

THE 2007 PROVENTION FORUM

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

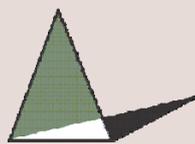
Making Disaster Risk Reduction Work



Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, Lesotho, 2006, International Federation

A review and discussion of key themes, challenges and potential contributions to be made by ProVention in promoting disaster risk reduction.

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PROVENTION
CONSORTIUM

Mark Pelling
Hazards, Vulnerability and Risk Research Unit
King's College London



2007 ProVention Forum – Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Executive Summary

The ProVention Consortium is a global partnership of governments, international organisations, academic organisations, the private sector and civil society. Its goal is to support developing countries reduce the risk and social, economic and environmental impacts of natural hazards on vulnerable populations. The ProVention Forum 2007 had the theme of 'Making disaster risk reduction work'. The Forum was held in Dar es Salaam on February 13-15, 2007 and brought together more than 100 partners.

The aim of this Forum Report is to record the state-of-the art and identify key challenges and opportunities for progress in fields of disaster risk reduction based on the discussions held at the Forum.¹

This Executive Summary is structured around the six working themes of the Forum and also includes comment on wider conversations. Finally six key messages are identified that ProVention and its partners might consider in their work over the coming year. This report is a summary of the views and dialogue of ProVention partners at the Forum as captured and contextualised by the author independently.

Urban risk: moving from analysis to action

The scale and pace of urbanisation and attendant disaster risk requires urgent action to both undo risk that has accumulated in urban systems (for example through retro-fitting) and prevent the production of risk in future development activities (for example through more participatory and self-organised local land-use and development planning methodologies). Work on social vulnerability analysis and integrated risk assessment, on extending planning and building construction standards to the informal sector and exploring options for piggybacking local disaster risk reduction work onto existing social development programmes all offer scope for improving urban risk reduction.

Future work would do well to recognise that decentralisation has weakened many municipalities, that for those at risk, disaster risk is only one – and often not the most pressing – form of risk, that many urban populations are youthful and this is a resource as well as a challenge for community based disaster risk reduction, and that the rural-urban dichotomy is for many people, and in many disasters an artificial one.

Slow onset disaster, climate adaptation, and disaster risk reduction

Drought and climate change management have developed with some separation from the disaster risk reduction community. What advantages would closer integration bring?

Drought risk management is gradually shifting from an environmental/hazard management focus to the implementation of innovative policy using less structural approaches, such as social protection and market solutions. The change is slow and still the majority of effort is on short-term humanitarian rather than longer term risk reduction and developmental approaches. There also is a clear gap between the many drought policies at the various levels and concrete actions on the ground. These findings suggest that drought risk management and the wider disaster risk reduction communities continue to offer many opportunities to learn from each other. A consensus emerged at the workshop that drought management, while requiring specific monitoring and response capacities, should be part of disaster risk reduction strategies and therefore eventually integrated into development planning and policy.

¹ The report does not provide an overview of the presentations and discussions held at the ProVention project showcase or partner side events. For a detailed Forum programme, including the workshop concept papers and PowerPoint presentations, visit www.proventionconsortium.org/forum2007

Policy development to support adaptation to climate change is at an early stage and ways of integrating these perspectives with disaster risk reduction would be helpful. The Hyogo Framework for Action provides some guidance and a closer synergy between adaptation and disaster risk reduction is likely to benefit both agendas, so long as geophysical hazards are not sidelined in the process. Closer working will be helped by clearer and common terminologies and clarity on mandates between agencies. Disaster risk reduction programmes and strategies will need to consider longer term changes in climate conditions. One way forward is to build stronger ties between national climate change focal points and national platforms for disaster management.

Risk transfer and risk reduction: moving from a dysfunctional to a symbiotic relationship

Risk transfer and disaster risk reduction are often seen as separate components of disaster risk management. Opportunities exist for improving resilience through the closer integration of these two areas of work where each can provide incentives for the other. Examples exist where micro-insurance has been partnered by micro-finance for small business development, and where commercial insurance has promoted retrofitting. But challenges to integration exist, perhaps most importantly: the poor are unable to afford commercial insurance, the financial stability of micro- and macro-insurers can be threatened by large covariant losses, and the institutional architecture to pull risk transfer and risk reduction together is yet to be constructed.

For closer integration insurers need to feel confident that their investments will not be lost. Ways forward include the potential for geographical diversification of the client base which can help protect the insurer against large disasters that presently threaten to destroy the capital base, particularly of micro-insurance networks; reviewing the role to be played by the state as an insurer of last resort and in its capacity to make insurance more affordable; and the need for a more reliable information base to better enable risk modelling.

Community and civil society perspectives, local knowledge and coping strategies

Input from three ProVention African Regional Forums, held in November-December 2006 in Dakar, Johannesburg and Nairobi framed this discussion and identified the characteristics of a supporting environment for local action. These included the need for clearly defined responsibilities for the state and local actors engaged in reducing disaster risk; institutional support to integrated disaster risk reduction into development programming; putting pressure on governments to act on their obligation to provide security for citizens from avoidable disasters; empowering people to build on traditional coping mechanisms, perhaps alongside novel approaches; using formal and informal education to promote disaster risk reduction; and greater co-ordination between external agencies to prevent the build up of complicated models and competing modes of operating.

Timely and serious participation, cognisant of local political realities lies at the core of successful disaster risk reduction and reconstruction interventions. Participation in risk reduction work can be enabled when technical knowledge is made accessible to local actors, and when external, technical actors are able to incorporate local knowledge and seek to place their work in a sensitive and progressive relationship with existing local socio-economic and political systems and hierarchies. Recognising that local actors are exposed to multiple threats from economic, social and political as well as environmental hazards can also help to knit together the often tactical actions of individuals with the more strategic and longer-term visions of external actors.

Governance and disaster risk reduction: enabling factors and challenges

Successful disaster risk reduction contributes to good governance and good governance enables successful disaster risk reduction. The most fundamental aspect of governance is the recognition that the state has responsibility to ensure the safety of its citizens. Operationalising this requires a legislative framework reinforced by effective multi-stakeholder engagement to enable accountability. This is particularly challenging in much of Africa, and elsewhere, where vulnerability is high, both individual and institutional capacities are low and incentives for personal action are limited.

Promoting disaster risk reduction through national platforms is one way in which governance and risk reduction interact. Some limited success was noted in lobbying from national platforms to integrate disaster risk reduction into National Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes. Lessons learned for promoting legislative and policy change include the advantage of having a national platform situated within a high-level political office such as the Office of the Prime Minister or President. Engaging multiple stakeholders including line-ministries and local government is essential and can be used to build risk reduction into annual budget requests from line-ministries. Implementation possibly requires a more autonomous positioning and a political system that allows scrutiny from civil society.

From research and learning to training and action

The Hyogo Framework for Action places importance on capacity development. Training and learning are key components of capacity development. But we do not yet have sufficient programmes and agreements between the many actors involved in generating knowledge and practicing disaster risk reduction to enable the smooth transfer of knowledge between researchers, trainers and practitioners. There is in effect a learning-action gap, which reduces both academic work and practice. This gap is a product of the institutions that shape incentives for researchers and practitioners.

Programmes organised by the University of Wisconsin and the University of Cape Town exemplify the potential for close collaboration between academic institutions and research users. Lessons learnt indicate that bridging the learning-action gap requires innovative programming, external recognition and financial investment. Formal partnerships between centres of research, training and practice can be fruitful but high quality academic research requires autonomy, and this is not always easy to protect if there are close relationships between academics and practitioners.

In the Corridors

A small number of participants were interviewed to gain a cross section of views on the contribution made by ProVention to disaster risk reduction and the impact of the ProVention Annual Forum.

ProVention was described by one interviewee as a 'wonderful pool of expertise' that could be drawn from. But a gap was identified between knowledge generated by ProVention and local access, and measures of change of practice at the local level. Where ProVention has local partners impact on the ground was more readily measurable.

The Forum was welcomed as a space for partners to reflect on practice and in particular the Forum prompted questions like: do we have the capacity to fight disaster risk in Africa? Are we building local capacity to reduce disaster risk? How do we know if we are? How can disaster risk reduction best be implemented in complex political and health contexts?

The Forum was valued as a space for exchanging ideas and networking. Overall there was a feeling that the Forum could benefit from inviting new constituencies. Either those that could learn

more about disaster risk reduction, such as local government; or those that could offer lessons or new perspectives in disaster risk reduction work, such as the development community. Also, it was suggested that it might be rewarding to organise future Forums differently, perhaps ordered around detailed case studies to highlight different mixes of hazards, expressions of vulnerability, or scales of risk.

Conclusion

The following are key lessons learned from the workshops and from conversations.

- ◆ *Better integration of disaster risk reduction into urban planning requires long-term commitment* and careful analysis of urban land markets, livelihoods and demographics before disaster risk reduction or response and reconstruction activities are undertaken to avoid missed opportunities and the erosion of local capacity.
- ◆ *Climate change raises new challenges for making disaster risk reduction work.* Long-term planning to reduce disaster risk needs to consider future climatic and social scenarios.
- ◆ *Insurance and risk reduction are most effective when undertaken in partnership.* Support for initiatives that seek to build such partnerships and report on lessons learnt are important first steps in developing this agenda for coupled action in disaster risk management.
- ◆ *Making disaster risk reduction work within mainstream development policy requires strong partnerships with line-ministries that can negotiate for national budget support.* National platforms and international and national civil society are potentially important as champions for disaster risk reduction and to hold government to account.
- ◆ *The horizontal exchange of information and ideas for practice can help improve performance and strengthen local self-reliance.* Horizontal links built between community groups, or at another scale, between national NGOs can also compliment (and potentially act as an alternative to) predominant organisational forms that are hierarchically structured with international organisations or donors at the apex.
- ◆ *Effort is needed to champion applied research and to enable academics to sharpen their analytical work and inform practice through partnerships with practitioner organisations of all kinds.* Innovative teaching, including distance learning, will also be strengthened through closer ties between researchers and practitioners.

1. Introduction and Background

The ProVention Annual Forum, 2007, was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The forum brought together ProVention partners to exchange experience and views on key challenges facing disaster risk reduction work worldwide, and especially in an African context.

The Annual Forum is a key activity for ProVention, an organisation that is dedicated to reducing disaster risk and loss experienced by vulnerable communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. ProVention is structured as a global consortium including governments, international organisations, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations. The wide range of stakeholders involved in ProVention's work, and the organisation's independence allow it to contribute to global policy development in disaster risk reduction in four main ways:

- ◆ Networking to build partnerships amongst the multiple stakeholders engaged in risk reduction.
- ◆ Providing an informal forum for dialogue and agenda setting.
- ◆ Supporting research to document and promote good practice in all aspects of disaster risk management.
- ◆ Facilitating learning and information exchange between communities of practice.

The value of ProVention as a forum for policy dialogue and debate on disaster risk issues has been highlighted consistently by its partners. Seeking to emphasise this aspect, ProVention initiated the first annual ProVention Forum open to Consortium partners and other invited guests in 2005. This Forum was co-organised with the Organization of American States and held in Washington DC, it addressed 'Natural hazard risk management as a development tool', focussing on the Americas.

The 2006 Forum, held in Bangkok, focused on 'Incentives for reducing risk'. It aimed to examine the political, economic, social and environmental incentives needed for a more proactive and preventative approach to dealing with disaster risk and vulnerability.

The 2007 ProVention Forum was organised around the theme of 'Making disaster risk reduction work'. Held in Dar es Salaam, the forum was enriched by many African participants but its scope was global. Discussion centred on six key policy areas. These included the emerging challenges of *rapid urbanisation* and *climate change* for disaster risk; new opportunities for risk reduction coming from a growing body of work and experience on *risk transfer*; and, established areas of practice that continue to provide challenges as well as opportunities for risk reduction – *local level working*, *risk governance* and *translating knowledge into action*.

An opening plenary session framed the Forum. Reflecting on experience in Africa the Forum was urged to think through the interconnectedness of multiple risks and their causal factors, and of the contributions that local and national actors can make in fighting avoidable disaster risk. If we are to make disaster risk reduction work it is important that initiatives be situated in local realities, several speakers underlined. Adam Kimbisa² showed clearly the challenges of urban life in Dar es Salaam where 70-80 per cent of the population live in unplanned settlements. In this city there has been some success at risk reduction through Community Infrastructure Upgrading Programmes that have brought together city and local actors to improve roads, storm water drainage and household waste management. Batilda Burian³ emphasised the need for integrated planning and for continuing advocacy for disaster risk reduction at the national level where disasters, drought in particular, continue to be seen as inevitable. She argued that 'droughts may be a fact of life but they need not erode life and livelihoods'. Responding to this need the Government of Tanzania approved a Disaster Management policy in 2004. Reflecting on his experience in Kenya, Abbas Gullet⁴ emphasised the role to be played by civil society and Red

² Tanzanian Red Cross Secretary General & Lord Mayor of Dar es Salaam

³ Minister of State, Tanzanian Government

⁴ Kenya Red Cross Secretary General

Cross in reducing risk as well as responding to disaster. He cautioned that the weak financial base and variable relationship with government experienced by many civil society organisations with national visibility are key constraints on capacity to undertake risk reduction work. All plenary speakers agreed that building and maintaining trusting partnerships between civil society and government was difficult but that where this had been done risk reduction was more likely to be integrated into everyday development work.

This report presents the most salient and important key issues, ideas and challenges raised during the ProVention Forum 2007. Material is presented under the six themes identified above, and also includes an 'in the corridors' section. This provides an opportunity to reflect on conversations with participants outside of the formal structure of the Forum workshops. The report does not provide an overview of the presentations and discussions held at the ProVention showcase events or partner presentations. A conclusion identifies points of potential action that build on ProVention's strengths.

2. Workshop Themes

2.1 Urban risk: moving from analysis to action

Key Challenges and Drivers for Change

It is arguably time to challenge the received wisdom that disaster risk reduction work is predominantly a rural concern. More than half the global population is already urban, with the highest rates of urban growth in Africa and Asia. In 2005 Hurricane Katrina and the South Asian Earthquake both dramatically showed how much disaster risk has accumulated in urban systems.

Large and mega-cities often have some formal capacity and delineated responsibility for disaster preparedness, hazard mitigation and response planning. But even here more than half the urban population may live outside of the reach of formal planning and enforcement mechanisms in informal and illegal settlements. Time and again urban disasters claim the lives of those either living in informal settlements (e.g. Mumbai floods of 2005) or in buildings that had not conformed to existing standards (e.g. Marmara earthquake, Turkey, 1999). How can risk management in large cities be extended to these populations? If partnerships are sought then what role can line ministries or sectoral departments of municipal government play?

Most documented academic and policy experience for urban risk reduction has focussed on large and mega-cities. These cities represent concentrated patterns of risk, but the majority of urbanites live in cities of less than 500,000 inhabitants. It is important not to uncritically transfer experience from larger cities to smaller locations where the policy and environmental context may be very difficult.

A good deal of work has accumulated on the measurement and modelling of the physical vulnerability of buildings and infrastructure in the city. The variability of social vulnerability means that it is much harder to aggregate and consequently is less amenable to modelling and meaningful measurement at the level of urban districts or the city as a whole. How might local assessments of vulnerability be up-scaled? Or, alternatively can strategic planning be brought down to the local level? Cities are places of political conversation, intellectual exchange and cultural development – how might these functions be included alongside the life support and macro-economic functions that dominate assessments of capacity, vulnerability and risk? Work is also needed to measure the impacts of risk reduction interventions. This is especially important in cities where rapid change means new configurations of hazard and vulnerability can be overlooked.

If urban risk is to be tackled comprehensively then there is a need to integrate with local economies and life worlds. This integration can take place on a number of fronts. Existing local networks, for example local health promoters supported by PAHO in the Americas, might provide

an opportunity for building local awareness of and skills in risk reduction, disaster preparedness and planning. To deploy resources in urban contexts we need to know much more about the ways in which local livelihoods and informal risk management strategies function, and how they might be influenced by disaster, response and reconstruction. It is not enough to simply transfer experience, models and tools developed in rural contexts to urban settings. For example, in targeting vulnerable, poor urban populations we need to consider urban land markets as well as local conditions of endangerment. This has been demonstrated in housing upgrade programmes where improved houses and neighbourhoods enjoy increased value and security but as value increases the poor become excluded over time through market pressures.

Experience and Lessons to Learn

In making disaster risk reduction work in urban contexts it is important to be realistic about the institutional barriers and opportunities that exist. Participants felt that civil society was more receptive than local government to disaster risk reduction. Decentralisation has increased the responsibility of local government and this provides opportunities for integrating locally driven risk reduction policy, but there are challenges. Decentralisation has not always increased the resources or autonomy of local government. Central government can still exercise political and financial influence. In addition, while departments in local government may be smaller than in central government they often share the same habit of 'silo' thinking – not talking to one another and inhibiting cross-departmental agendas like disaster risk reduction.

Specific sectors managed at the local level (water, housing, transportation, education, etc.) are likely to be key allies in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction. At the national level these sectors are likely to already be undertaking work that reduces disaster risk and can offer ways into understanding the institutional architecture of local government and politics.

There is growing experience of the use of participatory approaches in urban contexts. A key lesson learnt is that in urban settings and for the poor, and even those most at risk, natural disaster risk is often not the foremost stress and threat to livelihoods and health. The multi-risk nature of urban life, which includes threats from unemployment, crime, illiteracy, access to health care and safe drinking water, etc., needs to be better understood. Existing participatory activities provide an opportunity for piggyback participatory risk reduction work, although little experience of this strategy has been documented and reflected upon by practitioners. Critical reflection is also needed on the merits of multiple-risk approaches compared to hazard specific interventions. In many settlements the majority of the population are young, under 30 years of age. Youth influences the nature of urban life, natural disaster vulnerability and capacity provides a vital resource for participatory approaches. The challenges of working with youth need more attention to better integrate this under utilised resource in urban participatory disaster risk reduction work.

Practical experience of urban risk reduction work points towards seven findings:

- ◆ Despite support in the Hyogo Declaration, land use planning continues to be marginalised amongst the risk management community as a tool to address risk reduction. Imaginative thinking and practice is needed.
- ◆ Working in cities takes time. The experience of Earthquakes and Megacities initiative was that at least 5 years was needed to build up local awareness and demand for DRR.
- ◆ The best local results for risk reduction seemed to come from interventions that focussed on a limited set of actions.
- ◆ As in rural contexts, benchmarks are crucial to assign priorities and measure progress.
- ◆ Piggybacking natural hazard risk reduction on resolution of overall community development efforts can and should be done.
- ◆ Urban livelihoods tend to be multiple. There may be less ownership of the means of production than in low-income rural livelihoods, and so less scope for simple mechanisms to improve livelihoods and capacity.
- ◆ Secondary cities are amongst the most rapidly expanding. These cities offer an opportunity to plan for future growth and so be pro-active about risk management.

Future work on urban risk might usefully consider moving beyond the urban-rural dichotomy, which can hide the fluid character of risk and underlying processes of vulnerability and capacity building. The great movements of people and resources between rural and urban areas and the peri-urban livelihoods of many urban citizens at risk support a more even approach to conceptualising risk around cities.

A role for ProVention?

There is a burgeoning base of academic and practitioner experience of working in urban and peri-urban communities at risk. ProVention is well placed to bring this knowledge and experience together and to share lessons learnt amongst the wider community. As increasing numbers of international and national agencies work in urban contexts there is likely to be a strong demand for such an information base.

2.2 Slow onset disasters, climate adaptation, and disaster risk reduction

Key Challenges and Drivers for Change

Drought is the hazard type associated with the highest mortality world-wide, and is second only to flooding in terms of the number of people affected. Being a slow-onset disaster, there is much opportunity for intervening human (and compounding environmental) factors to shape the intensity and distribution of loss. Previous work by UNDP has clearly showed that the greatest incidence of drought associated deaths, as recorded by EM-DAT, took place in countries with poor governance and weak economies⁵. New variant famine has been discussed in sub-Saharan Africa to describe the interactions between impacts from HIV/AIDS and drought in household sustainability.

A range of tools exists to plan for and manage the risk of drought. These include early warning systems that integrate hazard and vulnerability assessments, hazard and vulnerability mapping, livelihoods assessments, water resource management. There are parallels with these tools in the management of risk from rapid-onset hazards. Is there scope for drought vulnerability and food insecurity management to learn from, and feed into the development of tools and practices from the wider disaster risk reduction debate?

The Fourth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change shows clearly that climate change is with us now. What does it mean to reduce disaster risk in an era of climate change? Old assumptions about the return periods and severities of hydrometeorological hazards can no longer be trusted. Vulnerability to the indirect impacts of climate change can also change the dynamics of vulnerability and resilience in social systems. How should risk reduction respond to the reality of climate change? By doing more of what is already done? By looking for new practices?

More positively, does climate change present an opportunity to advocate for risk reduction? The cost-benefit judgement of investing to reduce risk or responding post-disaster is shifting as risk increases. There is still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the local impacts of climate change and these uncertainties increase with smaller scale and for longer-term planning. Uncertainty can encourage to 'do nothing' and 'wait and see' thinking amongst decision-makers. How can this be overcome so that the positive opportunity can be realised for climate change to reinforce advocacy and work on the ground to build adaptive capacity and action?

One emerging possibility is a climate risk management approach, learning from agriculture and energy sectors. This is a market-based mechanism that could play a role in re-positioning uncertainty as an incentive for investment in insurance options. But how accessible is such an approach to poor countries with high risk?

⁵ UNDP (2004) Disaster Risk Reduction: A Development Concern, www.undp.org/bcpr/we_do/global_report_disaster.shtml

Experience and Lessons to Learn

Despite the increased capacity to predict drought and its impacts – with African institutions at the forefront of these efforts – we continue to fail to address the drought challenge. Part of the problem lies with the complex and varied character of drought. Individual events are hard to delimit spatially and their impacts relate to a wide range of sectors including agriculture, food security, water management, health and patterns of migration.

A rich body of knowledge and practical experience is available to reduce drought impacts. There appears to be a gradual shift from structural measures that often exacerbate the situation, to less structural responses, such as early warning systems, the promotion of social protection, social and economic policies and market solutions. However, in practice the focus of drought management remains very much on shorter-term humanitarian approaches. There is a good deal of scope to shift to more effective longer term strategies related to disaster risk reduction practices such as crop/livestock mixes and water harvesting. There are examples of good practice at the national and local levels, but too often these levels of knowledge and actions are not connected in reinforcing ways. While drought remains a disaster that requires specific capacities to monitor and respond to acute phases, drought risk management should be part of disaster risk reduction strategies and be integrated into decision making and planning across development sectors.

While the paramount concern for managing climate change is to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, there is also a need to act locally to prepare for and build capacity to cope with a climate that is changing now. Climate change science highlights a tension with the ways in which risk is conceptualised and consequently addressed. Global modeling is of limited use in planning support for the local scale of adaptation. At the fine resolutions required for this work the direction rather than scale of climatic modeling is most reliable. Temporal resolution is also important with the seasonality of climatic variation often being of more relevance than smoothed climatic trends. Advances in climate modeling have begun to integrate social variables to measure risk and adaptive capacity given specific future scenarios. But here too, there is a top-down, global demand for social data that is reducible to simple metrics. As in any indexing or modeling effort this is in tension with the equally important demand for thick, locally relevant data. Identifying key attributes of vulnerability and, perhaps more importantly of capacity to adapt to climate change, and how this might differ from contemporary analyses of vulnerability and capacity in relation to natural hazards is also important. This will help us to learn which aspects of disaster risk reduction policy can most effectively feed into work to build adaptive capacity and action to climate change.

Policy development to support adaptation to climate change is at an early stage and ways of integrating these perspectives with disaster risk reduction would be helpful. Not least it is important that work to reduce disaster risk does not generate avoidable greenhouse gas emissions or destroy carbon sinks, or close options for future adaptation. Both policy communities have natural and social science, strategic and community based approaches so there are many avenues for closer working.

Potential for developing win-win situations are numerous, as reducing risk to extreme climate events and climate variability, as embodied in the Hyogo Framework for Action, was referred to as the most effective way of adapting to climate change. Increasing the political space for urgent action can also benefit from a close interaction between the disciplines, as climate change, a global agenda with high visibility, can provide a strong impetus to engage in building more resilient communities to natural hazards. In the same vein, disasters are actual visible and tangible challenges for countries and communities, while climate change may be perceived as a distant problem.

Potential pitfalls that emerged from the workshop included the need for clearer and common terminologies between these two agendas, as well as a potential lack of clarity on mandates between agencies. It also appeared that disaster risk reduction programmes and strategies will need to better take into account longer term changes in climate conditions. Institutionalising the two disciplines at national level is a challenge. Both require multi-sectoral engagements, with a strong political commitment, including the engagement of Finance Ministries. One way forward is

to build stronger ties between national climate change focal points and institutions established as the national mechanisms to follow-up on the Hyogo Framework for Action.

A role for ProVention?

ProVention has a tradition of supporting rigorous knowledge generation in emerging policy areas. Climate risk management is arguably the most important new area for policy work, it touches all other areas of disaster risk reduction activity, not least drought risk. ProVention is well placed to implement blue skies thinking in this area and also to feed any outputs into the policy communities concerned. Most usefully, perhaps, from the perspective of the disaster risk reduction community would be an active engagement with the climate community internationally and in country to establish potential opportunities for common advocacy, work to build institutional frameworks and on the ground capacity to support adaptation and also to identify common gaps in knowledge.

2.3 Risk transfer and risk reduction: moving from a dysfunctional to a symbiotic relationship

Key Challenges and Drivers for Change

Risk transfer, interpreted as insurance, is a measure of last resort. It covers the remaining risk after hazards and vulnerability have been ameliorated according to technical feasibility and political will. While being a component of disaster risk reduction, risk transfer can also be a source of incentives for risk reduction. The more a risk is reduced, the lower the premium to cover the remaining risk. In practice, the costs of monitoring and rewarding risk reduction at the individual level are prohibitive, so that this potential incentive is seldom realised. The box below identifies a range of challenges for using risk transfer in protecting the poor and those at high risk from disasters.

Challenges for risk transfer

The following observations draw from a ProVention/IIASA study on micro-insurance but also apply to macro-scale risk transfer. They underline the symbiotic relationships between risk transfer and the larger range of risk reduction activities.

- ◆ A lack of incentives from risk transfer programmes to promote activities to reduce risk from disasters.
- ◆ Premiums for poor and high-risk groups are not affordable.
- ◆ The financial sustainability of insurance providers is threatened by large covariant losses.
- ◆ Insurers risk is covered by a range of national and international private and public sector mechanisms.
- ◆ There is limited transparency and few actors in the provision of financial backup arrangements for private market providers.
- ◆ There is a need for alliances among NGO/community groups, micro-finance organisations, government regulators, entrepreneurs and international financial and donor institutions in pioneering risk transfer programmes.

Source: Kull D. and Mechler R., Concept Note on Risk Transfer

There looks to be great scope for tools from risk reduction and risk transfer to reinforce each other. For example, the integration of micro-insurance and micro-finance opening possibilities for improved household economic status to contribute to vulnerability reduction. How might this relationship be strengthened?

Experience and Lessons to Learn

Both micro- and macro-insurance approaches offer scope for integration with risk reduction.

The poor amongst disaster victims are repeatedly exposed to and affected by disaster. They are also restricted in their access to financial services such as micro-insurance. There is a substantial lack of options for transferring risk available to the poor at the micro level. For example, the proportion of disaster losses in 2005 covered by insurance was 51 per cent and 30 per cent for the USA and Europe, respectively. Over the same period, only 5 per cent losses faced in Asian countries were covered by insurance⁶. Integration of risk reduction and cost-cutting/reduction measures was considered important in order to ensure viability of micro-insurance from commercial point of view to penetrate rural and isolated communities and make insurance affordable for the poor. Provision of fire safety measures, fertilizers, hybrid/disaster resistance seeds, adaptation of safer construction practices, access to credit facilities, and capacity building inputs can help low income groups reduce their risks.

Micro-insurance cannot be used as stand alone measure for risk reduction. Bundling of insurance products with other micro-finance products (savings, credit etc.) and non-financial services came up as a crucial factor in sustaining risk transfer models at the micro-level. To succeed, both poverty and risk must be reduced. This revealed direct link between poverty reduction and disaster risk reduction.

The role of governments was considered central in creating an enabling regulatory environment, offering incentives to insurers, making investment to enhance application of index-based weather insurance, as well as subsidising the cost of micro-insurance products to enable sufficient levels of market development for private sector involvement. Government was considered as the ultimate insurer in catastrophic risks.

In macro-insurance schemes, reinsurers are often willing to cover disaster risks through public-private partnerships. However, challenges related to regulatory environment, moral hazards, low levels of awareness, and adverse selection often discourages them. From the reinsurance point of view, it was believed that a certain degree of compulsion to build a larger pool of clients is essential for risk spreading and financial viability. Minimum participation of the insured and incentives for risk reduction must be identified and encouraged. It was suggested that insurers should look for negative correlations/uncorrelated risks to balance and manage risk pools to overcome the challenge of covariant risks. In terms of natural hazards this could best be achieved through geographical diversification in risks.

Lack of reliable information bases (weather stations) was mentioned as a key hindrance for index-based insurance products. The case of Ethiopia was referred as a good practice example where construction of an index offering real-time data helped to gain private sector interest and investment.

The World Bank, working through the Commodity Risk Management Group and its Global Index Reinsurance Facility and Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility has helped to promote public-private partnerships to build capacity in national stakeholders to link with international markets. It was mentioned that these initiatives are often driven by post-crisis forces and require a strong institutional basis to sustain momentum. Finding sustainable mechanisms, creating incentives for risk reduction, balancing public-private roles and responsibilities, and making up-to-date as well as historical data available to decision-makers were discussed as key challenges for risk modelling and risk transfer at the macro level.

Both, at micro and macro levels, affordability, access, service delivery, lack of reliable information base, up-scaling pilot projects, and sustainability of insurance products were discussed as key barriers in extending insurance coverage to the disaster prone communities. Development of basic infrastructure facilities such as weather stations to support index-based insurance products by governments was considered important.

⁶ Munich Re Group's Annual Review: Natural Catastrophes 2005

The limits of insurance should also be recognised. Insurance can replace losses but is not oriented towards 'building back better' or improving quality of life in a significant way. At the most, it can help bringing back communities where they were before.

A role for ProVention?

ProVention offers an informal space for the diverse private and public sector actors with an interest in exploring the potential for macro-and micro-insurance to build relationships and share ideas. Beyond this ProVention has been active in commissioning research into both levels of risk transfer mechanism. Bringing together this research with that of other initiatives to map out lessons learned and help to feed this into policy thinking at the national level would be a valuable contribution. In particular ProVention can help to bring risk transfer and disaster risk reduction professionals together to work towards the design and implementation of co-ordinated work.

2.4 Community and civil society perspectives, local knowledge and coping strategies

Key Challenges and Drivers for Change

Changing local behaviour to promote risk reduction works best when knowledge management can bring together local and scientific knowledge. Too often training sessions aimed at doing this do not reach those on the ground who could most benefit, or are couched in inaccessible and overly technical language. Where local action for risk reduction is promoted, overcoming pre-existing inequalities and social hierarchies while facilitating local ownership as a means of promoting relevance and sustainability is a common challenge.

Disaster risk is not experienced in isolation locally. In Africa, many of those at risk from sudden-onset disasters also have to live with HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, economic inequality and slow-onset disasters such as drought. There is a real tension between the strategic vision of international agencies and the more tactical approach to problem identification and response of actors on the ground. When the goal of a local actor is to sustain a household economy how can the more distant objectives of disaster risk reduction be made relevant? Is it advantageous to make linkages between sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction agendas or would this weaken advocacy and work on the ground?

Too often local initiative and capacities continue to be overlooked during external interventions. This is particularly the case during relief and reconstruction and can lead to the erosion of local markets and aggravate social inequalities. A lack of timely and serious participation, cognisant of local political realities, often lies at the root of failed risk reduction or reconstruction interventions.

Experience and Lessons to Learn

Findings from the three ProVention Regional Forums in Africa were used to initiate discussions. Key findings from the workshops included:

- ◆ The need for clearly defined responsibilities for the state and communities / localities engaged in reducing disaster risk.
- ◆ The need for institutional support to ensure that disaster risk reduction is integrated into development programmes.
- ◆ Local actions must be seen as part of broader strategies including putting pressure on governments to act on their obligation to provide security for citizens from avoidable disasters.
- ◆ Interventions should empower people to rethink and potentially continue to use traditional coping mechanisms, perhaps alongside novel approaches.
- ◆ Formal and informal education can help to sensitise people about disaster risk reduction.

- ◆ Agencies should watch out for duplication or for competing ways of conceptualising disaster risk and its reduction. This wastes scarce resource and is confusing.

While the requirement for good governance was recognised, it is often difficult to hold politicians and governments to account, even when international agreements have been signed. In Senegal one participant noted potential for partnerships, involving government and civil society, to increase the capacities of communities, especially in support of the development of a National Platform. National Platforms were also seen as a way of bringing government and other stakeholders together. Inclusion is facilitated when ideas and knowledge are presented in forms that are accessible and usable by ordinary people in their own languages. There is great scope for local civil society, including the media to disseminate information and to help in holding government to account. Opportunities for local groups to exchange experiences and information, such as that provided by the ProVention Regional Forums, are important to help isolated groups to break out of their silos and learn of other approaches. Political will is also needed to push for change. In East Africa pastoralists are losing their livelihoods in the face of a combination of climate change and being expelled from their land for 'development' projects.

Working at the government and community levels to reduce local disaster risk presents a number of challenges: we need to be clear about where development stops and disaster risk reduction begins, and to what extent these two aspects of improving human welfare are separate. We also need to keep a clear focus on the objective of reducing disaster risk so as not to become overwhelmed by the institutional dynamics of government and community organisations. One tool in enhancing clarity in work that targets local and state actors is to push for more open national and local government budget statements, another is to remember that to see political change, we also need to change our own practice and language.

Despite all the technical advances brought by outsiders in recent years, people by and large still mainly depend on themselves and each other. But we must avoid romanticising indigenous knowledge, and combine it with 'scientific' knowledge. The wealth of local risk solutions was well demonstrated by an example from San Salvador which identified more than a hundred coping strategies used by the people in a local urban community that was at risk of several hazards, including landslides. Households spent an average of 9 per cent of their income on reducing risks and being prepared for recovery from hazard impacts. Successful integration of local and scientific knowledge was reported from the work of SASOL, Kenya where local dams have been constructed. Success has required the combination of scientific expertise with local partnership to ensure that the technology works, and that the benefits are not captured by local elites for their own benefit. However, SASOL has also acknowledged that it cannot affect all relevant local issues, especially land resources. This success story provides important lessons that have not been applied elsewhere, for example in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, when international NGOs undermined local communities and their capacities. Experience from the Philippines has demonstrated the danger of local action to collapse into violent conflict with established powers who may feel threatened as the roots of vulnerability are revealed. Elsewhere politicians may justify their inaction because people are seen to be 'coping'. Even within local places, social diversity means every locality contains conflicts and differences that reflect the normal patterns of exploitation found at all levels. Donors and outside agencies are in danger of assuming that there is a unified community that is co-operative: unless we analyse and understand the way that power operates at the local level, outside initiatives are unlikely to have real participation and good results.

A role for ProVention?

ProVention is a leading international agency in bringing together methods and techniques for community based disaster risk assessment and reduction. Through partnerships with networked community based organisations ProVention is well placed to maintain this information set and to feed lessons learnt into local communities of practice through regional and national partners. Joining up work on local risk reduction with other areas of emerging concern such as urbanisation, climate change and risk transfer would add value to each of these areas of activity.

2.5 Governance and disaster risk reduction: enabling factors and challenges

Key Challenges and Drivers for Change

While there are clear linkages between all of the Forum workshop themes, governance was central to all discussions. Where disaster risk reduction works well this is a function of healthy governance. Because disaster risk reduction interacts with many aspects of governance through participatory mechanisms, public accountability, etc., it also contributes to the strength of governance regimes. Strong governance follows the rule of law, is consensus oriented, participatory, coherent, responsive, strategic, effective and efficient, equitable, transparent and accountable. Each of these aspects of strong governance influences disaster risk reduction on the ground, and each in turn can be influenced by the practice of disaster risk reduction.

The state has responsibility to ensure the safety of its citizens, their livelihoods and natural resource endowments. This implies the need for a rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction, and one that rests on the proper balance between individual action and institutional responses. Operationalising a rights-based approach requires effective multi-stakeholder engagement at all levels to ensure that participation is inclusive and effective. This is particularly challenging in much of Africa, and elsewhere, where vulnerability is high, both individual and institutional capacities are low and incentives for personal action are limited.

Key elements of governance that impact on the success of disaster risk reduction are:

- ◆ The quality of management of economic processes in the public and private sectors.
- ◆ Regulations and incentives.
- ◆ International trade, finance and developmental and humanitarian aid systems.
- ◆ Political will at all levels.
- ◆ Frameworks to bring together diverse values on risk and its management and that can work towards consensus but cope with conflict.
- ◆ Building accountability especially of international and state actors towards each other and to citizens. Accountability between citizens at the local level is equally important.
- ◆ Social policies that harness and strengthen local social capital.
- ◆ Working with traditional cultural practices.
- ◆ Effective decentralisation of disaster risk reduction responsibilities requiring adequate financial and human resources and a legislative framework.
- ◆ Promoting learning and capacity building at the local level.

Applying these attributes of governance to the operational aspects of disaster risk reduction shows key dimensions of governance to be: the institutional framework including legal and cultural aspects; the quality of management of disaster risk reduction in public, private and civil sectors; horizontal and vertical accountability; information and transparency in decision-making.

Experience and Lessons to Learn

Experience from Madagascar, Senegal and Uganda highlights the importance of national platforms in promoting and institutionalising disaster risk reduction in national policy. In Senegal the National Platform was successful in advocating for disaster risk reduction included in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy. In Madagascar, the integration of disaster risk reduction into national development planning was helped by credibility gained from the Hyogo Framework of Action and the former National Relief Council.

High-level political support was identified as key to institutionalising disaster risk reduction. In Uganda, the Department of Disaster Management and Refugees is located in the Office of the Prime Minister and disaster risk reduction has been mainstreamed as one of the pillars in

Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan. In Madagascar coordination of the National Disaster Risk Management Bureau is undertaken from the Office of the Prime Minister. The optimum locations for advocating for the institutionalisation of disaster risk reduction and for its implementation might not always coincide. Distance from political interference during implementation is an argument for national platforms to be located outside government. However, where government is strong having high-level support is essential for integrating disaster risk reduction into national policy.

Engaging multiple stakeholders is essential, but can be challenging. Even where national platforms function and disaster risk reduction is integrated into development planning, it can be difficult to change the operating culture on the ground and within bureaucracies. This challenge was highlighted in Uganda where politicians and NGOs have been slow to embrace risk reduction as a bridge between humanitarianism and development. The integration of line-ministries and local government into planning, legislation and the implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies is critical for success and this has to be balanced with the involvement of international donors and NGOs. Madagascar warned that national platforms can be overwhelmed by donors and NGOs and a clear programme of action was needed to generate the right balance of stakeholders.

Even where national platforms are in place gaining leverage for disaster risk reduction is a challenge. Experience from Tanzania shows that the national budgeting process is a key entry point. This requires that line-ministries identify programmes relevant to disaster risk reduction for inclusion in the budget and requires long term planning. Lessons from Bangladesh suggest that public accountability mechanisms can also be used to leverage action from government in disaster risk reduction. Successful public accountability in Bangladesh has been shaped by political pluralism, a strong civil society and an institutional system that has devolved authority. These attributes of Bangladeshi society help to enable citizens to hold decision-makers accountable. Reducing the 'wriggle-room' of decision-makers by identifying detailed responsibility (time-tables and targets) and lines of accountability requires legislation backed up by active oversight from government and civil society actors. In India the process of litigation has generated entitlements to food and work.

Governance for risk reduction is required at multiple levels. Globally, terms of trade and investment contribute to the inequality that generates disaster risk. Global discourses on climate change can be used by lobbyists for disaster risk reduction to gain higher profile. At the regional level where governance is weak opportunities for concerted action are being lost. Sub-national frameworks are needed to co-ordinate action and give appropriate priority to disaster risk reduction within development programming and through corrective interventions. Work is needed at all levels to make explicit the trade-offs between economic development and social and environmental costs that contribute towards the shaping and distribution of capacities and vulnerabilities to disaster. Greater transparency in global, national and local decision-making is a prerequisite for this agenda of reform.

A role for ProVention?

As a neutral actor, ProVention is well placed to review the successes and challenges faced at the international, national and local levels by actors aiming to build legislative frameworks and to operationalise disaster risk reduction within development plans. The role of national platforms and the interaction of international actors and policy frameworks with national stakeholders and policy priorities could usefully be reviewed. As ProVention has no direct stake in the development of national platforms or in international policy agendas it can approach this task with legitimacy. ProVention's past success with projects that have drawn together and analysed local experience to identify key lessons for disaster risk reduction could usefully be directed towards the assessment of the relationship between disaster risk reduction and good governance.

2.6 From research and learning to training and action

Key Challenges and Drivers for Change

The divide between academic research and action on disaster risk and its reduction is frequently expressed. This divide is maintained through the institutions that shape incentives for researchers and practitioners. On the one hand, academics are directed towards research that gains recognition from the international academic community. This encourages work that steps back from technical detail to engage with the bigger picture of social and physical processes shaping risk and risk management. Re-engaging with the more focussed concerns of practitioners can be challenging and often lies beyond the scope of funded research. On the other hand practitioners working under time pressure to deliver tangible outcomes or meet targets for delivery have little time to read academic works. Even where academic material might be known, risk aversion generates a preference amongst practitioners to repeat what they, or trusted colleagues know has worked from past experience rather than take up new proposals from academia.

The gap between knowledge generation, learning and practice has led to calls for action-research, for applied research and for a variety of mechanisms whereby practitioners or academics can spend time either in innovative training environments or on sabbatical experiencing first hand the needs of their sister community. Is there scope to promote long-term linkages between NGOs, research institutes and training centres to promote a more joined-up approach?

The Hyogo Framework for Action places importance on capacity development. Training and learning built on high quality research and critical reflection on practical experience are key components of capacity development. But who is able to reflect, research and learn? While actors at the international and national levels and members of well connected civil society organisations may be relatively well served, those with most day-to-day responsibility for managing risk – local government and line-ministry officials and those living with disaster risk often have neither the time to invest in learning nor are they served by established institutions of research, learning and training. The will is there, but we do not yet have sufficient programmes and agreements between the many actors involved in generating knowledge and practicing disaster risk reduction. There is in effect a learning-action gap which reduces academic work and practice alike.

Experience and Lessons to Learn

Closer collaboration between academic institutions and research users is possible. Examples of how this is being championed include the University of Wisconsin - Disaster Management Center that has a long tradition of international outreach and training in disaster management. The experience from the University of Wisconsin, set in the US context, is that there is a market for disaster management training and this can sustain academic positions, but those wishing to lead this have to be entrepreneurial, be prepared to work without a permanent contract and be financially self-supporting. When these – essentially financial – conditions are met, flexibility within the university system can be found. Initiating the process is the greatest challenge and one few individuals are in a position to take without some guarantee of a market.

The University of Cape Town - Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme in South Africa has also been a champion in connecting research and practice, but faces institutional constraints. For example, action research is interpreted as lacking sufficient analytical rigour and inappropriate for a high profile international university. Again, external recognition and financial investment is needed to demonstrate the value of this work to the university sector. Individual academics and departments have limited scope for action. In response to this need for collective, external action the Periperi U group of universities in Africa has been formed. A second initiative, PHREEway (Partners for Humanitarian Risk Education Expansion), is trying to provide a framework for how research institutions and NGOs could work together more closely with one another (with support from ProVention).

Some cause for optimism comes from Ghana where experience suggests there is a shift towards a recognition of the merits of partnerships between academics and practitioners. In the UK,

research-user participation in the development of research and dissemination strategies are a requirement of government funding for academic work, DFID has also invested in funding research that is led by overseas partners. Still, within universities, continuation of relationships between practitioners and academics between research grants is difficult to maintain.

There is an assumption that NGOs are the natural partners for academic institutions wishing to connect research and theory with practice. While NGOs are valuable partners they are limited in scope. Much less effort has been invested in exploring the potential for partnering with divisions within government departments with cognate responsibilities (e.g. community development, social security or environmental resource management including water management and urban planning and development). Government agencies offer the advantage of scale and where staff turn-over is controlled may have longer institutional memories than NGOs adding value to partnerships for learning. It should also be remembered that academic research no matter how theoretical is grounded in empirical observations so that closer collaboration with practitioners offers great opportunities for academics to learn and improve their conceptual and analytical tools. This might be tempered with the observation that academic research requires autonomy, and this is not always easy to protect if there are close relationships between academics and practitioners.

In Asia, there is a good amount of experience in training, including All Asia Disaster Mitigation Institute, Center for Disaster Preparedness, Philippines and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center. Here, Training and Learning Circles have been initiated to help build the capacity and update the knowledge of trainers. Trainers are a useful bridge between grassroots actors and academics or policy actors. They can feed information in both directions. In Latin America, while there is no permanent region-wide think tank of disaster risk reduction training there are a number of networks that have had impacts on thinking and practice for disaster management and risk reduction.

A role for ProVention?

In Asia and Africa, ProVention is actively supporting the building of networks to support training needs and the conversation between academic and practitioner institutions. Globally the Applied Research Grants scheme has been successful in raising the profile of disaster risk reduction among junior academics and postgraduate students as well as young practitioners. Such interventions are well made and might provide the basis for a more adventurous programme of activities that could stimulate academic and practitioner organisations to build closer relationships to the benefit of all parties. ProVention might extend this work by supporting innovative, pilot mechanisms for those involved in knowledge generation, training and practice to enter into partnerships to bridge the knowledge-action gap.

3. In the Corridors

This section brings together a range of concerns, issues and good ideas that arose through conversations with participants during the 2007 ProVention Forum⁷. The views presented here are meant to be provocative rather than representing a body of opinion. Three questions were asked in each interview, responses are summarised below.

What discussion or idea will you take away with you after the ProVention Forum?

From the perspective of humanitarian agencies working in Africa and trying to incorporate disaster risk reduction into their work, the Forum provided an opportunity to reflect on operating

⁷ Interviews were conducted with Sofia Bettencourt, World Bank Madagascar Country Office; Allan Lavell, FLACSO; Violeta Seva, Office of the Mayor Makati City, the Philippines; Antony Spalton, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and Feleke Tadele, Save the Children Ethiopia.

goals and procedures. The Forum prompted questions like: do we have the capacity to fight disaster risk in Africa? Are we building local capacity to reduce disaster risk? How do we know if we are? How can disaster risk reduction best be implemented in complex political and health contexts? Humanitarian agencies continue to be dominated by a service delivery approach and this is quite different from the developmental approach required of disaster risk reduction.

Policy areas flagged by interviewees as being particularly useful included urban risk and vulnerability, risk transfer and insurance, and general debate on the potential role of the private sector.

The Forum provided new evidence and brought together existing cutting edge practice but was not used as a forum to present original ideas or research *per se*.

Do you feel ProVention's programmes are making an impact on the ground?

The quality of ProVention's outputs was recognised and this has helped the disaster risk reduction message gain more widespread currency. ProVention and its Forum were welcomed as vehicles for the open exchange of ideas. The Forum was seen as a useful opportunity to network with a good mixture of civil society and academic workers taking part. Indeed ProVention was described by one interviewee as a 'wonderful pool of expertise' that could be drawn from. The challenge perhaps is to increase awareness of the contribution that disaster risk reduction can make to security and development and so develop the demand for ProVention's services in parallel with reviewing the mechanisms through which stakeholders can access ProVention's resources.

A gap was identified between knowledge generated by ProVention and local access and change of practice at the local level. Where ProVention has local partners impact on the ground was more readily measurable – for example in the work of AURAN and with the Red Cross in the Americas. Professional networks like ICLEI could be used to promote ProVention's work and especially that of its partners at the local level. This would serve to increase awareness of ProVention and the disaster risk reduction agenda and also help disseminate lessons learned through work supported by ProVention and its partners.

How could the ProVention Forum be improved in future years?

The Forum was valued as a space for exchanging ideas and networking. With this in mind more time for discussion in the workshop and plenary sessions would be welcomed. The use of preceding regional forums to feed into the planning of the Annual Forum was strongly supported.

Overall there was a feeling that the Forum could benefit from inviting new constituencies. Either those that could learn more about disaster risk reduction, such as local government; or those that could offer lessons or new perspectives in disaster risk reduction work, such as the development community. It is acknowledged that both strategies have been attempted to some extent in this year's Forum, with some representation from local government and also some outside technical disciplines such as risk transfer professionals, but there is scope to develop the strategy, using the Forum to exchange information and advocate to targeted communities of practice.

It might be rewarding to organise the content of future Forums differently. For example detailed case studies could be useful for showing the gaps and differences between different aspects of development, humanitarianism and disaster risk reduction as they unfold in a particular country or city. Case studies might focus on places exposed to different mixes of hazards, expressions of vulnerability, or scales of risk. Such themes would enable some interchange of ideas in the plenary. This might also be an opportunity to invite representatives from line ministries or local government to defend their policy positions and so expose them to disaster risk reduction. To maximise the impact inviting political and technical heads of departments is important – the first group has political power, the other the know-how to promote disaster risk reduction.

Suggestions for themes for future forums included climate change and a closer linkage with the natural science community and with those interested in ecosystems services.

4. Conclusion

This report has only been able to include a small proportion of the rich presentations and discussions made at the ProVention Forum 2007. The conference theme of 'Making disaster risk reduction work' provided an opportunity to take stock of contemporary work in disaster risk reduction by ProVention partners, organised around six themes. This also provided scope for identifying more clearly the frontiers for practice and research. The following are key lessons learned from the workshops and from conversations:

- ◆ *Better integration of disaster risk reduction into urban planning requires long-term commitment* starting with the building of a culture of disaster risk reduction amongst local actors, sectoral interests and municipal government. The structure of urban land markets, livelihoods and demographics – especially the youthfulness of populations – requires careful analysis before disaster risk reduction or response and reconstruction activities are undertaken to avoid missed opportunities and the erosion of local capacity.
- ◆ *Climate change raises new challenges for making disaster risk reduction work.* Climate change must be recognised both as a motor for variation in hydrometeorological hazard, and as a pressure re-shaping human vulnerability and capacity to cope with or adapt. This means that long-term planning to reduce disaster risk (for example through planning economic policy or in infrastructure development decisions) needs to consider not only future climatic scenarios but also future social scenarios influenced by direct loss and indirect impacts of climate change felt through movements of people, changing disease patterns and economic systems.
- ◆ *Insurance and risk reduction are most effective when undertaken in partnership.* Support for initiatives that seek to build such partnerships and report on lessons learnt are important first steps in developing this agenda for coupled action in disaster risk management.
- ◆ *Making disaster risk reduction work within mainstream development policy requires strong partnerships with line-ministries that can negotiate for national budget support.* Within government, national platforms are potentially important champions for disaster risk reduction. National and international civil society is also important in lobbying for disaster risk reduction and in holding ministries and national platforms to account.
- ◆ *The horizontal exchange of information and ideas for practice can help improve performance and strengthen local self-reliance.* Horizontal links built between community groups, or at another scale, between national NGOs can also compliment (and potentially act as an alternative to) predominant organisational forms that are hierarchically structured with international organisations or donors at the apex.
- ◆ *Effort is needed to champion the implementation and dissemination of applied research and to enable academics to sharpen their analytical work and improve practice through partnerships with practitioner organisations of all kinds.* More communication and collaboration between academic researchers and research users will help to reduce duplication, improve relevance and enhance the dissemination of academic work. Innovative teaching, including distance learning, will also be strengthened through closer ties between researchers and practitioners.

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ProVention Consortium Secretariat
PO Box 372
CH – 1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 730 44 99
Telefax: +41 22 733 03 95
Email: provention@ifrc.org
Web site: www.proventionconsortium.org



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