

Workgroup 1

Common Issues, Challenges and priorities

1) Characteristics of Urban Areas

Common Issues:

Many urban areas are growing rapidly, creating new patterns of vulnerability but also of hazards

Drainage and other infrastructure often does not keep up with this growth

Difficult to forecast small-scale, but intense rainfall and issue respective warnings

Keep a holistic picture of DRM with all phases, strengthen especially the prevention phase and legal frameworks

Challenges:

In some urban areas EWS do not yet exist

Update and adjust EWS and emergency plans to new urban developments

Align the actions of the many actors involved

Priorities:

Replicate good experiences from some cities to others within and outside the countries and integrate them in national policies / systems

(Consolidate earthquake and tsunami EWS on both coasts)

2) Governance and Institutional Arrangements

Common Issues:

Define operational procedures at each level for timely actions
adjust the language of local and national jurisdiction

Challenges:

Decentralisation needs to be further explored/supported while keeping coherence with the national level

involve more the private and community sectors in EWSs and establish respective institutional agreements/arrangements

Priorities:

Strengthen the cooperation between DRM agencies and the NHMSs (even if it already exists)

3) Utilization of risk information in emergency planning and warnings at the city level

Common Issues:

- Acknowledge the specifics and dynamics of urban areas (e.g. flooding occurred where it never occurred before, new vulnerabilities are created), update maps and plans regularly

Challenges:

- Explore precipitation thresholds for EWS and respective protocols
- Better link science and municipal and local structures

Priorities:

- Promote vulnerability analyses esp. on the city/community level
- Particularization of meteorological information, improve models and risk metrics
- Improve the scale of risk maps
- Communicate uncertainties and the limits / accuracy of warnings
- Establish risk maps for all levels
- All actors involved need to communicate back to the NHMSs (Met Service)

4) Hazard monitoring, forecasting, and mandates for warning development at the city level

Common Issues:

- Reduce the scale of forecasts! Better real-time information
- Sustainability/maintenance of the observation networks, also expand/strengthen these!
- Better interaction between hydrological and meteorological services

Challenges:

- Decision makers need to better understand warnings issued by the Met Service, the warning needs to clearly indicate the seriousness of the forecasted event – improve knowledge and awareness
- Take staff turnover into account
- Better specify the hazard that is threatening the city

Priorities:

Some countries are establishing regional forecasting centres with e.g. new radars, but this also needs strong partners (e.g. universities) in the region

5) Warning dissemination mechanisms (linking national to local levels)

Common Issues:

Expand dissemination to social media, using modern technologies but also the basic means (radio, etc.), warnings should be transferred through official civil protection agencies

Basic communication elements

Challenges:

It needs a framework to do that, how to regulate this complementarity, structuring this information

Keep it to one, unambiguous message – channel the large amount of information and keep it “official”
to maintain a two-way communication – from national to local but also from local to national

Priorities:

Improve communication depending on the characteristics of the territory, overcome the bias towards other stakeholders involved

Establish /check procedures – incl. non-traditional communication channels, even if manuals exist

6) Emergency preparedness and response activities (national to local)

Common Issues:

Many plans and procedures have not been updated according to more recent developments, they also have to be officially issued and enforced

Manage shelter and evacuated groups (have simplified plans there), esp. during recurrent events

Challenges:

To have emergency response strategies (incl. evacuation maps) at hand in a timely manner

Transfer emergency plans to urban areas and to specific types of events

Local / regional plans need to comply with the national plan / policy (e.g. if produced by NGOs)

Adapt the plans to specific hazards

Migrant / temporary population (different culture, knowledge, experience) in cities needs to be taken into account in emergency plans

Priorities:

Analyze the security situation in cities and the influence on warning uptake, headquarters of DRM/NHMS need to be located in safe places

Consider disabled people (e.g. include more visual elements in plans etc.)

7) Improvement of overall operational framework of the early warning system

Common Issues:

Challenges:

Priorities:

9) Priorities for the improvement of your EWS

Common Priorities:

10) Concrete areas of regional cooperation which could benefit your country's EWS in Urban areas

- Support and facilitate knowledge sharing and south-south cooperation
- Support cooperation at the sub-national level (cities) with a national view
- Foster scientific and know-how transfer of experiences and good practices
- Support and foster harmonization of standards
- Enhance forecasting capacities and data management at the sub-national level
- Improve use of existing and new tools and technologic products (satellite)
- Enhance countries capacities to develop and implement a regional severe weather events virtual center
- Link meteorologic and hydrologic models
- Mainstream remote sensing information in forecast modelling
- Validation of forecasting information at the local level, expected vs actual impact