

Urban Disaster Risk Reduction & Management

A global overview on urban disaster risk

Rapid urbanisation and climate change are amongst the most significant phenomena of the 21st century. In 2010, for the first time in human history the number of global urban inhabitants outnumbered the rural inhabitants. Urbanisation beside the social and economic opportunities which provides to the communities and states, is also a source of risk to many people. In a more accurate term, urban sprawl and unplanned urbanisation as consequences of improper development accumulate extensive risks which threaten life, property and dignity of millions of people around the world.

Every day, more than 100,000 people move to slums in the developing world-that is one person every second. Nearly 1.5 billion people currently live in informal settlements and slums without adequate access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation. Many are at risk of hurricanes, cyclones, flooding, earthquake and epidemics, as well as crime, fires and industrial accidents. Developed countries are not totally safe and immune against the urban disasters risks. Some of most destructive urban disasters occurred in highly developed countries in the recent years. In the rapidly growing urban risk environment, it is the responsibility of everyone from development sectors to humanitarian actors to take urban disaster risk reduction and management as serious concern and priority for action. The solution for this concern is building and enhancing the resilience of people and communities against risk of disasters and crises in the urban context.

Key facts and figures

- 2012 global population: over 7 billion
- Medium variant population 2050 projection: 9.6 billion
- In 2010, for the first time in history, the urban population outnumbers the rural population
- Global urban population: 53% or 3,763,000,000 vs. Global rural population: 47% or 3,337,000,000
- Urban population projection for 2050: 70%
- Global population living in slums and informal settlements: 1.5 billion
- 3.1 million people estimated to die annually from urban air pollution
- 1.3 million people estimated to die annually from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 million people affected & 222,500 people estimated to have died in the January 12th Haiti earthquake of 2010
- 12.5 million people affected & 19,447 people estimated to have died in the March 11th Japan earthquake and Tsunami of 2011
- Almost 300 people estimated to have died in the Karachi, Pakistan textile factory complex fire of September 12th 2012
- 1127 people estimated to have died in the Savar, Bangladesh building collapse of April 24th 2013
- Over 52,000 people estimated to have died in the European heat wave of 2003, the majority in urban areas
- 68 countries have a higher homicide rate in the most populous city than the rest of the country
- Up to 575,4000 people were estimated to have died during the 2009 H1N1 “Swine Flu” pandemic
- Food riots in 2008 & 2011 as food prices increased by 70% in some markets

Global efforts toward Urban Disaster Risk Reduction

- **UNISDR resilient cities campaign**
The Making Cities Resilient: 'My City is getting ready!' campaign, launched in May 2010, addresses issues of local governance and urban risk. 1468 cities have signed up for the campaign with its 10 essentials for making cities resilient
- **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP/DRR)**
The 3rd Session of the GP/DRR in 2011 renewed commitment to the Ten Essentials of the “My City is Getting Ready Campaign” and requested to:
 - “increase investment in disaster risk reduction at the local level and ensure national growth does not increase local risks”
 - “By 2015 all major cities in disaster-prone areas should include and enforce disaster risk reduction measures in their building and land use codes”The 4th Session of GP/DRR in 2013 called for:
 - “Better understanding of urban risk needs”
 - “Sound urban development and spatial planning, including attention to informal settlements, migration, safe housing, infrastructure and social services
- **World Urban Forum 6 in 2012:**
 - Highlighted the need for “guidance and tools to assist urban and local governments in ensuring resilience in the face of disasters”
 - Highlighted the fact that “cities are increasingly being exposed to disasters associated with climate change, which threatens economies, public health, quality of life and stability”
 - The disturbance and erosion of social cohesion by pervasive violence in neighborhoods exposes youth to increased risks”
- **Housing and Habitat Forum in different regions (Asia Pacific, Americas and Europe & Central Asia)**
 - This biennial conference usually co-organized by IFRC, Habitat for Humanity International. The forum gathers public, private and people sector stakeholders engaged in seeking solutions to poverty housing issues, impact of Climate change on built environment and risk aware planning.
 - It Showcases creative approaches & innovative solutions to urban vulnerability, risk management and housing finance (annual best practice awards)
 - Promote policies & systems that advance access to adequate, affordable housing and good governance.

Red Cross Red Crescent and Urban DRR & DM

- **Principles and values**
The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement imply among other things, provision of humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable and most affected people in a neutral and impartial way and by respecting human dignity.
- **Strategy 2020 of the IFRC**
Urban disaster risk reduction and management contributes greatly to achieving the 3 Strategic aims of the Strategy 2020 including:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

- **World Disaster Report 2010**

A turning point in IFRC strategic engagement in urban disaster risk reduction was the World Disaster Report (WDR)2010 which was dedicated to urban risk. WDR 2010 echoed the global and local concerns over urban disaster risks and called for effective action by the Federation and National Societies for risk reduction in urban areas.

- **Regional studies and research on Urban DRR/DM**

Pursuant to WDR 2010, a number of major initiatives on urban disaster risk reduction and management were taken within the scope of the IFRC, in addition to the numerous on going activities of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in urban areas. These included:

- *No time for doubt: Tackling urban risk”, A glance at urban interventions by Red Cross Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean* IFRC Americas Zone, 2011
- *Programmatic directions for the Red Cross and Red Crescent in building urban community resilience in the Asia Pacific Region* IFRC Asia Pacific Zone, 2012
- *Learning from the City*, British Red Cross, 2012
- *Urbanisation: Study into cases, trends and consequences of the rapid growth of cities and the impact on Red Cross and Red Crescent work*, Netherlands Red Cross, 2007
- *Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas – a Handbook* (IFRC/SKAT)
- *‘Better Laws, Safer Communities?’* IFRC 2013

Also, a number of regional workshops on urban DRR/DM are held or planned to be held in 2013 and 2014. So far two workshops on Urban DRR were held in Africa, the first in Arusha in February and the second in Kampala in July 2013. Bangkok workshop on Building Urban Resilience in Asia& Pacific was organized in July 2013.

- **Urban DRR/DM Projects**

Several National Societies are engaged in various types of DRR and DM projects in urban areas with the support of Participating National Societies. These projects range from urban risk assessment initiatives such as risk mapping to delivering health, water and sanitation services to the people in slums and informal settlements.

- **Current gaps, future needs and the way forward**

The outcomes of the most of Red Cross and Red Crescent works in urban risk reduction and management so far indicate that there is need for:

- Better understanding of urban context for more effective urban disaster risk reduction and management
- A global common approach of Red Cross and Red Crescent for engagement in urban disaster risk reduction and management
- Specific capacity and appropriate tools for disaster risk reduction and management in urban context

Partnership on Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Purpose

To respond to the growing concerns over urban disaster risk and support building the capacities of Red Cross and Red Crescent for effective urban risk reduction and management, with the contribution of the Iranian Red Crescent, the IFRC Partnership on Urban DRR/DM initiated in May 2013.

Objective

To strengthen National Societies' capacity to support resilience building and enhancing disaster preparedness and response in urban areas through:

1. Scaling up RCRC activities to reduce urban disaster risks and vulnerability,
2. Strengthening RCRC capacities to effectively response to urban disasters

Outputs

- Mapping of the RCRC work in urban areas
- Development of National Societies' long-term strategic plans for building urban resilience and implementation of pilot projects in selected cities
- Field test and revision of current RCRC tools for use in urban context
- Support the capacity building of National Societies to prepare for and respond to various disasters in urban areas
- Development of IFRC's common approach and guidelines for urban disaster risk reduction and management

The five pilot cities

To achieve the aforementioned objective and outputs in an evidence-based manner, city level pilot studies will be conducted in five selected cities of different zones. In planning and implementing the city level pilot studies, multi-stakeholder, multi-hazard, community and people-centred approach will be applied. The selected cities are as follows:

- Africa: Nairobi, Kenya
- Americas: Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- Asia Pacific: Jakarta, Indonesia
- Europe: Yerevan, Armenia
- Middle East and North Africa: Tehran, Iran

Timeline

March 2013-February 2015

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