

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Expert Group Meeting on Capacity Development for Disaster Information Management in North and Central Asia

26 - 27 February 2014

Almaty, Kazakhstan

REPORT

A. Organization of the meeting

1. The Expert Group Meeting on Capacity Development for Disaster Information Management in North and Central Asia was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) at Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 26 to 27 February 2014.
2. The expert group meeting was undertaken as part of the implementation of resolution 67/4 of 25 May 2011 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management, which requested ESCAP to support the process for the establishment of the Centre, including, inter alia, the development of the required modalities and arrangements. The resolution also invited all members and associate members of ESCAP to participate actively in the process of developing the programmes of the Centre and to support its activities, as appropriate, in a comprehensive manner; and encouraged the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to support actively the process for the establishment of the Centre.
3. The expert group meeting provided an intergovernmental platform for the member States of North and Central Asia subregion of ESCAP to exchange views on the critical gaps and needs in disaster information management and related institutional and policy issues and discuss the proposed programme of work of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) towards building the institutional capacity of member States for disaster information management through regional and South-South cooperation.
4. The specific objectives of the meeting were for member States of North and Central Asia to: (i) understand the gaps and barriers in disaster information supply chain in the subregion; (ii) discuss the programme of work of APDIM vis-à-vis the needs and aspirations of the stakeholders from the member States in the subregion; and (iii) outline the needs for and benefits of APDIM to the respective member States of North and Central Asia. The agenda of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1.

B. Attendance at the meeting

5. The meeting was opened by the State Secretary, Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic.
6. The meeting was attended by senior officials and experts dealing with disaster information management from the member States in the North and Central Asia subregion of ESCAP, namely: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Also attending the meeting were experts from UNDP, UNISDR and UNOCHA. A list of participants is attached as Appendix 2.
7. The bureau of the meeting comprised Talaibek Temiraliev (Kyrgyzstan) as Chairperson, Ardak Mukhametzhonovich Zhanguzhinov (Kazakhstan) as Vice-Chairperson and Rustam Rasim Safaraliyev (Azerbaijan) as Rapporteur.

C. Major conclusions and recommendations

8. The subregion is mostly prone to earthquakes, mudflows which are triggered by earthquakes, floods, droughts in the southern parts of the subregion, and severe frosts in the northern parts of the subregion. There are densely populated areas of the subregion which are highly vulnerable to major disasters causing large scale casualties and damages. Moreover, barrier lakes in mountainous areas of the subregion also pose major hazards with potential transboundary impacts.
9. In view of the above context, the experts shared information on the status and development of disaster information in the countries of the subregion to address the above-mentioned disasters. The member States of the subregion have established institutions with various mandates in monitoring and forecasting seismic and hydrometeorological hazards and in managing natural and man-made disasters, emergency prevention and response. They have also established national monitoring and information systems for disaster risk management at various levels of advance.
10. The experts reiterated that information on various components of disaster risk, hazard, vulnerability and exposure are critical inputs for policies and strategies and resilient development planning. The meeting noted that effective early warning systems and efficient information management systems have succeeded in saving lives in the event of major disasters. In the specific context of seismic risk reduction, it was noted that micro-zonation of major cities, resilient spatial land use planning, building codes and retrofitting of critical infrastructures and buildings are the felt needs in the subregion to be addressed on the priority basis. Countries in North and Central Asia subregion with high risks and vulnerability to disasters continue to have limited information and require enhanced capacity in disaster information management.
11. The experts noted that there is an increase of disasters affecting many countries. To further improve efficient coordination between member States in

the area of disaster risk reduction, prevention and management, there is a need for enhancing subregional disaster database that integrates statistical information across disaster types and countries and a subregional geospatial information system that helps the countries tackle these disasters. Experts expressed the view that APDIM has an important role to play in addressing the above major gaps in the subregion.

12. The expert group meeting provided an opportunity for the member States to review the work programme of the APDIM. The vision, mission and programme of work have been developed with a focus to support the vulnerable subregions and countries in line with the programme of work of the ESCAP subprogramme on Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction.
13. APDIM's vision strives for building the resilience to disasters in ESCAP member countries by filling up the gaps in information, enhancing their knowledge and capacities through various ways and means, including strengthening south-south and regional cooperation for disaster risk reduction. Its mission is to reduce losses and damages resulting from natural hazards by developing the capacities and capabilities to the country and organization of the region and strengthening regional cooperation on information sharing and management for disaster risk reduction, and that the APDIM will commence its functions and programme with a focus on the more vulnerable subregions of Asia and the Pacific region.
14. The strategy of APDIM is to link all the three pillars of disaster information management – information, knowledge and capacity development - following south-south and regional cooperation framework. Multi-tier strategic partnership with Centres of Excellence in the region will be put in place to realize the information and knowledge hub and the capacity development hub in three phases: phase one with Centres of Excellence within the country, phase two with other intergovernmental/regional organizations, and phase three with UN organizations.
15. The APDIM offers the member countries: (i) short-term capacity development training in seismic micro-zonation, building codes, disaster database organization, (ii) medium-term capacity development activities in developing risk assessment tools and techniques, and (iii) long-term collaboration and partnership in disaster information management. On specific query from the member Countries on sharing data and information, the APDIM clarified that it will adhere to the modality under the UN Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM) and will share those data already available in the public domain. The APDIM offered to do value addition to the data available in the public domain to develop regional/subregional database for disasters with transboundary origins.
16. UNDP, UNISDR and UNOCHA noted the importance of accessibility to and sharing of information for disaster risk reduction and management at the national as well as the subregional/regional levels. They welcomed the initiative of APDIM in this respect and will collaborate within their mandates.

17. The experts from participating member States strongly supported the APDIM's programme of work and agreed that it will fill the gaps in capacity development in disaster information management in the countries of North and Central Asia subregion in a phased manner. The meeting discussed a road map for APDIM with engagements of the member States and other developments partners with proposed short, medium and long term activities.
18. With regard to the proposed work programme of APDIM as presented at the meeting, the experts from participating members States expressed strong support to APDIM to provide capacity development activities on disaster information management to develop the following specific products, particularly hazard zonation, including seismic, microzonation, flood, GLOF, landslide and drought, and mapping vulnerability, exposure and disaster risk. It was noted that some countries had already made progress in seismic microzonation.
19. The experts also supported APDIM work programme on promoting south-south and regional cooperation on disaster information management, seismic reduction and hydrometeorological disasters, including disasters with trans-boundary origins. With regard to disaster information management, experts recommended APDIM to work on important cooperation initiatives, such as standardization of organizing disaster databases, national spatial infrastructure, global risk information platform, disaster loss database and post-disaster damage and loss assessment.
20. With regard to seismic risk reduction, all three initiatives, such as building codes, spatial land use planning and seismic microzonation under APDIM's work programme, were particularly relevant and reflective of the needs of the most vulnerable countries in the subregion. Experts recommended that APDIM should take into account country specific building codes norms and standards.
21. With regard to hydrometeorological disasters, such as flood, storms, drought, GLOF and mudslides, experts recommended that APDIM's work programme should cover all these type of disasters. The expert from Russian Federation and Tajikistan also added avalanches, fire and smoke hazards.
22. Finally, experts agreed that APDIM should utilize various cooperation modalities, such as capacity building, joint projects, information sharing and knowledge networking in delivering its programme of work. In addition, the experts recommended that APDIM should also further develop other mechanisms including toolkits and guidelines for implementing its programme of work. It was recommended that APDIM should also consider country specific arrangements for cooperation.

Appendix 1

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

- Agenda item 1: Opening of the session**
- Opening remarks
- Mr. Talaibek Temiraliyev, State Secretary, Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic
- Opening address
- Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov, Head of ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia
- Objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting
- Mr. Sanjay Srivastava, Regional Advisor on Disaster Risk Reduction, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, ESCAP
- Agenda item 2: Election of officers**
- Agenda item 3: Adoption of the agenda**
- Agenda item 4: Issues and challenges**
- Disaster Information Management in North and Central Asia: Issues and challenges
- Mr. Sanjay Srivastava, Regional Advisor on Disaster Risk Reduction, ESCAP
 - Mr. Yerik Turganbayev, Consultant, ESCAP
- Agenda item 5: Introducing APDIM**
- Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) – Vision, Mission, Plans and Strategic Framework
- Mr. Mojtab Khalesi, Officer-in-charge, APDIM
- Agenda item 6: Development Partners**
- Remarks by development partners on the issues related to disaster information management in North and Central Asia subregion
- UNDP, UNISDR and UNOCHA
- Agenda item 7: Country presentations**
- Sharing national experiences and identifying the critical gaps in disaster information management and Q&A sessions

- Experts of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Agenda item 8: APDIM's Programme of Work

A. Disaster information management hub in North and Central Asia

- APDIM Partnership Groups (National Cartographic Centre/National Disaster Management Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Knowledge management hub for seismic risk reduction in North and Central Asia
 - APDIM Partnership Group (Building and Housing Research Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran)

The discussion will provide the opportunity for all participants to comment on APDIM's programme of work. APDIM Partnership Group will interact with participants on programme of work and chart out the way forward

Agenda item 9: Conclusion and adoption of the report

Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations based on the comments and feedbacks from the experts

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