



# POLICY NOTE

Asian Development Bank  
Resident Mission in the PRC

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEALING WITH THE TRANSITION FROM DISASTER RESPONSE TO RECOVERY

### A. Purpose of the note

1. This policy note has been prepared in response to a request from the Ministry of Finance, Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) for ADB assistance following the earthquake in Sichuan Province on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The note is directed to sound practices<sup>1</sup> pertaining to the transition from disaster response to recovery, and offers suggestions on areas to pursue as the current disaster moves from the rescue and relief phase to the recovery phase. To put these suggestions into a wider disaster management context, a brief overview of disaster risk management issues in the Asia-Pacific region is provided. The note is in five parts, including this introduction (Section A). Section B focuses on general issues of disaster management. Section C identifies specific issues pertaining to disaster recovery and reconstruction. Section D deals with the transition phase from disaster response to recovery. Section E provides some specific recommendations on what practical issues the PRC could focus on as it moves from response toward longer-term recovery. Additional material is provided in the appendix including specific lessons ADB has learned from its involvement in recent disasters, and ADB's strategic role in disaster risk management.

### B. Overview of natural disaster risk management in Asia-Pacific

2. Mainstreaming disaster risk management (DRM)<sup>2</sup> has three primary goals: (i) to reduce existing risks where possible so as to lessen the impacts of future disasters; (ii) to ensure that development does not drive risk, that is, that projects do not inadvertently create or increase risk to the beneficiary population; and (iii) to ensure the sustainability of an individual project, and thus protect the project's investment. There is a clear and growing global momentum in favor of DRM, due to factors such as: (i) a series of substantial geophysical disasters that affected

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<sup>1</sup> In the disaster management context, a sound practice is any proven idea, program, technique, mechanism, method, practice or procedure for assessing, managing and reducing risk.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) defines disaster risk management as the systematic process of using administrative decisions, organizations, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of a society to lessen the impacts of disasters.

millions of people in the two year period between late 2003 and late 2005;<sup>3</sup> (ii) the increased political commitment evident in the adoption of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA<sup>4</sup>) at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005, the goals of which are outlined in Table 1; (iii) the growing evidence that climate change is radically altering patterns of disaster risk; and (iv) widespread recognition that risk-sensitive development planning can actively contribute to reducing disaster risk and also address persistent poverty trends. Countries throughout the world, including PRC, are realigning policies and strategies to respond to the expectations and directions of the HFA. However, recent evaluations of HFA achievements by the United Nations indicate that specific areas that contribute to DRM, such as social equality and gender equity, or better quality buildings and urban development, are not being emphasized.

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### **D. Overview of natural disaster risk management in Asia-Pacific**

4. Mainstreaming disaster risk management (DRM<sup>6</sup>) has three primary goals: (i) to reduce existing risks where possible so as to lessen the impacts of future disasters; (ii) to ensure that development does not drive risk, that is, that projects do not inadvertently create or increase risk to the beneficiary population; and (iii) to ensure the sustainability of an individual project, and thus protect the project's investment. There is a clear and growing global momentum in favor of DRM, due to factors such as: (i) a series of substantial geophysical disasters that affected millions of people in the two year period between late 2003 and late 2005;<sup>7</sup> (ii) the increased political commitment evident in the adoption of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA<sup>8</sup>) at the

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5. The main reasons for the lack of development components being factored in to disaster management include (i) the dominance of stand-alone response-centric disaster management or civil defense offices located within armed forces structures with staff who are not aware of or sensitive to processes and mechanisms that might reduce risk; (ii) lack of buy-in on the part of line ministries and sectoral departments into whose work DRM considerations need to be mainstreamed; (iii) limited devolution of responsibilities, authority and competences including resources to lower administrative levels; (iv) a lack of capacity to engage and sustain political support for DRM, which still tends to be cyclical and driven by the occurrence of large-scale disasters that require a political response; (v) little evidence of enforcement or accountability for DRM at any level; (vi) little interest to engage civil society or the private sector; (vii) a general view that DRM is regarded as either an environmental or a humanitarian issue, and which has resulted in a general lack of governmental policies, organizational structures and legislative frameworks that underpin DRM in an integral, coordinated and programmatic manner; (viii) a lack of comprehensive risk assessments or the use of risk information to develop DRM policies, strategies and plans; (ix) poor articulation between hazard monitoring and warning, risk identification and analysis, and disaster preparedness and response; and (x) lack of recovery and rehabilitation elements in existing contingency plans. Key challenges constraining the operation of existing systems are a lack of (i) dedicated resources from national budgets, (ii) trained personnel to implement plans, and (iii) implementation methods<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 1: Hyogo Framework of Action Summary of Commitment, 2005–2015**

<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial reduction of disaster losses—in lives and in the social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and countries</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) into sustainable development policies and planning</li> <li>Development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms, and capacities to build resilience to hazards</li> <li>Systematic incorporation of risk-reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery</li> </ul>
<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation</li> <li>Identify, assess, and monitor disaster risks—and enhance early warning</li> <li>Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels</li> <li>Reduce underlying risk factors</li> <li>Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels</li> </ul>

Source: ADB staff

<sup>9</sup> Refer UN/ISDR. 2007. *Disaster Risk Reduction: Global Review 2007*. Geneva.

## **E. Issues in disaster recovery and reconstruction**

6. Disaster-impacted communities are often rebuilt using the same types of materials, using the same construction methods, and in the same locations. In essence, this is rebuilding risk, with little or no accomplishment in reducing vulnerability. While there are obvious reasons for this, there are compelling motivations to take advantage of the post-disaster recovery period to introduce modifications that will reduce disaster risk. Sound structures in safe locations can provide communities with a greater likelihood of mitigating risks associated with a range of frequency and severity of hazards. This requires the establishment of and adherence to basic aspects such as building codes and planning laws, and to be accompanied by effective mechanisms for regular monitoring, supervision and enforcement.

7. However, improving building codes and planning laws may have little impact in countries where a large percentage of housing and urban development is in the informal sector. Hence, efforts are needed to train informal sector builders in safe building techniques; to train and accredit building inspectors; and to enforce building codes and regulations. Similarly, proper planning processes to prevent development on or near fault lines, floodplains, or on unstable slopes will better deliver basic necessities and ensure survival following a disaster. A window of time exists after impact (up to 6 months) where political decision-makers can be persuaded to introduce DRM measures into post-impact reconstruction activities. Linking this with a damage and needs assessment that can either be prepared by national agencies and/or international institutions (e.g. ADB has undertaken such assessments jointly with the World Bank, and often in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme or the Japan Bank for International Cooperation) is an efficient approach to institutionalize transformation measures.

## **F. The transition from disaster response to disaster recovery**

8. Disaster recovery activities start while emergency response actions are in progress. While the priority actions are different<sup>10</sup>, decisions made during the response phase will have a direct influence on the recovery action plan. Unlike the response phase of an emergency, where all efforts tend to have a singular focus on rescuing and saving lives, the function of recovery is characterized by a complex set of issues that can have long lasting effects on the community.

9. Recovery is best achieved when the affected community exercises a high degree of self-determination. Recovery extends beyond restoring physical assets or providing welfare services. Successful recovery recognizes that both communities and individuals have a wide and variable range of recovery needs and that recovery needs to meet all these needs in a coordinated way.

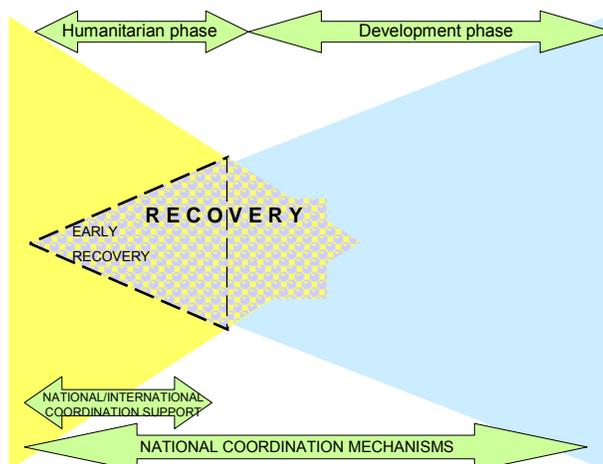
10. The transition from response to recovery has been termed 'early recovery' (see Figure 1). Early recovery seeks to build on relief efforts to crystallize sustainable development opportunities. It is not a separate phase in the relief-development continuum, but an effort to strengthen linkages. Early recovery operations aim to:

- Ensure smooth transition with the phasing out of the emergency operations
- Promote spontaneous recovery initiatives by the affected population and reduce the rebuilding of risk
- Establish the foundations for longer term recovery.
- Integrate risk reduction measures into recovery and development.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, an impact assessment that is needed to direct emergency response and relief resources is different from a damage and needs assessment that directs attention to longer-term reconstruction and rehabilitation needs.

**Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the transition from response to recovery**



Source: Adapted from IASC, 2006. *Implementing Early Recovery*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee. United Nations. New York.

**Figure 2: Generic Recovery Structure.**

Social Environment	Economic Environment	Natural Environment	Built Environment
Safety & Wellbeing	Individuals	Natural Resources	Residential Housing
Health	Businesses	Waste Pollution	Commercial / Industrial Property
Welfare	Infrastructure	Amenity Values	Public Building & Assets
	Government	Biodiversity & Ecosystems	Rural Farmland
			Lifeline Utilities

Source: MCDEM, 2005. *Recovery Management. Director's Guidelines for Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups*. DGL 4/05. New Zealand Government. Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management. Wellington.

**G. Suggestions for next steps**

11. The following twelve suggestions are offered to PRC authorities as they move towards recovery.

- (i) **Base decisions on empirical evidence.** It is essential that any planning and decision-making is based on reliable data from impact assessments. This data should also include revised hazard assessment information and updated vulnerability assessments.

- (ii) **Establish a recovery center** and/or review existing arrangements to ensure existing recovery center procedures are adequate and suitable for the current circumstances. Consider the concept of adopting local 'one-stop recovery shops' within which all appropriate agencies, utilities and services that the local community and business enterprises need to re-establish themselves are located in the same location. These local centers should have communication links to the central recovery center as well as their respective functional headquarters.
- (iii) **Use existing structures.** Maintaining the inter-organizational status quo is essential for the effective execution of post-impact actions. Wherever possible, recovery processes and practices should be based on existing organizational arrangements rather than creating new ones. There are two main reasons for this. First, existing organizations have established procedures and networks that make it easier and quicker to 'get things done'. Second, new organizations suffer from a lack of operational legitimacy until they have established their credentials on the ground, even if they have high-level political support. Any slip or delay by a new entity will be perceived as a sign of inadequacy by established organizations, which will be quick to assert their own legitimacy on new disaster-relevant tasks. It is more appropriate therefore to assign new recovery roles to existing organizations. An important corollary to this, however, is to be aware that new informal organizations will emerge at the local level wherever there is a perceived gap in existing formal arrangements or where a critical requirement is seen not to be met by established organizations – this is normal, and authorities should acknowledge the fact that these 'emergent organizations' are a critical component of the local community trying to re-establish itself by taking control of the changed environment, and should be accommodated.
- (iv) **Debris management.** Disaster-caused debris is a logistical exercise in its own right. Specific attention needs to be given to the safe removal and disposal of disaster debris ("rubble removal"), which if not correctly dealt with may cause environmental and/or health problems later. Some debris will be contaminated (e.g. from industrial and medical waste) and will require specific treatment before it can be disposed safely. Some debris can be recycled, although strict guidelines and monitoring procedures need to be put in place to ensure recycled items are correctly identified.
- (v) **Be transparent.** Transparency requires communication, which is the most important component of recovery, especially communication with the community. Post-impact communication is essential to keep everyone informed of the recovery process. For communication to be effective a designated 'public information manager' needs to be appointed and a communication plan developed. The media will be an integral consideration. Achieve transparency through open processes and wide dissemination of information on all aspects of the recovery process. Involve the impacted community in decision-making.
- (vi) **Include the impacted community.** Keep in mind that disaster management, and disaster recovery in particular, is a community-based issue. Review current links with the private sector and civil society in the context of disaster risk management and strengthen where appropriate. Keep in mind that livelihood restoration is a key priority area. Take decisions on plans, design and implementation at the lowest level possible to ensure community ownership and empowerment, and to make sure that solutions are locally appropriate. Sensitive issues such as the need for and the allocation of victims for transitional housing, and for eventual permanent housing, are best undertaken through community-level consultations. Mobilize private investment, both human and financial,

and if necessary provide the local private sector with incentives and the technology needed to participate fully in reconstruction.

- (vii) **Identify resource sources.** Identify as early as possible what financial and material resources may be required, and identify sources, keeping in mind resources may be procured locally, nationally and/or internationally. The identification of resources needs to take into account the fact that disaster recovery is a long-term activity that typically takes years, even decades. Resource identification should include alternative sources and a timetable for procurement. The process of resource identification and acquisition should be started as early as possible so as not to place undue pressure on existing production and supply schedules. Also keep in mind that transportation of supplies to the impacted area often becomes a bottleneck, so attention to delivery and distribution logistics is essential. With respect to the coordination of reconstruction funds from external agencies, setting up a multi donor fund, which has been used in some recent reconstruction programs, is one option that can be explored.
- (viii) **Identify development opportunities.** Review relevant development plans and link recovery strategies directly to them, keeping in mind that disasters often provide opportunities to revise national/provincial development strategies. Also be mindful that large-scale disasters often divert much-needed resources from needy projects elsewhere, thus having an unintended consequence of jeopardizing development goals in other parts of the country.
- (ix) **Build in resilience.** Avoid the creation of new disaster risk. Set mechanisms in place to review current construction techniques, building codes and regulations, land-use management/zoning plans and regulations, and amend where necessary. Also review national, provincial and local disaster planning programs to see if they adequately incorporate a risk management practices.
- (x) **Identify lessons learned:** Establish a register to identify lessons learnt. For example, identify (i) the specific issue (including whether the lesson requires amendment/adjustment to current arrangements or if the lesson is a gap in existing arrangements), (ii) area of responsibility/jurisdiction, and (iii) relevant law/regulation the lessons falls within, etc.). Also include areas for future training, exercises, resource replenishment and/or new purchase, etc.
- (xi) **Look after the ‘hidden victims’.** While disasters have a direct impact on the affected population in the immediate impact area, the physical, economic and social disruptive consequences are far-reaching, including likely dislocation of commercial supply chains, transport and other utility linking systems. Depending on the degree of connectedness and reliance these and other system have to the impact area, they will also require assistance. In addition, relatives, friends, and colleagues of disaster victims may require additional psychosocial support.
- (xii) **Create an exit strategy.** Factor into the recovery operations an exit strategy. The exit strategy is a systematic plan of action to withdraw formal recovery assistance from the recovery center and transition to business-as-usual while allowing the community to continue their own recovery processes. Key participants in this decision-making are national authorities, local politicians, the private sector and civil society.

## Appendix 1: ADB operational lessons from recent disaster and emergency assistance

Issue	Lesson	Possible Solution
<b>Disaster</b>		
The poor were disadvantaged in recovery by limited access to resources, and fewer options for recovery.	Recovery programming is not always focused on pro-poor and poverty reduction and is not systematically tracked, so poor people end up losing out.	Careful poverty targeting and sensitive project design can lead to major poverty-reduction impacts even under difficult post-disaster circumstances. Inclusive growth policies that challenge the underlying causes of poverty, vulnerability, and livelihood impairment should be advocated.
Developments in the aftermath of disaster (in this case an earthquake) shifted gender roles.	Rethink social conditioning and type of contributions household members make.	Develop a gender and vulnerability reduction action plan that incorporates livelihood improvement.
In Pakistan, the large number of actors supporting recovery increases the complexity of planning.	Integrated and multisector programming is needed to significantly facilitate planning and implementation.	Phasing of response and recovery should follow where possible the expressed needs of the affected population, rather than the timetable of outside agencies.
While sound practices in disaster planning emphasize flexibility, it is not always evident in country-specific plans.	Greater clarity and allocation in the execution of authority for disaster actions is needed.	Perhaps certain authorities need to be delegated to lower levels, including participation of civil society.
Knowledge gained during the damage and needs assessment (DNA) is often lost to the project team.	By focusing on speed, openings can be missed to identify a project team that can deliver, certainly for the first year.	Linkages between phases and the personnel conducting them need to be built in to disaster planning.
Targeting development and reconstruction of tsunami-affected areas opens a set of equity issues regarding surrounding areas. It is politically difficult to spend vast sums of money to redevelop one village (or part of) and then leave immediate neighbors in poverty with deficient essential infrastructure and services.	An enlarged agenda will lengthen the time and resources required to recover and develop the wider region.	National policy, with respect to land use, disaster compensation, and other politically charged issues, needs to be thought out before disaster strikes. These policies must be in place to guide decision makers as disaster occurs. Determining national policy in the midst of disaster relief and recovery operations is difficult.
Recovery demands a high degree of local participation in decision making, which is time-consuming, but necessary.	Local capacity for disaster management must be developed.	Given the sometimes weak local capacity in some areas, likely problems should be anticipated and factored into planning, funding, and implementation processes.
Recovery costs of operations are often inflated due to rising rents for administrative staff, rapidly rising wages for local skilled (and scarce) people, increased insurance premiums, and danger money required in some areas.	Post-disaster conditions can skew costs and operating conditions.	Supply constraints must be dealt with on a priority basis, because failure to do so will enervate other activities.
Disaster typically trigger offers of support from various sources and resulted in some players providing assistance, including non-	Staff are uncertain how to deal with the many organizations. Regular dialogue with key organizations could provide	Assigning an international liaison component to disaster planning arrangements can strengthen response capacity during early

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>
governmental organizations and humanitarian aid organizations with which the impacted country may not have much interaction.	helpful insights for future involvement.	recovery.

## Appendix 2:

# ADB Brief: Disaster Risk Management

Disaster and conflict situations have a detrimental effect on the development programs of ADB's developing member countries and in particular, on their efforts to reduce poverty. ADB's Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy helps strengthen efforts to reduce disaster risk.

### Disasters: An Ongoing Issue in Asia

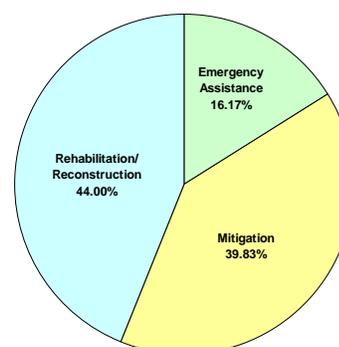
Over the past several decades, natural disasters have had an increasing negative impact on the most vulnerable people in developing member countries (DMC). The geophysical and climatological characteristics of Asia and Pacific make the region especially vulnerable: harsh climatic conditions and diverse geography are subject to extreme weather and unstable geology, and development gains can be fragile and easily overwhelmed by the effects of natural events. For the 30-year period 1975-2005, Asia witnessed approximately 37% of the world's recorded natural disasters, 57% of the deaths, 89% of populations affected, and 44% of property and infrastructural damage. An average year sees \$39.5 billion in physical losses throughout Asia<sup>11</sup>. Since approximately two-thirds of natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific region are weather-related, the effects of climate change could result in more frequent and more damaging events. A major challenge now is natural disaster augmented by climate change. It is nonetheless important that synergies be developed between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation since integrating these actions will not only benefit both agendas but also ensure that geophysical hazards, which accounts for 33% of ADB's overall disaster and emergency assistance, continue to be taken into account.

### ADB's Strategic Role

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has had dedicated disaster policies for 20 years. ADB recognizes that a major rationale for its involvement in disaster and postconflict assistance is because timely intervention allows an impacted DMC to maintain development momentum. Its three policies (approved in 1987, 1989, and 2004) have exhibited distinctive characteristics that reflected both DMC needs at

the time and the thinking of the international community. ADB has utilized several approaches for implementing disaster and emergency assistance. The most extensive is the provision of financial grants and loans following disaster impact. ADB has also provided hazard mitigation loans, national and regional technical assistance to reduce natural hazard risk and, in exceptional circumstances, grants to help overcome the impact of major disasters. Over \$7.0 billion has been expended in disaster and postconflict assistance since 1987, financing some 271 projects. These figures mean that, on average, ADB has been engaged in at least one new environmental, health, natural hazard or conflict related risk management activity every month for the past two decades. The figure below indicates the general nature of ADB's assistance for the period 1987-2007.

**Nature of ADB Emergency and Disaster Assistance, 1987-2007**



### Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy

#### Objectives

Disaster risk management is integral to development activities. A proactive stance to reduce the effects of disasters in the region requires a comprehensive approach with an emphasis on actions taken prior to a hazardous

<sup>11</sup> Data derived from EM-DAT database (Disaster Events Database), WHO Collaborating Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Belgium.

event rather than on postdisaster recovery. The 2004 Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy (DEAP) is a wide-ranging course of action that brings together natural and non-natural disasters as well as postconflict situations. The DEAP has two interrelated objectives:

- (i) To strengthen ADB's effectiveness in supporting DMCs to manage risks related to natural hazards and post-conflict by reducing vulnerability, and by preventing and mitigating related disasters before they occur; and
- (ii) To facilitate rapid and adequate assistance by ADB to its DMCs in response to disasters and postconflict situations in an effort to efficiently revitalize their development efforts.

### **Policy components**

The DEAP is a partnership between ADB and its DMCs that is designed to mainstream disaster risk management as an integral part of ADB's development process by

- Adopting a systematic approach to reducing disaster risk;
- Mainstreaming disaster risk management as an integral part of the development process;
- Working more closely with DMCs to help them adopt an approach that emphasizes preventive measures;
- Strengthening other partnerships to maximize synergies among development and specialized relief organizations;
- Using resources more efficiently and effectively to better support pre- and post-disaster activities; and

- Improving organizational arrangements within ADB for planning, implementing, and communicating effectively about disaster and emergency-related assistance.

In the context of country partnership strategies, the evaluation of disaster risk and its review with country authorities is an important tool to enhance awareness of threats and to encourage countries to allocate scarce resources to improve their risk management. Incorporating appropriate disaster risk management strategies into country programming and portfolio management is the cornerstone of ADB's shift to a proactive stance for improving risk management and enhancing development.

### **Funding and partnerships:**

The DEAP also promotes sustainable financing of disaster preparedness, especially those which can be undertaken in cooperation with the stakeholders.

### **Time line and key events**

An action plan for sustainable approaches to disaster risk management was approved by Management in April 2008 and will pursue a set of actions to be undertaken over the next 3–5 years focusing on:

- (i) building organizational awareness and capacity to support disaster risk reduction activities more effectively;
- (ii) enhancing country programming and portfolio management;
- (iii) developing relevant policies; and
- (iv) engaging proactively in regional initiative