

**State-level Consultation on:
“Climate Risk Management in Urban areas through disaster preparedness and mitigation”**

A GOI-UNDP Project supported by USAID

17 November 2012, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

On November 17, 2012 a multi-stakeholder consultation meeting was conducted in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh to initiate state-level discussions on the USAID supported GOI-UNDP project on “**Climate Risk Management in Urban Areas through Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation**”.

BACKGROUND:

In view of the increasing risk exposure of the urban areas of India, often accentuated by climate change and variability, a project on “Climate Risk Management in Urban Areas through Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation” has been approved jointly by the Government of India (GOI) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with financial support from USAID. The project would be implemented over a period of three years (Sept 2012 – 2015) with a total budget of US\$ 1.21 million.

The key objectives of the project are to:

1. Reduce disaster risk in urban areas by enhancing institutional capacities to integrate climate risk reduction measures in development programs as well as to undertake mitigation activities based on scientific analyses, and
2. Enhance community capacities to manage climate risk in urban areas by enhancing the preparedness.

Towards these objectives the following activities have been envisaged under the project:

- i. Preparation of City Disaster Management Plan (CDMP)
- ii. Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis
- iii. Building capacities of communities in disaster response through trainings
- iv. Formulation of an Action Plan to strengthen Early Warning Systems based on analytical studies
- v. Preparation of Sectoral Plans (in four key sectors) to mainstream DRR and Climate Change Adaptation in development programmes
- vi. Knowledge Management initiatives

The project will be implemented in six cities in the multi-hazard states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu. The cities are: Gangtok, Shimla, Bhubaneswar, Thiruvananthapuram, Madurai and Vijayawada.

All the 6 cities are presently covered under Urban Risk Reduction Project of GOI-UNDP DRR Programme. These cities have made some progress on many of the critical aspects of disaster risk management and have attempted to: prepare city disaster management plans, set up Emergency Operation Centers, create mass awareness, and build capacities of various stakeholders on disaster management. However, in most cases it is observed that the CDMPs prepared at the city level are more focused on disaster preparedness and response with very little emphasis on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. These plans are not yet further reinforced with ward level DM plans and community response teams. It is known fact that during disasters community members are the first responders and hence building capacity at the community level for disaster response is crucial to ensure disaster risk reduction.

Continuing efforts are also required to implement the City Disaster Management Plans as well as to ensure that disaster risk reduction aspects are integrated in the developmental activities of various sectors. It is envisaged that the proposed project would identify existing gaps in key disaster risk management areas/components and devise activities that would enhance disaster resilience and adaptive capacities of the identified cities and its residents. Special attention would be paid to ensure that these activities take into consideration climate change and climate variability induced hazards and other impacts on natural and built environments.

The project will be implemented at the national level by the MHA and in cities by the Municipal Corporation or district authorities depending on the recommendations of the state government.

Under this project, state-level consultations with relevant stakeholder groups are planned to be conducted in all 6 project cities. The purpose of these consultations is to agree on the following:

- 1) Implementation strategy
- 2) Relevant stakeholders
- 3) Roles and responsibilities of various line departments and other partners in project implementation.
- 4) Focal point for the project from the state government.
- 5) Project Monitoring Mechanism

The first consultation meeting was conducted in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh on November 17, 2012. The following section summarizes the key highlights from the discussions in Shimla.

CONSULTATION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

The consultation began with the welcome address from Mr. G. Padmanabhan, UNDP who reiterated UNDP's role as a provider of technical assistance and seed funding for key DRR activities that would strengthen government's DRR/DRM activities. Himachal Pradesh being a well performing state under the GOI-UNDP DRR programme, there is significant interest in consolidating the progress made so far. In addition, efforts would be made to incorporate climate change related hazards and their impacts in the activities to be carried out through the proposed project.

Additional Chief Secretary, Mr. Deepak Sanan while welcoming the USAID-GOI-UNDP initiative pointed out that technical support, laws and legislations alone cannot bring about disaster risk reduction. Initiatives that help change accepted practices and individual perceptions regarding risks are equally important. Any risk reduction measure to be effective, it needs to influence collective conscience leading to change of collective behaviour through well-designed communication and awareness-raising campaigns. He emphasized that analysis of popular perceptions with regard to disasters when combined with a scientific analysis of vulnerability can contribute to more effective risk reduction measures. Critical factor that determines the success of such initiatives is identification of triggers that can bring about changes in people's perceptions and behaviours. He urged the participants to take this project as an opportunity to strengthen their own DRR initiatives.

A brief presentation of the USAID-UNDP-GOI project was made by Mr. G. Padmanabhan of UNDP. He informed the participants of the objectives of the proposed project and provided a brief overview of the different project components. Following this, an open discussion facilitated by UNDP allowed the participants to share their views on the relevance of different proposed project components for Shimla and suggest ways in which the project could add value to what the state/district/city has already been doing towards disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Component-wise summary of the discussions regarding the proposed project is as follows:

- (i) City Disaster Management Plan (CDMP):

Under the URR programme, a CDMP has been prepared for the city of Shimla under the stewardship of the Municipal Corporation. The primary focus of the plan has been on strengthening Disaster Response mechanisms. With this objective, the plan has done a preliminary HRVA at the ward-level and also developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the key response agencies/departments. It has also a capacity-building plan (largely for those involved in the construction sector), under which a cadre of master trainers have been created. HIPA has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the trainings. The plan also has a section on some of the mitigation measures that could be undertaken.

Under the CDMP, guidelines are available for Emergency Support Functions (ESF) with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. Since the CDMP was prepared in the recent past, orienting the various Departments and response agencies towards SOPs as well as testing the operational effectiveness through mock drills (testing the CDMP – especially performance of critical functions including communication, medical response, traffic management, etc.) could be undertaken through this project. The SOPs and other guidelines developed to strengthen the emergency response capabilities could also be reviewed to ensure that climate change related hazards are incorporated. Also, the vocabulary used in the response component of the CDMP (Incident Response System) need to be reviewed for clarity as well as its compatibility with existing titles of key functionaries and terminologies used by departments/agencies that perform the emergency response functions. In addition, the response component of the CDMP should also look at resources (including machinery and equipment) available beyond the immediate city limits to support ESF when a disaster event overwhelms the city administration's capacity to respond. The Response Plan should also have procedures/formal arrangements (SOPs) to access such resources. These gaps in the existing CDMP could be addressed through the project.

Emergency Operation Centres (EOC) – An EOC has been set up at the city level. It was mentioned that significant investments are planned by the state government to strengthen the EOCs using funds from the 13th Finance Commission. After a preliminary assessment of the nature of activities that are planned by the state government, specific aspects that contribute to strengthening the emergency response infrastructure, skills, and/or institutions could be taken up through this project. The Disaster Management Information Centre associated with the EOC could be reviewed to assess the data collection (including type of data, sources, organization of data – whether a database is used or not), analysis and information dissemination systems used.

(ii) Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA):

As mentioned above, a basic HRVA was conducted as part of CDMP preparation. However, since HRVA would form the basis for all activities, a careful analysis of the ward-level HRVA conducted in relation to the preparation of the CDMP should be undertaken including review of the types of hazards considered, data (parameters used, sources, timeframe), methodology adopted (for both data collection and analysis) as well as provisions for updating the database (GIS-based or other forms).

In addition the state-level HRVA (currently being prepared) maybe reviewed to see if it could contribute to the city-level HRVA, especially from a regional perspective (hazards that originate outside the city yet could have indirect impacts on Shimla) as well as any significant aspects related to urban risks incorporated in the state-level HRVA.

Based on the review of these two reports, existing gaps if any could be identified (especially from the perspective of its ability to inform DRR and CCA initiatives) and rectified through this project. A final comprehensive HRVA for the city of Shimla could be compiled, largely drawing from the existing HRVAs mentioned above and other supporting studies conducted through the project to fill the identified gaps.

This report could then form the basis for reviewing the mitigation components of the CDMP and identification of mitigation activities that could be implemented through the project. It is also necessary

to ensure that the database compiled as part of the HRVA exercise is maintained and updated periodically and be accessed by relevant departments/agencies.

(iii) Building capacities of communities in disaster response:

14 training centers have been identified across the state to undertake three-day training on first aid and search and rescue for Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) volunteers. These centers are hosted by Home Guards, Civil Defense or Fire Services. A roster of the trained volunteers is also maintained at the state level.

Though capacity-building at the ward level is emphasized in the CDMP, it has not yet been actively implemented. Response Teams at the ward level are yet to be constituted and the members trained. Through the project, support could be provided to review the training modules currently used for training the NYK volunteers and adapt them to meet the specific requirements at the ward level/urban context (including SAR in collapsed structures). Efforts could also be made to establish institutional linkages to sustain the interest of trainees, conduct regular trainings to maintain a minimum number of trained volunteers in each ward at any point of time as well as refresher trainings for already trained volunteers.

(iv) Action Plan to strengthen Early Warning Systems

The city does not seem to have a formal EWS communication network, which ensures last-mile connectivity. Through the project a detailed assessment of feasibility of setting up a EWS could be commissioned. The study should provide specific suggestions to improve their effectiveness of existing community-based EWS. Therefore, the study would provide the opportunity to revisit the functioning of community-based EWS where they exist and suggest ways to upgrade/re-design the existing systems in light of the technological advances made in the area of EWS (including satellite-based communication systems).

On the basis of this study the action plan to strengthen the EWS may be formulated in coordination with all relevant departments involved in response functions, agencies that issue warnings, community and volunteer groups that act as first responders. The Action Plan could suggest activities to strengthen: (i) institutional arrangements for the functioning of EWS (coordination mechanisms between key actors, clarity in roles, SOPs), (ii) technology – hardware aspects of the EWS, with due consideration to emerging technologies that are relevant to the particular context of Shimla, (iii) data collection (sources of critical data) and analysis, (iv) last mile connectivity, (v) linkages between issuance of warnings and response/action, (vi) capacity of key actors and (vii) cooperation with other government and non-governmental departments/agencies within the city, district, state as well as the national level on receiving warnings/critical information.

(v) Sectoral Plans to mainstream DRR and Climate Change Adaptation in development programmes

Some of the sectors identified by the participants for integration of DRR/CCA include:

- Education – especially through school safety initiatives
 - (state government in coordination with the Department of Technical Education is carrying out an exercise to identify various designs and construction practices used for educational buildings and include risk reduction measures – need to be confirmed)
- Health – hospital safety (especially since the hospitals in Shimla cater to the medical needs of the region) – establishment of a network of medical service providers/hospitals including those outside the confines of Shimla, along with arrangements to access helicopters or other means of transporting patients in case of an emergency

- Housing – Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) - In Krishna Nagar ward of Shimla, risk mitigation measures have been taken into account in the implementation of RAY. This could be reviewed and the possibility of mainstreaming it in the relevant departments could be explored.
- Infrastructure - Shimla being a recipient of the JNNURM funds, has prepared a City Development Plan (CDP). The CDP has identified infrastructure projects in various sectors that are to be implemented through JNNURM. In one of the sectors, a project t, could be identified to demonstrate how DRR/CCA could be integrated into a development project/activity. The USAID-UNDP-Gol project could fund additional costs associated with specific changes to be brought about in the processes or project activities/components of the JNNURM project to make it disaster risk resistant, with due consideration to climate change related issues.
- Energy – minimize carbon footprint through reduced energy consumption - development and promotion of renewable energy sources, appropriate technology, etc.
- Forest management with specific emphasis on soil and water conservation measures
- Transportation

(vi) Knowledge Management:

It was suggested that through the project a baseline study on climate change and associated impacts on Shimla be commissioned based on data/studies that are already available with various agencies (such as the IMD –recently published a study on climate of Shimla) and research institutions (such as the State Climate Change Centre).State Climate Change Centre because of its specific focus on climate change could be supported through the project to undertake the study. Such a study could also serve as an effective tool for advocacy and awareness-raising regarding the need for DRR and CCA measures.

In addition, state website could be upgraded to function as the data warehouse on all aspects of disaster management including preparedness, response, risk reduction, climate change and adaptation measures, etc. both for the entire states as well as the city of Shimla (including plans, supporting studies, awareness raising materials, training modules, and any relevant document related to DRM/CC). It should also provide links to the relevant agencies and institutions that are engaged in research and training in these aspects.

Through the project other knowledge-sharing initiatives such as e-discussions on relevant topics may be conducted through the Solutions Exchange portal of UNDP. If there is significant interest from the government, the possibility of having such a functionality embedded in the government website (state or city) could also be explored.

Additional comments:

The state government officials expressed the opinion that it would be better for the District Collector to perform the role of the project coordinator, and the Office of the Commissioner could be given the responsibility for implementation. The Department of DM in the state Government will be the overall state Nodal Agency for the project.