

Summary of Event on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) organized by Delegations of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to UNESCO and the OECD, 8 November 2013 (programme below)

The event brought together representatives from governments, the private sector, international organizations and knowledge institutions in order to identify key challenges, best practices and opportunities for cooperation with a view to the post-2015 development agenda and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

Big Picture: Margareta Wahlström, SRSG of UNISDR, described a shift from *responding* to disasters in the seventies to *preventing* disasters. The goal of the HFA 2005-2015 is to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. Increasing resilience to disasters is essential for Sustainable Development, i.a. because without it (ODA) investments could be affected or destroyed by disasters. Parallel to the post 2015 development agenda process, UNISDR is conducting regional and global consultations with all stakeholders to identify key elements, targets and indicators for a post 2015 HFA. The outcomes will lead to a post 2015 HFA, to be adopted in March 2015 during the 3rd UN World Conference on DRR in Sendai, Japan. Whatever form a post-2015 framework takes it should offer the opportunity to scale-up disaster risk reduction efforts that can be measured against development outcomes. It should emphasize greater outreach at local and community levels and reflect on the substantive issues, like the need for financial instruments for greater investment in disaster risk management and the implementation of this agenda based on sound scientific and technical expertise.

Science: Johannes Cullmann, Chair of the Intergovernmental Council of UNESCO's IHP Programme, noted that with regard to DRR, science has followed the same methods and norms for too long. If you always think like a hammer you will see disasters only like a nail, and this narrow view gets in the way of the inventive and more effective solutions we need. This narrow view also fails to address the fact that the world around us constantly evolves: e.g. Paris once was a swamp, but now it needs totally different solutions to water related risks. In a changing world only *flexible* criteria for design and construction can help to accommodate the extra water or to address the lack of it. The same goes for data and statistics: they are key to measuring risks and to finding solutions, but only if science complements them by looking at them from different perspectives. Example: a research project involved the Catholic Church to understand how people experience and see risks. We have to find solutions where they are.

Policy: Stephane Jacobzone, Counselor at the OECD Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development, explained that governments have to develop clear accountability frameworks for risk management, where responsibilities would be clearly assigned. They should also not aim for zero risk, as this would not be economically efficient. The efficient reduction of disaster damages therefore raises the following governance challenges and questions: how to determine the levels of residual risk that individuals and society can choose to accept or tolerate? Who can be responsible for what and how? What are the costs of reducing risks over the short, the medium and the long term? Answering these questions is not simply a matter of top-down investments in national infrastructure but is also a matter of risk governance. OECD suggests a mix of structural and non-structural policy measures, including some to be implemented at the local level at local cost. The role of science and technology in understanding risk exposures is key to these strategies, but so too are economic analysis of the tradeoffs that different options for risk management entail. The OECD is developing Principles on the Governance of Critical Risks as a strategic guidance tool to support policy makers. These Principles promote government leadership and participatory processes that include all stakeholders to support effective risk governance and management. Fostering such an integrated perspective is particularly crucial for making decisions about management of water risks, due to the broad range of interests attached to water uses.

Inventive solutions: How do you motivate partners to actually cooperate in this integrated framework for DRR? A Dutch best practice in this respect was presented by Michel Rentenaar, Acting Director Environment, Water, Climate and Energy of the Dutch MFA. Cognizant of the need to harness the potential of the private sector for solutions, The Dutch MFA and the Ministry of Infrastructure & Environment looked for a way to connect the Dutch Water Sector to the needs of governments. The goal was to help overcome the difficult questions that governments often are confronted with when they need help for DRR: who can identify the needs in a short period of time? And which experts and solutions do you turn to? To facilitate this starting phase of DRR, the Dutch Government established the "Dutch Risk Reduction Team" (DRR-Team): a unique window for the whole world where governments can instantly be connected to the right expertise, ranging from climate change adaptation (ecosystem approach for infrastructures) to disaster preparedness (inflatable dikes). For this, countries can send their request to the Dutch diplomatic representation in the country or in the region. As disasters do not happen only in developing countries, the DRR Facility is financed with both ODA and non-ODA funds so that all countries can be serviced (EUR 5 mln/2 years).

Debate:

- There is a strong link to be made between the HFA and the UNFCCC because DRR science needs funding, and big funds privilege the politically relevant climate theme.
- The potential of Higher Education: even though business schools teach how to manage risks for companies, they do not teach how to address *disaster* risks.
- UNISDR would like to develop a roster of experts supported by their countries to facilitate expertise on Disaster Risk Management when requested. The Dutch DRR Facility could easily help identify interested partners.
- UNISDR has networks with different sectors, national and local governments, parliamentarians, academia and scientific community, private sector, NGOs and civil society organizations, self-organizing communities (women's groups, children, persons with disabilities, elderly) and more than 1,500 cities that have signed the campaign "Making Cities Resilient". It has their best practices to offer.
- How can scientists be involved in the establishment of the post 2015 HFA?. UNISDR will contact the Division of Water Sciences UNESCO to benefit from UNESCO's scientific networks.
- DRR is not only about hydrology, but also about *social* uncertainties. Therefore the social sciences should not be overlooked when it comes to understanding and influencing the way citizens, companies and decision-makers deal with risks.
- Potential link between religion and DRR: religious leaders sometimes have 100 mln followers(!). This potential influence must be harnessed as was done during World Water Day 2013 in The Hague, it can have a huge impact.
- Tools that visualize risks are crucial for addressing them and raising awareness about them. Example: the "Aqueduct" atlas of water risks of the World Resources Institute: <http://bit.ly/1eIue0I>.
- DRR focal points are useful, but we need integrated answers.
- Risk is "booming" because people move to cities. So we need to change planning: first think water, then think building (ecosystem approach: build with nature).