

Visakhapatnam Declaration

—2nd—

WORLD CONGRESS ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

*Jointly Organised By
Government of Andhra Pradesh*



DMICS

Envisioning a Disaster Resilient Society

Disaster Management, Infrastructure and Control Society

PREAMBLE

We are in a world that is facing humanitarian crises of unprecedented magnitude and intensity in the recent decades, in the form of natural hazards of disproportionate consequences and impacts, climate change as well as human - induced disasters.

In the midst of growing threat of increasing frequency of disasters especially due to climate change and every day risks to the marginalized, who continue to experience inter-generational poverty and inequality; we wish **to express our firm commitment** to Sendai Framework for DRR and Sustainable Development Goals. Further, we would remain responsive to the upcoming international commitment on Climate Change and World Humanitarian Summit.

At the 2nd World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDM) held in Visakhapatnam, in November 2015, approximately 1,000 disaster management professionals, practitioners including children and students, researchers, academicians, defense service personnel, government authorities, NGOs, multi-lateral organizations, media, private sector as well as representatives of communities - committed to disaster management came together and dialogued intensely about relevant issues. Building on the experience of recent decades, we have resolved to commit ourselves, communities and institutions to innovate and create an accountable action plan. In doing so, it is important to identify the risk drivers and address their root causes. Natural Resources and Environmental changes are a critical concern which impact the life-line of communities.

2nd World Congress on Disaster Management believes in sustaining a deep focus on vulnerability reduction and capacity development of women, youth, children, disabled, elderly and strengthening inclusive approaches.

Whereas global processes **“towards building resilience of communities and nations”** through IDNDR followed by Yokohama strategy, HFA and recently, Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-30), which laid down 4 priorities and 7 targets – the last two decades of action has contributed to bring about a significant change in the perception and mindset, at the national levels in most countries, which has helped create an enabling environment; but, the same has not percolated down to the sub-national, especially local levels.

Therefore, keeping its focus on local realities, 2nd WCDM affirms its commitment and resolves to do the following in order to achieve the objectives of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and integration into Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change Adaptation:

LOCAL LEVEL

Sub-national / provincial / district / local (like Panchayats in India / Upozilla in Bangladesh, etc as per the local context)

- ❖ **Set up a full time dedicated, independent body of experts. This would be equivalent of State Disaster Management Authority at sub-national / provincial level, aligned with national legislation / mandate.**
- ❖ **Invest in Strengthening and Operationalizing district level / regional units (for example DDMA in India / Provincial in Sri Lanka); and institutionalize accountability mechanisms (as obligated under respective national DM Act) – with strong convergence at local level structures.**
- ❖ **Generally, Communities are the First Responders to every disaster. However, we must recognize that they are also the Last / Sustained Responders. 2nd WCDM would like to place on record that devolution of approach to the last**

level of governance and communities (both in rural and urban areas), is the key to an innovation in disaster management that we wish to deliver on.

- ❖ **To strengthen and enable the development functions (line-departments) to deliver on their risk reduction functions (roles and responsibility).**
- ❖ **Targeted Vulnerability reduction: Recommend adaptive use of social protection schemes for resilience building. State/provincial Governments will provide policy directive to the District Magistrates, BDOs and Panchayats to recognize stress amongst the most vulnerable families and provide in-time and needs based support through adaptive use of social protection schemes.**

Keeping in view the experience of India with 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution of India and other similar national and regional experiences regarding devolution of powers to **local governance structures and mechanisms**, it is important to recognize their critical role in all phases of disaster management – preparedness planning, response, recovery and mainstreaming DRR into development processes and outcomes.

In the context of the newly formed state of Andhra Pradesh, which is hosting 2nd WCDM, the government is building the new Capital City. We desire to see the new capital becoming a model for the rest of India and the world, as a **Smart Resilient City** which includes the concerns of all stakeholders. The new capital should become sister to Kyoto, Tokyo, Singapore – which are not only smart cities but also disaster resilient models. The 21st century city must retain its ancient cultural heritage and history; at the same time, becoming disaster / climate resilient.

New **culture of prevention and preparedness** should be incorporated as an essential component of all development planning and implementation. State

Disaster Management Authority should spearhead and lead this, so that, it is risk-informed and risk-sensitive. Promoting culture of safe construction practices and improvement of unsafe buildings (schools, hospitals, other critical infrastructure) through retrofitting is important. Public Awareness campaigns are an important priority of focus in this endeavour.

Local initiatives at preserving the knowledge and history of disasters must be encouraged through supporting concepts such as '**Disaster Museum**' – not only as institutions of history and culture; but also as a space for learning, by preserving the remains of disaster impacts, as a living memory for future generations..

NATIONAL

- ❖ Effective funding mechanisms need to be generated, such as national disaster mitigation fund to resource implementation of local plans
- ❖ Build a platform of knowledge management / good practices / innovations at local level

REGIONAL / CONTINENTAL

- ❖ Promote effective regional mechanisms for sharing of data which is gender-sensitive and age-appropriate
- ❖ Explore Appropriate Practices / Networks at the level of governments / multi-lateral organizations, which can activate rapid response, when needed (humanitarian access)
- ❖ Pro-Active strategies such as Comprehensive School Safety, which includes Children out of School (*so that no child is left behind*) can be piloted as a regional cooperation among nations

GLOBAL LINKAGES

- ❖ Undertake cooperative studies among communities and local governance on evidencing climate change understanding and local commitments. This would be undertaken at intra-, and international levels.
- ❖ Promote Private Sector Partnerships to strengthen humanitarian commitments

Use of modern / innovative technologies in all their forms and manifestations (space – telecom – earth sciences – cyber – geo-spatial mapping)-- as drivers for early warning systems applicable for multi-hazard contexts, disaster surveillance; and efficient use for dissemination to vulnerable communities / masses

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

- ❖ WCDM secretariat (DMICS) will help negotiate / advise for substantial outcomes
- ❖ Make WCDM as a biennial event (once every two years)
- ❖ Promote and nurture partnerships among stakeholders

We, as participants of 2nd WCDM, pledge to commit ourselves to Visakhapatnam Declaration and resolve to undertake steps needed to realize this **action agenda**.

22 November 2015

Action Agenda of 2nd World Congress on Disaster Management

First Year of Implementation of Visakhapatnam Action Agenda

Local Level:

- ❖ Vulnerability Assessments and Capacity Mapping of local conditions and stakeholders to develop risk-informed plans
- ❖ Strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions / Urban Local Bodies along with resource allocation to be the critical responder and to put in place necessary protocols incorporating new technologies
- ❖ Regular mock drills at community levels led by Panchayat and Urban Bodies
- ❖ Local Contingency Planning including pre-stocking for first response

Sub-National / National / Regional Level

- ❖ Where national building codes and standards exist, these need to be enforced for every new structure to be built (homes, schools, health centres, hospitals, - in fact, all infrastructure)
- ❖ For the existing critical structures, professional assessment needs to be undertaken and retrofitting to be planned and implemented.
- ❖ Comprehensive School Safety to be a pioneering initiative in the region

Resilient Cities:

- ❖ Newly emerging cities can be guided by standards for SMART and Resilient Cities with adaptation features

Study / Research Agenda

- ❖ Undertake Disaster and Climate Risk studies from a local point of view and develop risk reduction and adaptation

Recommendations for Commitments for strategic and sustained Disaster Management:

- ❖ Whereas resources have been made available for relief during disaster response times, it is necessary to allocate specific funds for mitigation, research and innovation in the areas of resilience and adaptation
- ❖ Army to be included in planning and support for Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives
- ❖ Culture of Preparedness must include all stakeholders and vulnerable groups with a balance of short and long term initiatives
- ❖ Media to play responsible role in awareness generation on Disasters and Prevention
- ❖ Academic institutions including engineering and medical institutions; and experts to work with Revenue, Police, Fire Service, SDRF, NDRF and other armed forces to strengthen preparedness and prevention initiatives in DRR and CCA. Whenever situation demands, defense / para-military force may be requisitioned especially for response including search and rescue
- ❖ Use of technology and specially 'walkie-talkie' to be available at local to handle disasters from a local perspective

*Together for a Safer World,
Build a Disaster Resilient Society*

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