communication; and enhance governance for disaster management at all levels and across all sectors.

The Council's conclusions in June 2014 confirmed support for DRR efforts and the Commission's approach towards an ambitious post-2015 framework that would address vulnerabilities and promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The EU has clearly stated its goal of promoting poverty reduction and sustainable development worldwide, and of making humanitarian aid more effective. The institution's commitment and contribution to strengthening resilience and helping vulnerable communities – including through DRR – have increased over the last decades. Based on experiences in DRR policy and strategy, and

in local community-based preparedness efforts, the EU has adhered to five principles in the negotiation process.

- Firstly, the framework should improve accountability, transparency and governance, with countries more effectively implementing the relevant policy frameworks.
- The HFA2 should deliver tangible results, and progress should be measured according to commonly-agreed and action-oriented targets and indicators.
- Thirdly, DRR should become an essential component of sustainable and smart growth inside and outside the EU, and it should boost that growth. This will require that the public and the private sector develop and integrate DRR into their long-term strategies.
- Fourthly, vulnerabilities and needs must be addressed in a comprehensive manner, and the new framework should focus on and support the local level and the most vulnerable segments of society.
- Finally, as a number of major global discussions are scheduled to produce outcomes that will define the next decade, the EU has pleaded for an HFA2 that is coherent with other international frameworks, including those on climate change and sustainable development. For its part, the EU is promoting DRR as an essential element of the climate and post-2015 development agendas.

The workshop seeks to facilitate discussion among various stakeholders. They will describe their experiences with the HFA and their assessment of it at international, EU and Member State levels. Participants will also offer their views of the ongoing negotiation process and the expected outcome of the new DRR framework.

In an atmosphere of open discussion, participants are encouraged to explore the EU's role in promoting DRR both within and outside its borders, and to examine how the Union could best contribute to future efforts under the new framework.