



Australian Government  
AusAID



## Investing in a Safer Future

A Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the  
Australian aid program

June 2009





Australian Government  
AusAID



# Investing in a Safer Future

A Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the  
Australian aid program

June 2009



Cover: Primary school students plant mangroves as part of a disaster risk reduction program in Bali, Indonesia. Photo: Courtesy of Indonesian Red Cross 2008

## Acknowledgements

AusAID would like to thank all the NGOs, multilateral and regional organisations, and government and donor agencies who participated in consultations on the policy.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Ms Margareta Wahlstrom, for her invaluable guidance early in the policy development process.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2009

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Attorney General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or posted at <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>

ISBN 978-1-921285-80-6

Published by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Canberra, June 2009.

This document is online at:  
[www.ausaid.gov.au/publications](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications)

For more information about the Australian Government's international development program, contact:

Communications Section  
AusAID  
GPO Box 887  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone +61 2 6206 4000  
Facsimile +61 2 6206 4880  
Internet [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au)

Edited by Wilton Hanford Hanover Pty Ltd  
Designed by GRi.D, Canberra

For more information on disaster risk reduction see:  
[www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/disasterriskreduction.cfm](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/disasterriskreduction.cfm)



These icons symbolise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—eight goals representing an agreement by world leaders to reduce poverty and enhance human development by 2015. More information about the MDGs is available online at [www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/mdg.cfm](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/mdg.cfm)

# Ministerial foreword



The global momentum towards greater prioritisation of disaster risk reduction is strongly supported by the Australian Government. Much can be done to minimise the impact of natural hazards before they occur. Without action, disasters will continue to disproportionately affect the poorest people in developing countries.

Australia is at the forefront of international efforts to encourage greater investment in disaster risk reduction. Our own experience in managing the multitude of natural hazards we face - drought, bushfires, cyclones and floods—has taught us much about how to better mitigate and prepare for these events.

In January 2005, just three weeks after the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Australia was one of 168 UN member states to adopt the Hyogo Framework for Action, which is a blueprint for global disaster reduction efforts. We share the conviction that urgent and sustained actions are needed to reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters.

*Investing in a Safer Future: a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid program* provides the framework for the full integration of disaster risk reduction into Australia's aid program.

The policy supports the significant efforts of partner governments, UN agencies, civil society and others to implement the Hyogo Framework. The policy is crucial if we are to help developing countries and communities minimise the impact of disasters.

There is now global recognition that disasters can undermine, and even reverse, hard-won development progress. Investing in disaster risk reduction not only saves lives and livelihoods—it helps reduce the costs involved in responding to disasters, can offer a measure of protection to developing economies, and helps safeguard critical infrastructure.

Studies have found that for each dollar invested in disaster risk reduction, two to ten dollars are saved in avoided or reduced disaster response and recovery costs. Minimising disaster risk is also vital for ensuring achievement of sustainable development targets including the Millennium Development Goals.

This work is all the more urgent given evidence that climate change impacts are likely to increase the frequency, severity and unpredictability of weather related hazards. The policy recognises that disaster risk reduction is a critical component of efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

One thing is clear, if we do nothing the devastating impact of disasters on people, economies and the environment will grow.



Australia, through AusAID, has had a long engagement in disaster management, mitigation and preparedness, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. This policy builds on Australia's considerable experience, and provides a framework for current and future investments, including the Australia–Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction. It will strengthen and enhance Australian support for disaster risk reduction globally and ensure the increased sustainability and effectiveness of our aid program.



**Stephen Smith MP**  
*Minister for Foreign Affairs*

A woman studies a hazard map showing tsunami inundation hazard areas and evacuation routes for one sector of Padang city, Indonesia.  
Photo: Courtesy of SurfAid International

Hazard maps are an important tool for ensuring that planning and new development considers risks from natural hazards.



# Contents



<b>Ministerial foreword</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Scope of this policy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The global commitment to disaster risk reduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What are the key challenges?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What is disaster risk reduction?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Why is disaster risk reduction critical for sustainable development?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>What are we already doing?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>What will we do?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>What are the guiding principles for the policy?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>How will the policy be implemented?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>How will performance be assessed?</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	
1 Policy overview	32
2 Summary of the Hyogo Framework for Action	33
3 Selected UNISDR terminology on disaster risk reduction	34



A coral wall intended to break the swell of king tides and storm surges is being constructed in order to protect residents in Tarawa, Kiribati.

Photo: Jocelyn Carlin/Panos Pictures

# Summary



Disasters can wipe out years of hard-won development progress, devastate lives and livelihoods and cripple developing economies.

In 2008, 321 natural disasters killed over 235 000 people, affected the lives of more than 211 million and cost over US\$181 billion.<sup>1</sup> As the impacts of climate change worsen, the frequency and severity of natural disasters are likely to increase.

But natural hazards, such as cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis do not need to become natural disasters. While disasters are generally triggered by a natural hazard event, the impact on communities is a direct result of vulnerability related to complex development factors, such as poverty, disability and gender inequality.

Disaster risk reduction programs aim to reduce the vulnerability and enhance the resilience of communities to the adverse effects of natural hazards. Investing in disaster risk reduction protects lives, livelihoods and property and is critical for sustainable development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It can significantly reduce the costs involved in response to disasters and can safeguard development gains by protecting investments from being impaired or lost.

This policy comes at a time of unprecedented international momentum to reduce disaster risks. Since the adoption in 2005 of the Hyogo Framework for Action, a global blueprint for disaster risk reduction, there has been growing international conviction that response alone is not enough. Proactive efforts to reduce disaster risk are needed.

The Australian Government already invests in disaster risk reduction initiatives in over 30 partner countries, but more needs to be done. This policy provides a framework for the Australian Government's commitment to reduce the risk of natural disasters.

The goal of this policy is **reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience of countries and communities to disasters**. There are four outcomes:

- 1. Disaster risk reduction is integrated into the Australian aid program**—to ensure measures are taken to reduce disaster risk through all development and humanitarian programs. This will also ensure that development is safeguarded from disasters, and development and humanitarian programs do not create new forms of vulnerability.
- 2. The capacity of partner countries to reduce disaster risks is strengthened in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action**—to ensure continued support to international and regional organisations, partner governments and NGOs to prioritise, coordinate, support and facilitate disaster risk reduction programs.

1 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), *Deaths and economic losses jump in 2008*, media release, 22 January 2009, [www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2009/pr-2009-01-disaster-figures-2008.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2009/pr-2009-01-disaster-figures-2008.pdf).



- 3. Leadership and advocacy on disaster risk reduction are supported and enhanced**—to promote leadership for disaster risk reduction within AusAID and with key partners, including governments and civil society, and to advocate for greater prioritisation of disaster risk reduction.
- 4. Policies and programming for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are coherent and coordinated**—to ensure our approaches to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are strongly aligned.

The construction of cyclone shelters combined with community preparedness activities and effective early warning systems has led to a marked reduction in deaths caused by cyclones in Bangladesh. With weather related hazards likely to increase due to the effects of climate change, investing in such measures to reduce risk is vital.

Photo: Zed Nelson/Panos Pictures



# Scope of this policy



This policy supports the overarching objective of the Australian aid program—to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia’s national interest.

This policy provides a framework for the Australian Government’s commitment to reduce the risk of natural disasters within the aid program.

This policy will apply to all Australian overseas development assistance, delivered by AusAID and by whole-of-government partners. It will be implemented in coordination with other key Australian Government policy initiatives, particularly those outlined below.<sup>2</sup>

- > While the Disaster Risk Reduction policy covers natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods and drought, there are clear links between natural hazards and conflict, pandemics and technological hazards. Natural disasters can and do occur in conflict zones and may exacerbate or reduce conflict. The threat of a pandemic may require the same institutional and government preparedness as a natural disaster. In support of a multi-hazard approach this policy will be implemented in conjunction with the *Pandemics and Emerging Infectious Diseases Strategy 2006–2010* and the *Peace, Conflict and Development Policy*.
- > A major aim of the Disaster Risk Reduction policy is to promote coherence and coordination between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation policies and programs. This commitment is reflected in the Australian development assistance program’s approach to the environment and climate change.
- > Risk reduction needs to be integrated into humanitarian assistance and programming. Linkages with the *Humanitarian Action Policy* which governs Australia’s humanitarian assistance will be essential.

As well as disaster risk reduction, there are a range of other important cross-cutting issues that must be integrated across the aid program, including disability<sup>3</sup> and gender. Integration of disaster risk reduction will be mutually supportive and coherent with these other policies. This includes ensuring that the needs of vulnerable groups, such as women and girls and people with disability, are included in disaster risk reduction processes, policy decisions and program design, implementation and evaluation.

---

<sup>2</sup> These documents can be found at: [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> See *Development for All—Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009–2014*



A child takes refuge with his ducks on a tiny mound of dry land during the 2007 South Asian floods. In response to climate change impacts and the threat of increased flooding, livelihood programs in Bangladesh have been adapted to minimise losses. One successful approach has seen farmers raise ducks rather than chickens as ducks are more likely to survive floods.

Photo: G.M.B. Akash / Panos Pictures

# The global commitment to disaster risk reduction



This policy comes at a time of unprecedented international momentum to reduce disaster risks. Governments, international agencies and non-government organisations across the globe share the conviction that urgent and sustained actions are needed to reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters.

In January 2005, just three weeks after the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held in Kobe, Japan. At the conference, 168 countries, including Australia and all of our developing country partners, adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, a blueprint for global disaster reduction efforts. For the first time, the world had a common global agenda for reducing the risk of disasters.

The Hyogo Framework's overarching goal is a substantial reduction in disaster losses—in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of countries and communities. The Framework outlines **five priorities for action**:

1. *Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.*
2. *Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.*
3. *Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.*
4. *Reduce the underlying risk factors.*
5. *Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.*

A summary of the Hyogo Framework is at Appendix 2.

The adoption of the Hyogo Framework, and subsequent work by countries to implement the priorities for action, signal a growing international conviction that response alone is not enough, and proactive efforts to reduce disaster risk are needed. However, considerable work is still required to translate these international commitments into action.

**'Disaster risk reduction is everybody's business. Only by investing in tangible risk reduction measures can we reduce vulnerability and protect development'**

Ban Ki Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2008

# What are the key challenges?

**‘Reducing disaster vulnerability may very well be the most critical challenge facing development in the new millennium’**

James Wolfensohn, Former President, World Bank, 2003

**Disasters are increasing in frequency, scale and impact.** In 2008, at least 321 natural disasters killed over 235 000 people, and affected the lives of more than 211 million. Recovery costs for the year are set to exceed US\$181 billion, which is more than twice the annual average for 2000–2007.<sup>4</sup>

**Climate change adds to the risk**, and is highly likely to increase the frequency and severity of weather-related hazards, which accounted for over 76 per cent of natural disasters over the last two decades.<sup>5</sup> During the period 1987 to 2006, the number of reported weather-related disasters increased significantly, from an average of 195 per year between 1987 and 1998 to 365 per year between 2000 and 2006.<sup>6</sup>

**Time trend of reported natural disasters, 1975–2008**



On average, over the past 30 years, the number of reported natural disasters has increased dramatically, as illustrated in the graph above.<sup>7</sup>

4 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), *Deaths and economic losses jump in 2008*, media release, 22 January 2009, [www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2009/pr-2009-01-disaster-figures-2008.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2009/pr-2009-01-disaster-figures-2008.pdf).

5 UNISDR, *Climate change and disaster risk reduction: briefing note 1*, 2008, [www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/climate-change/docs/Climate-Change-DRR.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/climate-change/docs/Climate-Change-DRR.pdf).

6 Hoyois, P, Scheuren, JM, Below, R, Guha-Sapir, D 2007, *Annual disaster statistical review: numbers and trends 2006*. Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters.

7 UNISDR and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), *2008 Disasters in Numbers*, [www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/facts-sheets/2008-disasters-in-numbers-ISDR-CRED.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/facts-sheets/2008-disasters-in-numbers-ISDR-CRED.pdf)

**Disaster impacts are exacerbated by several factors**, including increases in global population and unplanned urbanisation, growing settlement and investment in high-risk coastal areas, deforestation, poor land-use management, inadequate enforcement of building codes and periodic economic fluctuations.

**Disasters disproportionately affect the poor.** Over 95 per cent of people killed by natural disasters are from developing countries.<sup>8</sup> The poorest people in developing countries are the most vulnerable to disaster impacts and have the least capacity to reduce their risk exposure. They are more likely to reside in marginal, hazard-prone locations, live and work in substandard buildings that cannot withstand stress, have limited livelihood options and food security, and poor access to social protection mechanisms.

While large-scale, high-impact disasters command international attention, they are only part of the problem. **Small-scale but high-frequency events**, such as annual flooding in South Asia, can cumulatively cause more damage than large events.

Finally, in environments where governments face scarce resources and competing priorities, it may be difficult for development partners to **establish a policy dialogue around disaster risk reduction** and encourage investments which although cost effective, may not benefit communities for some time.



Settlement on the outskirts of Manila, Philippines

Photo: Jim Holmes

Approximately one billion people worldwide live in informal settlements, which are often on land deemed unsuitable for residential or commercial use. The expansion of informal settlements is closely associated with the rapid increase in weather-related disaster reports in urban areas.

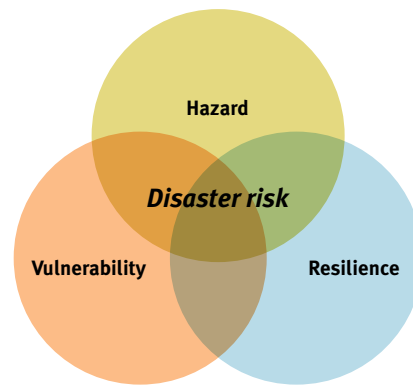
*2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*

<sup>8</sup> World Bank: *Disaster Risk Management*, 2009, <http://go.worldbank.org/BCQUXRWOw>

# What is disaster risk reduction?

## Definition of disaster risk

Disaster risk arises when hazards interact with vulnerabilities. The potential for a hazard to become a disaster is determined by a complex relationship between a **hazard** and the **vulnerability** and **resilience** of a population, as represented below.<sup>9</sup>



A **hazard** is a natural event that may cause loss of life, injury or other adverse impacts. Natural hazards include:

- > Geophysical events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis
- > Hydro-meteorological events such as cyclones, droughts and floods

**Vulnerability** refers to physical, social, economic, environmental and individual factors that increase the likelihood of loss from a hazard. Traits that increase vulnerability include:

- > Poverty
- > Disability
- > Disease
- > Gender inequality
- > Age (elderly and young)

**Resilience** is the ability to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover or 'spring back' from the effects of a hazard. Mechanisms that increase resilience include:

- > Livelihood diversification
- > Warning systems
- > Access to health and education
- > Improved buildings
- > Effective legislation and governance

It is important to recognise that people can be both vulnerable and resilient at the same time. For example, an individual may be **vulnerable** due to poverty, old age or disability but may also be **resilient** due to a range of livelihood options, safe housing, insurance and access to health systems.

<sup>9</sup> AusAID recognises that these terms may be used slightly differently across the development program, particularly in relation to climate change.

## Why it is important to consider vulnerability

The 2003 Paso Robles earthquake in central California left two people dead and 40 injured. Four days later, the earthquake that struck Bam, Iran, resulted in over 30 000 deaths and another 30 000 injured. Both earthquakes were of a similar magnitude (6.5 and 6.6 respectively) and occurred in highly populated areas.

The dramatic difference in the impacts of these earthquakes is attributable to differences in the structural quality of buildings in each location. Eighty-five per cent of the buildings in Bam collapsed during the quake. A major factor contributing to the devastatingly high death and injury toll was that traditional mud brick buildings were not earthquake resistant, and crumbled and suffocated people inside.

Mohamed Rahimnejad, a civil engineer working in Bam after the quake, said that ‘the houses killed the people, not the earthquake’.

Source: UNISDR, *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters*, 2007, [www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/docs/HFA-brochure-English.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/docs/HFA-brochure-English.pdf)

Right: Rubble lines the streets of Bam, Iran after a magnitude 6.6 earthquake in 2003. Residents in Bam were vulnerable due to structurally unsafe housing. Collapsed buildings significantly contributed to the deaths of over 30 000 people. Photo: Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures



## Definition of disaster risk reduction

Disaster risk reduction is ‘the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through **systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters**, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events’.<sup>10</sup>

Broadly, disaster risk reduction includes efforts to:

- > foster or support national, provincial or local prioritisation and coordination of disaster risk reduction strategies
- > collect data on natural hazard risks for use in improving early warning systems
- > educate and raise awareness about disaster risk reduction
- > mitigate the impact of natural hazards, through livelihood diversification, building reinforcement, environmental protection, microfinance, land-use planning and any other activities that increase resilience
- > strengthen disaster preparedness, including contingency planning, emergency response and evacuation plans.

<sup>10</sup> UNISDR, *Terminology on disaster risk reduction*, 2009, [www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng.htm](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng.htm) (emphasis added).



# Why is disaster risk reduction critical for sustainable development?



## It protects lives, livelihoods and property

Disasters not only result in loss of life, injury and impairment; they also destroy livelihoods, personal property and critical infrastructure. Investment in disaster risk reduction, including preparedness and mitigation activities, can dramatically reduce these losses. For example, in 1970, around 500 000 people were killed when Cyclone Bhola hit Bangladesh. Since then, the Government of Bangladesh has invested in early warning systems, mitigation measures and community preparedness activities. When Cyclone Sidr struck in 2007, over three million people were evacuated and 1.5 million took refuge in purpose-built cyclone shelters. As a result, less than 4 000 people were killed.<sup>11</sup>

Further, ensuring that homes, workplaces, hospitals, schools, roads and other critical infrastructure are as disaster-proof as possible can enhance the resilience of a community to natural hazards.



### Disaster risk reduction protects livelihoods

#### Crop resilience in Niger, West Africa

Historically and with increasing frequency, the effect of droughts on rural communities' harvests in Niger, West Africa, have been devastating. Traditional farming practices combined with severe drought conditions exacerbated food shortages and often led to famine. Farmers tended to rely on a narrow range of crops and to clear land of all trees, which led to desertification, a lack of biodiversity and lower future crop yields.

To address the underlying causes of food shortages, an integrated farming system known as the 'farmer managed agro-forestry farming system', or FMAFS, was developed by Australian members of the faith based organization 'Serving in Mission' (SIM). The program aims to address desertification, the lack of biodiversity in the crops used, absence of ground cover and low soil organic matter content. Farmers were also given the opportunity to determine the density of tree layout, annual crops and types of crops planted.

Since 2000, SIM has been providing training to farmers in World Vision programs. World Vision and SIM are now also engaged in researching and promoting markets for FMAFS' products. FMAFS has helped farmers to broaden their definition of farming and use agro-forestry as an effective alternative to destructive practices. The program has provided farmers with many tangible benefits, including additional food sources, firewood, crop protection and crop resilience, and alternate income sources. It has introduced a robust, resilient way of farming, replacing a way of farming that was extremely vulnerable to droughts.

Source: Adapted from World Vision, 'Increasing crop resilience to drought through agro-forestry farming— case study from Niger, West Africa' to be published by ISDR, 2009.

Left: A farmer in Niger uses new techniques to ensure his land is more resilient to drought and desertification. Photo: Courtesy of World Vision Australia 2008

11 Government of Bangladesh, *Damage, loss and needs assessment for disaster recovery and reconstruction*, 2008.

## Disaster risk reduction saves lives

### Earthquake preparedness in Silabu, Indonesia

Being prepared for disasters saves lives. The people of Silabu, a small village in North Pagai, Mentawai Islands, about 160 kilometres west of Padang, Indonesia, were well prepared to deal with two earthquakes on September 12 and September 13, 2007. The first earthquake measured 8.4 on the Richter scale, and the second 7.9. The earthquakes destroyed 50 per cent of the small village and more than 60 houses. However, thanks to a three-year Australian Government-funded community-based disaster risk management program undertaken by SurfAid International, there were no casualties from about 150 families and a population of 625.

In the two months before the disaster, SurfAid carried out emergency preparedness activities and the community erected signposts pointing to an evacuation site. Children participated in earthquake simulation drills at school and families prepared emergency bags with essential documents and emergency items. This meant that when the earthquake struck, the community knew what to do and where to go.

Source: J Brown. ReliefWeb: SurfAid International Situation Report No. 2: Mentawai Earthquakes, 15 September 2007.

Right: A primary school student takes part in an earthquake drill conducted by SurfAid. Photo: Courtesy of SurfAid International



## It protects development gains

The damage caused by large disasters can outweigh efforts to improve development outcomes. The Kashmir earthquake of October 2005 caused an estimated US\$5 billion in damage in Pakistan, roughly equivalent to the total overseas development assistance for the preceding three years.<sup>12</sup>

Disasters and development are inextricably linked. While ineffective or poorly designed programs can contribute to greater vulnerability to hazards, effective interventions to reduce disaster risk can protect development gains and limit communities' exposure to further economic and social shocks.

## It is cost effective

Studies by the World Bank and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have found that for each dollar invested in disaster risk reduction, two to ten dollars are saved in avoided or reduced disaster response and recovery costs. For example, planting mangroves to provide a buffer against waves caused by storms, floods or tsunamis can have enormous disaster mitigation benefits as well as livelihood and climate adaptation benefits. A mangrove-planting project in Vietnam to protect coastal populations from typhoons and storms yielded an estimated benefit/cost ratio of 52 over the period 1994 to 2001.<sup>13</sup>

Risk reduction does not have to be expensive. Estimates suggest that building disaster protection into new health and school facilities would only add 4 per cent to their total cost.<sup>14</sup>

Further, investing in disaster risk reduction will mean that the costs of humanitarian response following a disaster are significantly reduced over the long term.

**'We lost in 72 hours what [has] taken more than 50 years to build'**

President Carlos Flores, after Hurricane Mitch struck Honduras in 1998

Many of the Australian Government's partner countries are prone to hazards. Targeted disaster risk reduction initiatives can ensure that development investments are not impaired or lost through disasters. Taking account of disaster risk in the design and implementation of broader development programs will help ensure sustainability.









<sup>12</sup> World Bank, *Hazards of nature, Risks to development: an IEG evaluation of World Bank assistance for natural disasters*, World Bank, Washington DC, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> UNISDR, *Climate change and disaster risk reduction: briefing note 1*, 2008, (citing the 2006 *Stern Review: Report on the economics of climate change*, 2006), [www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/climate-change/docs/Climate-Change-DRR.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/climate-change/docs/Climate-Change-DRR.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> UN News Centre *Remarks to the Ministerial Meeting on Reducing Disaster Risks in a Changing Climate*, 2008, [www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/search\\_full.asp?statID=340](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/search_full.asp?statID=340).

## It supports the Millennium Development Goals

The Australian Government is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which are agreed targets set by the world's nations to reduce poverty by 2015. Disaster risk reduction efforts can help support these goals, as outlined in the table below.

Millennium Development Goals	How disasters can impact on these goals <sup>15</sup>	How disaster risk reduction can help achieve these goals
 <b>Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>	Disasters increase poverty and hunger by destroying livelihoods, such as farming. This can cause food insecurity and unemployment, and push people into long-term poverty.	Protecting and diversifying livelihoods helps build resilience to cyclical hazards such as floods and droughts.
 <b>Achieve universal primary education</b>	School attendance can fall after a disaster, due to damaged school buildings, displacement of families, and loss of income. Children may need to perform extra chores or even seek employment instead of attending school.	Safe, structurally sound and accessible buildings means all children are protected while at school, and they minimise disruption to operation after a disaster. Schools or health centres can double as cyclone shelters and safe evacuation buildings.
 <b>Promote gender equality and empower women</b>	Women and girls suffer most from the impacts of disasters. Because of the breakdown of services after a disaster, their workloads often increase and they are more vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual abuse. The situation is often worse for women and girls with disability. <sup>16</sup> Girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school and enter the workforce, and women often eat or drink less to save rations for their family.	Reducing disaster risk alleviates the impact of additional burdens that befall women as a consequence of disasters.
 <b>Reduce child mortality</b>	Children are more likely to be killed by sudden events such as floods, landslides and earthquakes. They can also become orphaned, homeless or vulnerable to injuries, impairment or illness as family structures break down or change significantly. Disease can spread due to unsafe water and sanitation.	Preventing the destruction of health, water and sanitation infrastructure is critical in protecting children from death, disease and disability.
 <b>Improve maternal health</b>	Pregnant women are at high risk of death, injury, illness and disability during and after a disaster. Hospitals and health clinics may be damaged and safe-birthing environments are rare or absent. Pregnant women may also experience increased stress, workloads and responsibilities.	Community warning systems allow pregnant women to move to safety before a disaster. Protecting or diversifying livelihoods so that families have a year-round income ensures pregnant women's nutritional needs are better met. Availability of safe-birthing environments can prevent complications during childbirth.
 <b>Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>	Contagious diseases such as malaria can spread quickly in the wake of a disaster. Treatment can be disrupted if health clinics and hospitals are destroyed. Poverty that is exacerbated by a disaster may force more women into sex work, and men into transient professions which can increase their risk of HIV infection.	Risk reduction will reduce the possibilities for spread of contagious diseases following disasters. Livelihood security will avoid impoverishment and vulnerability to sex work or displacement.
 <b>Ensure environmental sustainability</b>	Disasters can cause widespread environmental damage. Crops can be affected by pollutants and rebuilding of houses can exacerbate deforestation.	Restoration of ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs and forests reduce the impact of and exposure to hazards. Securing livelihoods can protect natural environments and decrease the rate of migrations to urban centers. Effective land-use planning helps people identify safe areas to live, and environmentally sound places to grow crops.
 <b>Develop a global partnership for development</b>	The Hyogo Framework for Action has built consensus internationally, and led to new partnerships between governments, international and regional organisations, non-government and civil society organisations and the private sector to ensure development is more sustainable through reducing disaster risk.	

<sup>15</sup> This table is based on Annex A, 'Examples of disaster impacts on efforts to meet the MDGs', on page 21 of DFID, *Reducing the risk of disasters—helping to achieve sustainable poverty reduction in a vulnerable world: a DFID policy paper*, DFID, London, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> DFID, *Disability, poverty and development*, DFID, London, 2000.



A man plants mangroves in the Philippines.

Photo: Jim Holmes

Healthy mangroves shield coastlines from the damaging effects of strong wind and waves caused by cyclones and tropical storms. With an expected increase in weather-related events due to global warming, mangroves are also an effective climate change adaptation measure.

Mangroves not only protect against extreme weather events, but also provide positive environmental impacts through their ability to control soil erosion, absorb carbon dioxide and improve water quality through pollutant filtration.

# What are we already doing?



## Current programming

Australia is well positioned to enhance its support to disaster risk reduction. Australia has had a long engagement in disaster management, mitigation and preparedness, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The Australian Government has invested in a broad range of disaster risk reduction activities at the regional, bilateral and community level in over 30 countries, including:

- > **strengthening international leadership and collaboration**, including support for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)'s Asia-Pacific program and the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which is focused on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in developing countries.
- > **funding key regional initiatives**, such as the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, relevant South Pacific regional organisations and the ASEAN Secretariat, to support government efforts to implement disaster risk reduction strategies and build networks and linkages between organisations to promote coherence.
- > **strengthening partner government agencies**, including national disaster management offices to prepare for and mitigate disasters and technical agencies to map risks from hazards such as typhoons, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.
- > **supporting community-based activities** such as preparedness programs to improve local response and recovery, to protect against the loss of livelihoods and mitigate potential hazards.

There is increasing interest in disaster risk reduction across the aid program, as well as in our partner countries. A number of AusAID's larger bilateral programs, including Indonesia and the Philippines have developed or are developing disaster management strategies with a strong focus on disaster risk reduction, reflecting increased partner government interest in preventive approaches.

## Philippines READY program and partnerships

As one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, the Philippines requires a comprehensive approach for managing disasters. The Hazards Mapping and Assessment for Effective Community Based Disaster Risk Management program (READY 2006–2010) is the flagship project of the Philippines Government on disaster risk reduction. Working closely alongside the United Nations Development Programme and Philippines Government agencies, the Australian Government provided A\$2.5 million (2006–2010) for the Philippines Government technical agencies to map and assess disaster risk in 28 provinces most vulnerable to tropical cyclones and tsunamis. The information was then used to develop community-based early warning systems, mainstream disaster assessment into land-use planning and create advocacy campaigns for better disaster preparedness.

The READY program serves as a platform for many other disaster risk reduction projects in the Philippines. By producing one set of official statistics on multiple hazards, other community and non-government organisations can easily identify local disaster risks and vulnerabilities. For example, these maps are used by initiatives such as the Philippine National Red Cross community-based disaster preparedness project and European Commission-funded projects in the Philippines.

Right: A staff member of the Philippine Government's National Disaster Coordinating Council looks at a hand-painted water gauge used to monitor flood levels. The gauge is also part of an early warning system developed through the READY program. Photo: Jennifer Clancy, AusAID



## Whole-of-government expertise

The Australian aid program draws on the technical expertise of other Australian Government departments to assist developing country partners to build their capacity to reduce disaster risk. This important work will continue and expand. Through efforts to prevent, mitigate and prepare for disasters in Australia, the Australian Government has accumulated important research, tools and experience that are relevant and useful to partner countries.

## Rabaul Volcanological Observatory twinning program

Since the devastating eruption of the Rabaul volcano in Papua New Guinea in 1994, AusAID and Geoscience Australia (GA) have worked collaboratively with the Rabaul Volcanological Observatory (RVO) to mitigate the potential impacts of volcanic disasters. The current RVO twinning program has ensured that AusAID investment and RVO gains made during the earlier and larger Volcanological Service Support project have been maximised through the ongoing working relationship between RVO and GA.

One aim of the program is to enable RVO to provide reliable early warnings of destructive volcanic events to national and local authorities responsible for the safety of communities. Early warnings can minimise loss of life and economic disruption. The program has had demonstrable success in enhancing RVO's capacity to provide early warning, and RVO is a platform for Papua New Guinea's disaster management capacity. In addition to its monitoring capability, RVO has a highly effective public awareness program targeted at communities vulnerable to volcanic events.

Right: GA officer Trevor Dalziell and RVO officer John Bosco work together to install new communications equipment used for monitoring seismic activity. This data can be used to complement the monitoring of volcanic threats for the six volcanoes that the RVO permanently monitors. Photo: Lindsay Miller, Geoscience Australia.



Students at a Muhammadiyah elementary school in Indonesia are taught about volcanic hazards and disaster preparedness using education materials developed by Muhammadiyah with the support of the Australian Government. Muhammadiyah is the second largest civil society organisation in Indonesia.

Photo: Muhammadiyah, Yogyakarta

Experience shows that children who learn about disasters at school promote a culture of safety in the wider community, and know what to do when a disaster strikes.



# What will we do?



This policy has one overarching goal, supported by four outcomes.

## Goal

*Reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience of countries and communities to disasters*

## Outcomes

- 1 Disaster risk reduction is integrated into the Australian aid program*
- 2 The capacity of partner countries to reduce disaster risks is strengthened in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action*
- 3 Leadership and advocacy on disaster risk reduction are supported and enhanced*
- 4 Policies and programming for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are coherent and coordinated*

While specific implementation plans will be determined by partner country priorities and program size and capacity, efforts will be focused on achieving these outcomes.



A community leader points to an evacuation map for his community based on hazard information supplied by the Australian Government supported READY program.

Photo: Jennifer Clancy, AusAID



‘There is now international acknowledgement that efforts to reduce disaster risks must be systematically integrated into policies, plans and programs for sustainable development and poverty reduction.’

Hyogo Framework for Action

## Outcome 1

### Disaster risk reduction is integrated into the Australian aid program

Integrating disaster risk reduction across the aid program is a new way of working in AusAID. To effectively reduce disaster risks, it is not only what we do, but how we do things that is critical.

### Integration into development assistance

Risks from natural hazards need to be factored into development policy, planning and program implementation. Integrating risk reduction will enable appropriate measures to be taken to reduce disaster risk in all development sectors. It will also help to ensure that development assets are protected against potentially negative impacts from hazards and that development programs do not create new forms of vulnerability or erode traditional methods of resilience.<sup>17</sup>

All future Australian aid country strategies and development programs will be informed by risk assessments and risk analysis, which will include consideration of natural hazards and local vulnerabilities.

Australia will:

- > build AusAID staff capacity to understand how disaster risk relates to all development assistance and to integrate disaster risk considerations into programming and monitoring and evaluation, through the development of tools and training and the provision of technical support
- > review ongoing programs to identify opportunities for integrating disaster risk reduction and risk sensitivity
- > build partner government capacity, where appropriate, to support integration into policies, planning and programs
- > develop measurable and achievable indicators for integration.

The table below provides examples of how disaster risk reduction can be integrated into development programs in a range of sectors.

Education	Health	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Incorporating disaster risk reduction modules into the school curriculum and higher education</li> <li>&gt; Promoting hazard resilient construction for new schools</li> <li>&gt; Introducing features into schools to allow their use as accessible emergency shelters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Promoting hazard resilient construction for new hospitals</li> <li>&gt; Implementing disaster preparedness plans in hospitals</li> <li>&gt; Undertaking vulnerability assessment of hospitals in hazard-prone areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Introducing disaster risk impact assessments for the construction of new roads, bridges and other major infrastructure</li> <li>&gt; Promoting the use of hazard risk information in land-use planning</li> <li>&gt; Ensuring compliance and enforcement of building codes and laws, especially for critical infrastructure</li> </ul>
Governance	Environment	Sustainable livelihoods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Elevating disaster risk reduction as a policy priority and encouraging allocation of necessary resources</li> <li>&gt; Ensuring and enforcing the implementation of disaster risk reduction initiatives and assigning accountability, as well as facilitating participation by all relevant stakeholders</li> <li>&gt; Integrating disaster risk reduction into national disaster management legislation and national development plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Strengthening capacities to protect ecosystems that can help reduce disaster risk (e.g. mangroves and coral reefs)</li> <li>&gt; Combating environmental degradation that enhances disaster risk (e.g. deforestation)</li> <li>&gt; Integrating disaster risk concerns into existing environmental assessment tools and planning mechanisms</li> <li>&gt; Coordinating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Promoting contingency programs, including crop planning and crop diversification</li> <li>&gt; Promoting diversified income opportunities</li> <li>&gt; Introducing effective insurance and credit schemes to compensate for crop damage and loss to livelihood</li> <li>&gt; Implementing social protection mechanisms such as for those who have or acquire impairments as a result of a disaster</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Provention Consortium, *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development*, 2009, [www.proventionconsortium.org/?pageid=16](http://www.proventionconsortium.org/?pageid=16).

## Integration into humanitarian assistance

Risk reduction approaches will be integrated into the design and implementation of Australia's humanitarian assistance and recovery programs. Australia's humanitarian assistance is delivered in line with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship and 'do no harm', as outlined in the *Humanitarian Action Policy*.

Australia will:

- > ensure disaster risk reduction informs decision making on recovery, particularly early recovery efforts. This includes integrating the 'build back better' principle into recovery and reconstruction. 'Build back better' entails identifying the social and structural causes of damage and ensuring reconstruction does not rebuild the same vulnerabilities and is accessible to all
- > ensure humanitarian assistance does not inadvertently create future risks for communities
- > learn from and share lessons with other humanitarian agencies on good practice on integrating disaster risk reduction into humanitarian assistance
- > earmark or program funds for disaster risk reduction as part of humanitarian assistance where feasible
- > work with whole-of-government partners and other Australian partners involved in humanitarian assistance to integrate disaster risk reduction.

### 'Build back better' and gender in Aceh

Building back better is not just about infrastructure; it can also be part of broader development programs. The recovery phase can provide unique opportunities to rebuild better, both structurally and for the development benefit of communities. A policy advocacy project in Aceh that strengthened women's legal rights in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami illustrates the potential for reducing disaster risk as part of a gender-focused disaster recovery program.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) funded advocacy activities of the Women's Policy Network (*Jaringan Perempuan untuk Kebijakan*) in developing a joint land titling policy. Before this initiative, men—as heads of the household—were given exclusive ownership of the land. Recognising the opportunity to build back better, the Women's Policy Network took a lead role in advocating for women's rights through lobbying, seminars, workshops and media campaigns. As a result, the post-tsunami land distribution scheme allows Acehese women to have their names registered as individual or joint owners in title deeds.

Source: Adapted from UNISDR, 'Using political momentum to engender legislation in the reconstruction context' in *Gender perspective: working together for disaster risk reduction*, 2007.

Right: The Women's Policy Network of Aceh took a lead role in developing the joint land titling policy. Photo: UNIFEM



**‘Sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually supportive objectives, and in order to meet the challenges ahead, accelerated efforts must be made to build the necessary capacities at the community and national levels to manage and reduce risk’**

Hyogo Framework for Action



A volunteer points the way to a safe evacuation area with a sign made as part of a community-based disaster risk management program in the Mentawai Islands, Indonesia. The project was implemented by SurfAid with support from the Australian Government.

Photo: Courtesy of SurfAid International

## Outcome 2

### **The capacity of partner countries to reduce disaster risks is strengthened in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action**

All of Australia’s developing country partners have adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action. Nations, regional organisations and institutions, civil society, the scientific community, media and the private sector all have a role in its implementation. Many partner governments have already developed their own national action plans and forums for disaster risk reduction. Agreed regional frameworks are in place, such as the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response.

Australia will:

- > support international and regional organisations, including the UNISDR, to facilitate improved coordination, harmonisation and collaboration amongst disaster risk reduction stakeholders in partner countries
- > strengthen networks and links between stakeholders, including partner governments, regional and non-government organisations, to reduce duplication and promote efficient use of resources
- > support effective regional organisations to develop tools and methodologies, provide training and capacity building and offer technical expertise in support of national efforts
- > strengthen partner government capacity at national and sub-national levels, including disaster management offices, to develop and implement frameworks, programs, strategies and legal reforms
- > support specialist technical agencies to gather quality risk assessment data, provide reliable early warning information and develop and implement systems to notify communities effectively
- > support research priorities, through national and regional research institutions and universities
- > provide support for, and build the capacity of government and non-government organisations to facilitate and lead community-based disaster risk management activities
- > foster opportunities for increased engagement with the private sector on disaster risk reduction
- > explore options to support innovative financing mechanisms for risk reduction
- > explore options to support risk transfer initiatives. For those risks that cannot be managed and could affect the most vulnerable, risk transfer options such as insurance will be considered as part of a comprehensive risk management approach
- > support social protection measures that increase community resilience to risk, such as cash transfers, public works programs and micro-finance schemes.

## Australia–Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction

In late 2008 the Prime Minister of Australia and the President of Indonesia agreed to form a A\$67 million Partnership for regional disaster reduction that will involve Australian and Indonesian collaboration on innovative scientific solutions, risk information and analysis, and training and outreach in support of greater disaster mitigation and preparedness in Indonesia and regionally. This Partnership has become effective through the establishment of the Australia-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction (AIFDR).

The AIFDR will focus on disaster reduction capacity development through strong relationships between the Governments of Australia and Indonesia, and key partnerships with regional leaders in disaster risk reduction. As a new initiative, the AIFDR will seek to avoid duplication of efforts by focusing on identifying gaps in the current disaster reduction capacity within Indonesia and the region, and will also seek to link scientific risk identification, disaster reduction research, training programs, policy and planning tasks.

## Outcome 3

### Leadership and advocacy on disaster risk reduction are supported and enhanced

Australia recognises the central role of committed and sustained leadership for successful implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. As well as supporting AusAID staff to be effective leaders and advocates for disaster risk reduction, other partners will also be supported, including governments and civil society.

Australia will:

- > ensure key senior Australian Government staff with responsibility for promoting disaster risk reduction receive training and support for this role
- > identify and support potential national ‘champions’, from government and civil society, who can promote the benefits of disaster risk reduction and who have the capacity to effect change
- > advocate for greater prioritisation of disaster risk reduction with partner governments across sector ministries, such as those responsible for health and education
- > improve our engagement with multilateral organisations to enhance the effectiveness of their global leadership in disaster risk reduction.

**‘Disaster risk reduction... [must be] underpinned by a more pro-active approach to informing, motivating and involving people in all aspects of disaster risk reduction in their own local communities.’**

Hyogo Framework for Action

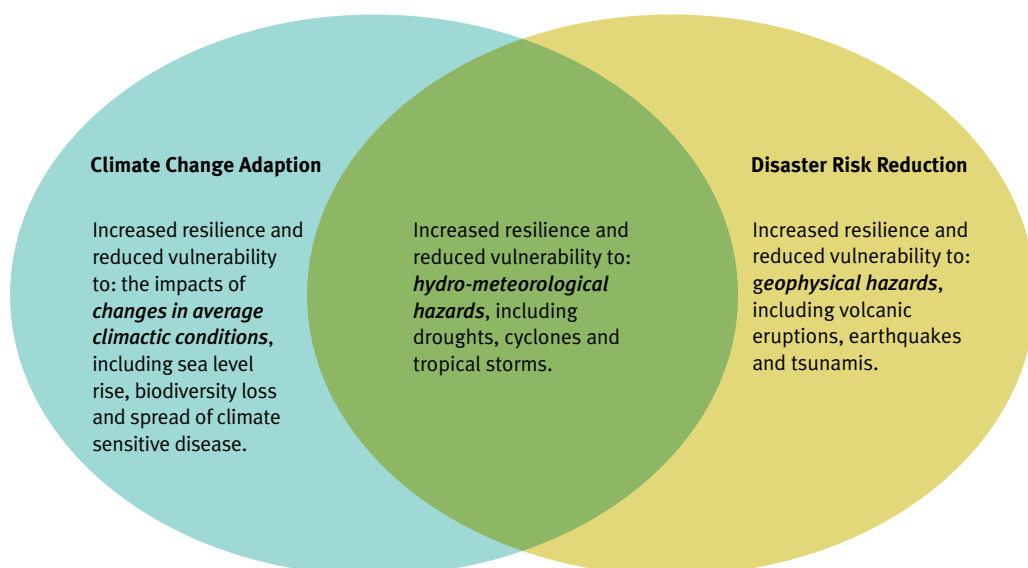
## Outcome 4

### Policies and programming for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are coherent and coordinated

‘Climate change and disaster risk reduction are closely linked. More extreme weather events in the future are likely to increase the number and scale of disasters, while at the same time, the existing methods and tools of disaster risk reduction provide powerful capacities for adaptation to climate change’

UNISDR, Climate change and disaster risk reduction, 2008

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation both aim to increase the resilience and decrease the vulnerability of communities to weather-related disasters. While they have tended to operate separately in practice, there is a considerable overlap between the two agendas. Disaster risk reduction is a critical component of adaptation. Existing frameworks and tools that deal effectively with climate-related events can be built on to address the impacts of climate change. For its part, climate change poses increased risks, which disaster risk reduction efforts must take into account to be successful. Considering these issues together will ensure a comprehensive risk reduction approach across all development policy and programming. This will enhance coordination and reduce duplication, and ultimately, promote more sustainable and effective development.



Australia recognises the convergence of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation approaches. The Australian Government will ensure that all future support under this policy is closely aligned with Australia’s approach to the environment and climate change, and implemented coherently.

Australia will:

- > work with whole-of-government agencies, and with our partner countries and organisations, to promote coordination of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures that aim to reduce people's vulnerability to natural disasters
- > promote and support moves to coordinate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation approaches in international policy discussions
- > integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development policy and programming in tandem, including development of joint tools and training
- > jointly program activities that aim to achieve adaptation and risk reduction objectives
- > adopt consistent positions in key climate change and disaster risk reduction forums
- > encourage greater collaboration within the international system.

### Integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in Quang Ngai, Vietnam

Integrated disaster risk reduction has been a key part of Australia's aid to Vietnam over the past 10 years. More recently, these initiatives have been of value in helping communities adapt to expected climate change impacts. For example, from 2003 to 2008 the Australian Government in partnership with the Government of Vietnam jointly administered the A\$15 million Quang Ngai Natural Disaster Mitigation Project. Quang Ngai, a central coastal province, is faced with the annual threat of floods and typhoons, which present significant challenges for poor families in rural and coastal areas.

Recognising the significant impact that climate change may have upon these communities and the potential for future natural disasters, key components of the program included:

- > disaster mitigation infrastructure, such as riverbank protection, surge control dykes, and a safe harbour for fishing boats
- > community-based natural disaster risk management, including capacity building for the provincial Red Cross and Women's Union to improve awareness, practical skills, preparedness and appropriate response to disaster situations, a school safety program, a community risk reduction plan and improved safety awareness and adoption of practical methods for reducing risk in near-shore and offshore fishing
- > improved river-basin management, particularly through floodplain modeling to inform planning decisions for development approvals and emergency response.

Source: Adapted in part from 'Australia's aid program: promoting effective disaster risk management in the Asia Pacific region', *Real Risk*, Tudor House, pp. 56-58, 2008

Right: Pictures taken at My Phuoc, Vietnam, before and after the construction of river embankments as part of the Quang Ngai Natural Disaster Mitigation Project. These embankments protect the riverbank from erosion and make communities safer from flooding. Photos: Quang Ngai Natural Disaster Mitigation Project



# What are the guiding principles for the policy?

In working towards achievement of the outcomes of this policy, Australia's assistance to reduce the risk of disasters will be guided by the following core and operational principles.

## Core principles

### 1. Align policies and programs with the principles of the Hyogo Framework for Action, namely that:

- > States have the primary responsibility for implementing measures to reduce disaster risk
- > Disaster risk reduction must be integrated into development activities
- > A multi-hazard approach can improve effectiveness
- > Capacity development is a central strategy for reducing disaster risk
- > Responsibility for disaster risk reduction should be decentralised
- > Effective disaster risk reduction requires community participation
- > Gender is a core factor in disaster risk and in the implementation of disaster risk reduction
- > Public-private partnerships are an important tool for disaster risk reduction
- > Disaster risk reduction needs to be customised to particular settings.

### 2. Respect people's rights and values in disaster risk reduction activities, including:

- > the right of people to safety at home and work
- > the value of local culture and indigenous knowledge of communities in managing disaster risks and impacts.

### 3. Ensure that policies and programs for disaster risk reduction are socially inclusive and meet the needs of the most vulnerable people and communities.

### 4. In accordance with Australia's commitment to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action:<sup>18</sup>

- > work in partnership with developing countries and other stakeholders, ensuring support is aligned where possible with existing government policies, priorities and systems
- > harmonise efforts with other donors and regional organisations.

18 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed in 2005, is an international agreement to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators. The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) was the major outcome of the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Accra, Ghana in 2008. The purpose of the forum was to review progress in implementing the commitments made in the Paris Declaration. The AAA commits donors and recipient countries to take action to improve aid delivery even further.

## Disability and disasters

People with disability are among the most vulnerable to disasters and tend to be invisible in disaster management and risk reduction activities. Although people injured in a disaster are more visible and likely to receive services in a disaster response, it is important to remember that there are people already living with disability in affected areas who may become even more excluded and marginalised. This is due to inadequate registration of people with disability, loss of family members and carers to assist with evacuation, inaccessibility of emergency physical and social infrastructure, and a lack of adequate planning and education in disaster preparedness and response.

In disaster preparedness planning, it is important to consider the specific needs of people with disability, before, during and after disasters. For example, people with hearing impairment may need awareness materials presented in alternative formats such as sign language or captions on television; clear and brief instructions could be used for people who have difficulty understanding complex instructions; people with physical and vision impairments might need assistance evacuating and accessing social services; and warning signals and alarms of impending disasters such as special signals or flickering lights could be established. People with disability can take an active role in leadership, planning, management and decision-making to ensure their needs are met and risk reduction is appropriate and effective.

Sources: Adapted from *World Disasters Report 2007*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2007, and *How to include disability issues in disaster management*, Handicap International Bangladesh, 2005.

Right: A community in the Philippines work together to ensure that all members are evacuated during a tsunami drill organised by the READY program, with support from the Australian Government. Photo: Office of Civil Defence, Philippines National Disaster Coordinating Council.



## Gender and disasters

Disasters affect women and men in different ways, with statistics showing that women and girls suffer disproportionately. In the major disasters of the past two decades, the female mortality rate has reached between 55–90 per cent of total deaths.<sup>1</sup> For example, in the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, women died in greater numbers as they were more likely to be at home when the earthquake hit. Risk reduction strategies must be gender-differentiated, and address the different levels of vulnerability and resilience of men and women.

It is also important to recognise that women can contribute significantly to shaping and sustaining resilient communities. As managers of natural and environmental resources, economic providers, caregivers and implementers of community development, women are well positioned to reduce disaster risks, and should be recognised as key actors in this field.<sup>2</sup>

1 *Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: Legislating Gender-Responsive Mitigation, Adaptation, and Women's Participation*, Third Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance, 2008

2 *Words Into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework*, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2007

Right: Women take part in community-based disaster risk reduction activities coordinated by the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) / Act for Peace, with the support of the Australian Government. Photo: NCCA/Act for Peace





## Operational principles

1. Determine policy implementation according to country program context, including partner government priorities, risk and vulnerability profiles, ongoing programming by partner governments and other stakeholders and available resources.
2. Adopt an evidence-based approach, building on what has proved to be effective practice in reducing risks, and on existing commitments and successes within the Australian aid program. This approach recognises that significant progress has already been made, taking account both of Australian knowledge and international best practice.
3. Draw on Australian knowledge, expertise and resources in domestic disaster risk reduction, in particular capitalising on the experience of whole-of-government partners in reducing disaster risks within Australia.
4. Remain flexible and responsive to meet the opportunities and challenges presented by a highly dynamic international agenda in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
5. Ensure a gender-sensitive approach is taken to implementing this policy, given the different roles of men and women in contributing to preparedness for, and recovery from disasters.
6. Share information, monitoring and reporting on Australian work on disaster risk reduction with partners.

A woman in Aceh, Indonesia explains the contents of a disaster preparedness poster to her daughter.

Photo: Courtesy of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)



# How will the policy be implemented?



Shortly after the release of the policy, AusAID's disaster risk reduction unit in Canberra will develop a detailed implementation plan for the first 12 months of the policy.

This plan will include:

- > integrating disaster risk reduction principles within two major bilateral development programs, the Philippines and Indonesia, as well as into infrastructure development in the Pacific. These will serve as 'pilots' and lessons from this process will inform wider work to integrate disaster risk reduction into all programs
- > commissioning a review to document current best practice in the program and examine lessons learned from Australian Government support provided to date, which will help guide future investments
- > exploring options for further targeted disaster risk reduction programming, noting that most disaster risk reduction initiatives will be, as they are now, funded from existing country programs.

The implementation plan is intended to be a living document, and will be revised and reported on annually. The policy will be reviewed two to three years after its release.

A community leader in Indonesia talks about building safer housing.

Photo: Courtesy of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Ensuring that infrastructure can resist hazardous events such as ground shaking from an earthquake and strong winds from a tropical storm can significantly reduce disaster risk. This can be achieved through adherence to appropriate building codes and construction standards for new infrastructure, and retrofitting existing structures.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, *Words into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework*, Geneva, 2007

# How will performance be assessed?

Achieving the goal of this policy will require a long term commitment. While it is important to assess progress at the 'goal' level, the main focus of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) is the outcomes and core principles of the policy, as listed in the first column of the framework.

The second column of the PAF poses key performance questions, which will be reported on annually to assess progress of the policy against its outcomes. The policy outcomes are broad and require action from various parts of AusAID and its partners. As it applies to these actors in different ways, it is inappropriate to set fixed and predetermined indicators against these outcomes. Performance questions direct attention to key areas of investigation and allow for a broad range of inquiry under each outcome.

The third column of the PAF outlines the indicators and types of information, which should be considered in gathering evidence to address the performance questions. The Australian Government has committed itself to the Hyogo Framework for Action, which provides key indicators for several areas that align with this policy. Consequently, a selection of these indicators that suggest the types of information to be considered when addressing the performance questions, have been included. This ensures that key areas recognised internationally as indicative of outcomes are included, and that there is sufficient scope for further inquiry and investigation under the performance questions. Information to consider for the third and fourth outcome build from AusAID experience on how to promote change internally and how to advocate and support change at national and regional levels.

The third column of the PAF is designed to illustrate the breadth of inquiry under the performance question. It demonstrates Australia's commitment to gather a wide range of information in addressing each outcome. However, it is not intended that the performance assessment will be limited only to those areas.

Finally, the PAF identifies the main sources of information for each question. It is expected that other sources such as additional activity reporting, evaluations and donor and partner government reports will also be utilised in the ongoing assessment of progress. The sources identified in the framework are the minimum to be considered.

# Performance Assessment Framework

Performance questions	Information to consider <sup>20</sup>	Sources of information
<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>Reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience of communities and countries to disasters.</p>	<p>Are people more able to cope with, and recover from disasters?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The number of deaths arising from natural hazard events.</li> <li>&gt; Percentage of natural hazard events that did not require a disaster declaration (including a request through the United Nations for international assistance).</li> </ul>	<p>National country reports</p> <p>UN reports</p> <p>Additional impact studies undertaken in selected countries</p>
<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <p>1. Disaster risk reduction is integrated into the Australian aid program.</p>	<p>In what ways has the disaster risk reduction policy influenced the implementation of the Australian aid program?</p> <p>In what ways has the disaster risk reduction policy influenced the implementation of the humanitarian assistance program, including 'build back better'?</p>	<p>Annual Program Performance Reports (APPR)</p> <p>Quality at Impementation (QAI) reports</p> <p>Reports from program managers</p>
<p>2. The capacity of partner countries to reduce disaster risks is strengthened in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action.</p>	<p>What capacity do partner governments have to effectively implement disaster risk reduction, following Australian support?</p> <p>In what ways have non-government actors, the private sector and communities been engaged in disaster risk reduction in a country, following Australian support?</p>	<p>QAI reports</p> <p>APPR reports</p>
<p>3. Leadership and advocacy on disaster risk reduction are supported and enhanced.</p>	<p>How have international and regional perspectives on disaster risk reduction been positively influenced?</p>	<p>APPR reports</p> <p>Additional disaster risk reduction reporting</p>
<p>4. Policies and programming for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are coherent and coordinated.</p>	<p>How have climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction integration efforts been taken forward within Australia?</p> <p>How has disaster risk reduction been integrated into programs addressing climate variability and climate change adaptation?</p>	<p>Additional disaster risk reduction reporting</p> <p>QAI reports</p> <p>APPR reports</p>

Performance questions		Sources of Information
<b>Core Principles:</b>		
1. Align policies and programs with the principles of the Hyogo Framework for Action.	How have initiative designs included attention to the Hyogo Framework for Action principles?	Quality at Entry (QAE) reports
2. Respect people's rights and values in disaster risk reduction activities.	Have programs and initiatives which include disaster risk reduction utilised appropriate analysis processes for design and implementation in particular analysis of vulnerability and gender? How well have peoples' rights and needs been addressed through disaster risk reduction programs?	QAE and Quality at Completion reports
3. Ensure that policies and programs for disaster risk reduction are socially inclusive and meet the needs of the most vulnerable people and communities.	How have policies and programs addressed social inclusion? Has gender disaggregated data been collected?	
4. Work in partnership with developing countries and other stakeholders, ensuring support is aligned, where possible, with existing government policies, priorities and systems. Harmonise efforts with other donors and regional organisations.	Have programs and initiatives which include disaster risk reduction sought to align the support provided with existing partner government systems, policies and priorities? How have partnerships with stakeholders been developed in disaster risk reduction focused programs and initiatives? In what way has Australia sought to improve the value of its disaster risk reduction programs through country and regional donor harmonisation?	QAE and QAI reports

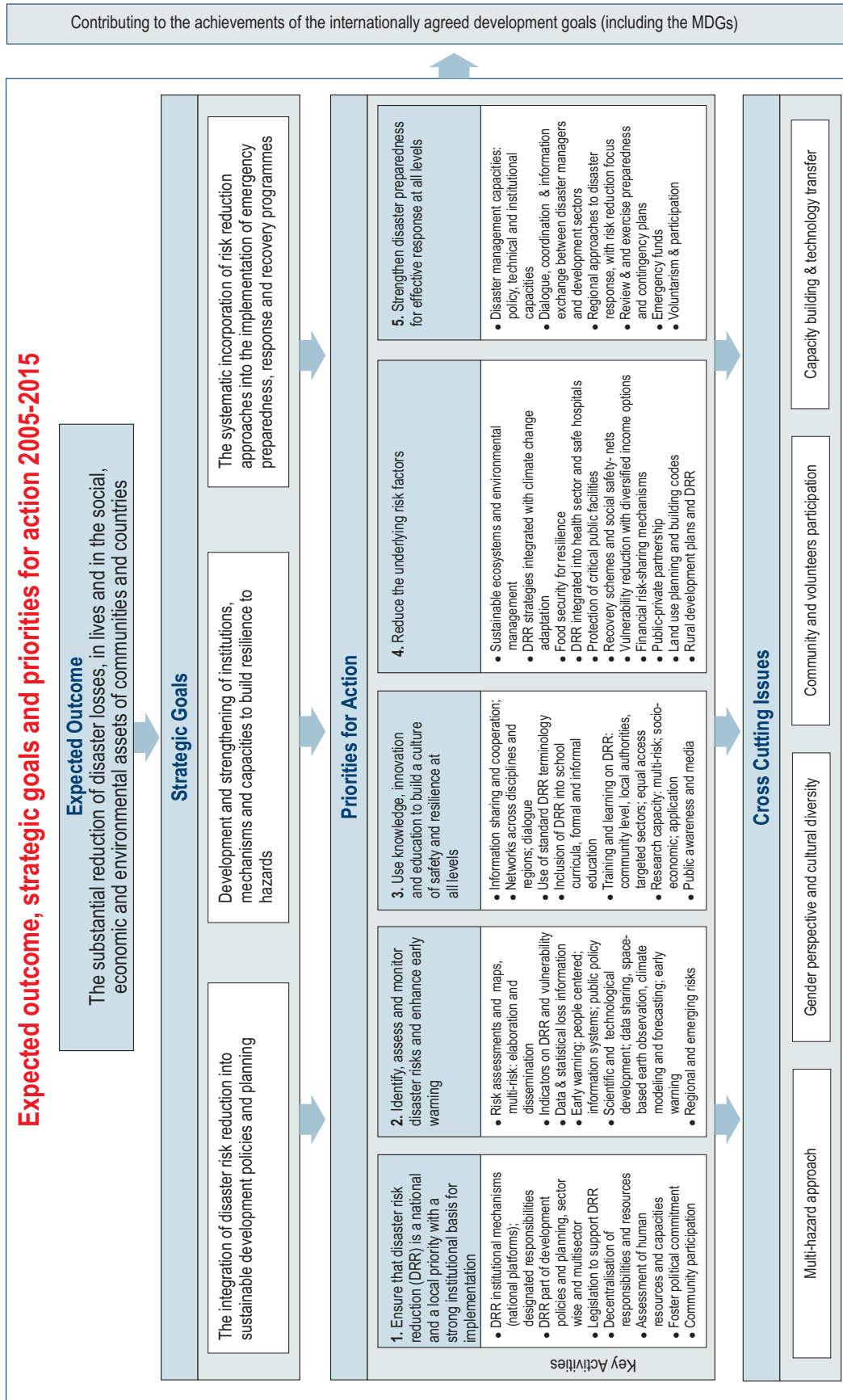
20 As appropriate these indicators have been adopted from *Indicators of Progress: Guidance on Measuring the Reduction of Disaster Risks and the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action*, UNSIDR, Geneva, Switzerland, January 2008.

## Appendix 1: Policy overview

Investing in a Safer Future			
a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid program			
Goal			
reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience of countries and communities to disasters			
Outcomes			
1. Disaster risk reduction is integrated into the Australian aid program	2. The capacity of partner countries to reduce disaster risks is strengthened in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action	3. Leadership and advocacy on disaster risk reduction are supported and enhanced	4. Policies and programming for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are coherent and coordinated
<p><b>Integration into development assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; build partner government capacity to support integration of disaster risk reduction into policies, planning and programs</li> <li>&gt; develop tools and training for AusAID staff on integration of disaster risk reduction into programming, monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul> <p><b>Integration into humanitarian assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Risk reduction approaches including 'build back better' integrated into humanitarian assistance and recovery programs</li> <li>&gt; ensure humanitarian assistance does not inadvertently create future risks for communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; support international and regional organisations to improve coordination and efficiency of disaster risk reduction efforts</li> <li>&gt; support technical agencies to assess risk, and provide early warning system information</li> <li>&gt; strengthen partner government capacity to develop and implement disaster risk reduction frameworks, programs, strategies and legal reforms</li> <li>&gt; support research priorities</li> <li>&gt; build government and non-government organisations' capacity in community-based disaster risk management activities</li> <li>&gt; support social protection measures</li> <li>&gt; explore options for engagement with the private sector and risk transfer initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; ensure key senior Australian Government staff with responsibility for disaster risk reduction receive training and support</li> <li>&gt; identify and support potential national 'champions', from government and civil society</li> <li>&gt; advocate for greater prioritisation of disaster risk reduction with partner governments across sector ministries</li> <li>&gt; improve our engagement with multilateral organisations to enhance the global profile of disaster risk reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; work with whole-of-government agencies, partner countries and organisations to promote coordination of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures</li> <li>&gt; promote and support moves to coordinate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in international policy discussions</li> <li>&gt; integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development policy and programming in tandem</li> <li>&gt; jointly program activities to achieve adaptation and risk reduction objectives</li> <li>&gt; adopt consistent positions in climate change and disaster risk reduction forums</li> </ul>

# SUMMARY of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (Hyogo Framework)

## Expected outcome, strategic goals and priorities for action 2005-2015





## Appendix 3: Selected UNISDR terminology on disaster risk reduction <sup>21</sup>

**Adaptation**—The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

**Building code**—A set of ordinances or regulations and associated standards intended to control aspects of the design, construction, materials, alteration and occupancy of structures that are necessary to ensure human safety and welfare, including resistance to collapse and damage.

**Climate change**—The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defines climate change as ‘a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods’.

**Disaster**—A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

**Disaster risk**—The potential disaster losses, in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period.

**Disaster risk management**—The systematic process of using administrative directives, organisations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

**Early warning system**—The set of capacities needed to generate and disseminate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities and organisations threatened by a hazard to prepare and to act appropriately and in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of harm or loss.

**Land-use planning**—The process undertaken by public authorities to identify, evaluate and decide on different options for the use of land, including consideration of long-term economic, social and environmental objectives and the implications for different communities and interest groups, and the subsequent formulation and promulgation of plans that describe the permitted or acceptable uses.

**Mitigation**—The lessening or limitation of the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters.

**National platform for disaster risk reduction**—A generic term for national mechanisms for coordination and policy guidance on disaster risk reduction that are multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary in nature, with public, private and civil society participation involving all concerned entities within a country.

**Preparedness**—The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organisations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.

**Recovery**—The restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors.

**Resilience**—The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

**Response**—The provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.

**Retrofitting**—Reinforcement or upgrading of existing structures to become more resistant and resilient to the damaging effects of hazards.

**Risk assessment**—A methodology to determine the nature and extent of risk by analysing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability that together could potentially harm exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend.

**Risk transfer**—The process of formally or informally shifting the financial consequences of particular risks from one party to another whereby a household, community, enterprise or state authority will obtain resources from the other party after a disaster occurs, in exchange for ongoing or compensatory social or financial benefits provided to that other party.

**Sustainable development**—Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Vulnerability**—The characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

21 UNISDR *Terminology on disaster risk reduction*, 2009, [www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng.htm](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng.htm)

