

through protection measures, including incentives for environmental rehabilitation, the designation of safe areas for urban expansion and demarcation of zones for protection from human intervention.

This programme was itself a learning process. Key elements of success have included the realization that risk profiles and participatory processes in each municipality were different, so strategies should rely on local decision-making and be flexible in approach and implementation. In addition, local plans should be linked with central institutions to access support and blend with national development policy. The involvement of local stakeholders and the embracing of a gendered sensitivity to development, disaster risk management and participation were also key in maintaining local support and generating significant local outputs for disaster risk reduction.<sup>58</sup>

The most appropriate policies for enhancing the positive contribution of civil society will depend on the developmental context. For many countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia that have undergone structural adjustment and participatory development, the challenge may not be so much the creation of a non-governmental sector, as its coordination.

An overly strong civil society can undermine local and national government and undo democratic gains. This happens when private development agencies in civil society funded by the international community are perceived as overshadowing the state in driving local development.

In other cases, the state may still have an overriding control on civil society organisations and reduce their effectiveness and scope of operation. It is a fine balancing act, but the goal should be a strong civil society and a strong state working in partnership with a socially committed private sector.<sup>59</sup>

A final challenge for policies aimed at building social capital is the danger of undermining democratic institutions. It is all too easy to create an impression that non-state funding streams are more accessible, and locally far larger and more responsive, than local and state government agencies. Indeed, the main argument for funding civil society is weaknesses in the state sector. Over the long-term, funding civil society without strengthening the state simply reproduces the lopsided governance that interventions were designed to overcome. Working towards partnerships and

transparency in funding, with support for good policy from state and non-state actors, may be a less rapid but ultimately more constructive approach to building local social capital to enhance resilience.

Disaster risk reduction also offers opportunities for embracing gender sensitivity in development policy and practice. For example, the skills and experience of women in building and maintaining local social networks can be critical for local risk reduction.

This said, the role of women in local decision-making often continues to be sharply constrained by social and economic status. It is not unusual to see women forming the majority of membership in an organisation, while men dominate in leadership positions.

For policy interventions seeking to include a participatory component, preliminary discussions to help map the social relationships within the community are essential if the vulnerable (who are also the socially excluded) are to be reached and helped to build their own levels of resilience through participation.

In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, the inclusion of women in disaster preparedness and development organisations (including education, reproductive health and micro-enterprise development groups) has been followed by a huge reduction in the numbers of women killed or affected by tropical cyclones.<sup>60</sup>

The importance of a gendered perspective on risk during the reconstruction period can be seen from the experiences of the civil society group Janpath after the Gujarat earthquake in 2001. Janpath is a network of activists and organisations that aim to enhance the status of women in Gujarati society as a means of building the foundations for more inclusive governance.<sup>61</sup>

### **3.3 How Can Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Development Planning Help to Meet the MDGs?**

In Chapter 1, connections between each MDG and disaster risk management were made. Here, the discussion highlights opportunities for win-win policies that could help more people be free from preventable losses caused by disaster as part of a wider programme of meeting human development needs. MDGs 1, 3, 6, 7

and 8 are addressed as being of primary concern to disaster risk reduction.

### *MDG 1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger*

There are many opportunities for interventions that could simultaneously reduce disaster risk and poverty and hunger.

- Strengthening and diversifying livelihoods.
- Encouraging responsible foreign investment and job creation.
- A flexible and participatory approach to urban planning.
- Building social security, including access to health and education.
- The provision of risk/loss spreading mechanisms for those excluded from insurance cover.

At levels from the individual to the national, the impact of disaster takes away the means of generating an income as well as any savings and assets. It is this aspect of disaster that means pro-poor development policy is also an opportunity for disaster risk reduction.

Many of the tools for delivering poverty-alleviation projects and programmes need simply to be modified to take account of disaster risk reduction. The added value of such work is to enhance the sustainability of poverty and hunger alleviation.

In development planning, many countries and international funding agencies include elements of environmental and social impact assessment for large projects. These assessments could take into account the potential impact of developments on disaster risk. This would allow for greater transparency in the power of large infrastructure developments to reshape where people live and what they do to make a living, and so to contribute to changing patterns of disaster risk. This information could then enable more informed claims from those impacted by disaster.

### *MDG 3. Promote gender equality and empower women*

Gender influences the types of hazard to which an individual is exposed and an individual's access to resources with which to build resilience to hazard and to recover from disaster. Where structural constraints in society result in the exclusion of women from decision-making or economic security, risk will be unevenly spread.

The continued exclusion of women from all levels of political decision-making is one of the greatest lost opportunities for human development and disaster risk management.

Eliminating disparities in primary and secondary education is the quantitative target set for this MDG. But there are many other ways in which women's full participation in society can be measured at the local level.

The long-term goals for development and disaster risk reduction must be to empower women and to encourage a self-questioning of the social structures within which women and girls live their lives. Also, to work with women and girls and provide the tools for moving towards greater equality with men in household, familial and wider social relationships.

Enabling a greater voice for the views of women in development will allow women to identify priorities for development. In enabling women to confront disaster risk, reforms in land and dwelling ownership, inheritance and employment rights are likely to be as important as the needs to strengthen the social justice concerns of women in accessing health, education and legal services.

Highlighting gender in development and disaster risk reduction raises a broader issue of inclusiveness in decision-making. To promote resilience, inclusive and consultative processes are needed that engage those most at risk. Often those most at risk are the most resourceful members of society, but also the least included in economic and political life. This will include women, but also child-led households, elderly people caring for grandchildren, ethnic and religious minorities, people weakened by chronic illness and social classes and casts with low social status.

### *MDG 4. Reducing child mortality*

Children are at greater risk of being affected, injured or killed by disaster impacts than adults. For example, an estimated 114,000 school-aged children were made homeless by the Marmara earthquake in Turkey in 1999.<sup>62</sup>

It is perhaps the indirect impacts of disaster that have the greatest toll on children and interact with national mortality levels. Most important here is the loss of livelihoods that can lead to extreme poverty and homelessness for children left behind.

Appropriate safety nets, such as help for extended families with capacity to absorb orphans or well run orphanages, can support many children. But for those children born into families whose livelihoods and homes have been taken away by disaster impacts, the chances of survival in the first years of life will be reduced.

#### ***MDG 6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases***

For many people, natural hazard stress and shock is felt as one of many pressures. As the preceding discussion highlighted, HIV/AIDS and other diseases can undermine individual and collective coping capacity, just as disaster impacts can take away development gains and livelihoods, making people more vulnerable to illness.

Interventions to strengthen basic health care provision, family health care and preventative health planning can play central roles in strengthening society and building capacity with which to resist natural hazards.

Innovative development policy is required for those instances where natural hazard coincides with high rates of illness. Ways of providing subsistence, security and education for the children of families where adults may be dead or made weak from illness are difficult to find. This is even more so when rural livelihoods are under stress from drought conditions or crops and houses and tools have been swept away by floods.

Synergy exists between the aims of development and disaster risk reduction. The importance of integration is heightened amid chronic illness.

#### ***MDG 7. Ensuring environmental sustainability.***

One of the clearest signals of a crisis in environment-human relations is natural disaster. Soil degradation, biodiversity loss, over-fishing, deforestation or drinking water scarcity undermine rural livelihoods and pave the way for vulnerability to environmental hazard.

In cities, pollution of waterways and the air and inadequate provision of drinking water, sanitation or solid waste management systems shape patterns of illness that run down resistance to everyday hazards. In rural and urban contexts, risk accumulation that ends in disaster is often closely tied to problems of environmental sustainability. Strategies to enhance environmental sustainability will make a contribution to breaking the chain of accumulated risk.

The man-made and natural environments are themselves at risk from disaster. Tropical cyclones and earthquakes can destroy natural assets and cultural treasures.

Geographical inequity describes much of disaster risk tied to environmental sustainability. The preceding discussion of global climate change highlighted the link between wealth creation for some, at the expense of increases in disaster risk for others in distant places. It is because of this that international cooperation is needed to support mitigation of climate change and for those societies forced to adapt to its impacts.

In the foreseeable future, it will not be possible to separate those aspects of hydrometeorological hazards that can be explained by climate change from background fluctuations. But the responsibility of industrialised countries for climate change is undeniable. Support for adapting to climate change and coping with its adverse impacts is an argument for increased international attention for disaster risk reduction.

#### ***MDG 8. Developing a global partnership for development***

The most important components of this goal relate to trade, debt relief and aid. Success rests to a large extent on the willingness of developed countries to meet their commitments. The 2001 Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Doha, Qatar placed the needs and interests of the developing countries at the heart of WTO negotiations. However, in 2003, the subsequent stalemate in the Cancun round of WTO negotiations showed greater political will, collaborative thinking and action is required at the international level to allow developing countries to trade on a level playing field.

More progress has been made in debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Some 26 countries have now entered this process. The HIPC process is reinforced by international financial agencies that have integrated disaster lending into their portfolios.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) climbed in 2002 after nearly a decade in decline, but remains well below the target of 0.7 percent of donor countries GDP. Yet the amount of money provided for emergency and distress relief is small and fluctuates in response to annual crises. However, as a proportion of ODA, emergency and distress relief has steadily increased

from 1.9 percent in 1986 to 3.2 percent in 1991, and reaching a peak of 7.8 percent in 1999. It has since declined to 6.3 percent in 2001.<sup>63</sup> Within this percentage, the funds oriented towards disaster risk management remains minimal.

Increases in assistance finance may reflect an evolving change in international donor priorities. As likely is a response to increasing disaster losses as the disaster-development relationship becomes ever more tightly connected, and human and economic exposure to disaster risk grows.

ISDR has succeeded in building regional and international partnerships for disaster risk reduction and in disseminating good practice. Similarly, negotiations around the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), most recently centred on the Kyoto Protocol, also provide a focus for international attention that can directly address the concerns of disaster risk reduction.

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