

## **Recommendations from the Albania National Policy Dialogue**

Based on the detailed assessments of the DRR policies and practices as well as the NMHS capacities, gaps and needs in the beneficiaries to support DRR, policy recommendations were developed. Initial results were presented to national stakeholders for review and discussions during National Policy Dialogues organised by WMO together with the UNDP in Tirana the 14-15 July 2010.

During this meeting, high-level participants endorsed the assessment, as well as the set of recommendations emanating from it and presented hereunder.

### **HFA priority 1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation**

**Recommendation 1:** To improve and strengthen national and local government mechanisms to institutionalise lessons learned from previous disasters and incorporate them into DRR policy, planning and programming. Previous experiences of disasters and the response to them reveal and good knowledge of the disaster potential across the population and establish addressing disaster risk as a national priority. Capturing these experiences and using them to guide future DRR policy, planning and programming is an important step in ensuring that DRR is evidence-based and builds on the foundations of existing knowledge. Such mechanisms will help to promote and support dialogue, the exchange of information and coordination among relevant agencies and institutions at all levels with the aim of fostering a unified approach towards DRR.

**Recommendation 2:** To establish a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. To further support the Government of Albania's existing and ongoing programme of disaster risk management, the establishment of a National Platform is proposed to strengthen the profile of DRR and to ensure that debate across all levels of government, technical agencies such as the hydro-meteorological, meteorological and the seismological services, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector is ongoing and contributes actively to policy-making and planning. The National Platform will allow for the engagement of all major practitioners and technical specialists as well as representatives of communities and those affected. It will also promote awareness and coordination among the relevant sectors, and ultimately support the linking of such awareness and coordination to national planning, budgeting and implementation of DRR activities.

### **HFA priority 2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning**

**Recommendation 3:** To establish and invest in fully operational 24/7 hydro-meteorological services (technical and human resources) as well as in the seismological sector to support risk assessment and early warning systems and promote operational monitoring, warning, forecasting and mapping of meteorological, hydrological and seismological hazards. This will build on the existing Disaster Risk Assessment and the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment undertaken with support from the ARC. It is critical to perform comparative analysis of the existing institutional and legislative arrangements for meteorological, hydrological and seismological services, upgrade and modernize hydro-meteorological and seismological observation networks, data management and forecasting systems and provide sustainable organizational, human and technical resources to maintain and operate them. It is also necessary to strengthen the early warning capacity with a multi-hazard approach and enhanced cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Directorate General for Civil Emergencies and other key stakeholders and the National Civil Emergencies Plan, to include contributions by the hydro-meteorological and seismological services.

**Recommendation 4:** To create appropriate mechanisms to increase coordination between the three meteorological organizations. With three organizations responsible for delivering meteorological services in Albania (Institute of Environment, Water and Energy (IEWE); Albanian Air Force Meteorological Service (MWFS); and, Tirana International Airport Meteorological Service)

there is a need to develop an appropriate framework with the legal basis to ensure that roles and responsibilities in DRR are clearly defined.

**Recommendation 5:** To integrate policy, planning and programming in adaptation to climate change with DRR strategy. The frequency and magnitude of hydrological and meteorological hazards has the potential to increase due to climate change. It is critical to invest in local scale climate studies in order to promote adaptation to climate change and to ensure that climate change adaptation and DRR are integrated into one programme coordinated through the Directorate for Civil Emergencies and the hydro-meteorological service.

### **HFA priority 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels**

**Recommendation 6:** To integrate DRR into the education system in Albania at all levels – primary, secondary, university. Building on existing levels of awareness and expanding understanding to incorporate the future threats from climate change and other hazards, as well as new development, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education examines the potential for integrating DRR as a part of national curricula at all levels, particularly in those areas showing the highest levels of risk. In addition, universities and other tertiary education institutions should be encouraged to establish research programmes encompassing different disaster risks, the results of which should have a natural outlet through the National Platform.

**Recommendation 7:** To establish a National Training Centre for DRR and Civil Protection practitioners and community members, using the existing National Fire Fighting Training Centre as a foundation. The most challenging issue is the building (or, at least, the consolidation) of the culture of safety and resilience. This requires ongoing, continuous activities aimed at increasing community capacities, regular integration of DRR into (particularly local) development plans, training activities and simulation exercises for all levels, and, most importantly, greater potential for creating the potential for the development of the capacity of women as powerful agents of the transmission of the culture of safety and resilience to the younger generation. The establishment of a National Training Centre for DRR would support this ambitious agenda and assist the process of strengthening capacities within the many stakeholders.

**Recommendation 8:** Supported through bilateral, regional and international cooperation and partnerships, sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually compatible objectives and strategies, and in order to meet the challenges ahead, accelerated efforts must be made to mainstream and integrate disaster risk reduction into development and governmental and sectoral strategies. Furthermore, efforts must be made to build the necessary capacities at all levels of institutional organization in Albania to manage and reduce risk. Such harmonization of mutually compatible objectives can help to counter the negative effects of increased population, unsustainable development practices, degradation of natural resources, the increasing exposure of the poor to disaster risks, ineffective forecasting, defective environmental control measures, inadequate capacity development and lack of appropriate market mechanisms, all of which are amplified if disaster risk is not addressed effectively as an integral component of the implementation of development.

**Recommendation 9:** To support the development of studies and research around the reduction of specific risk factors that affect Albania. Although the major hazards that affect Albania are well known, far less is known about the detailed effects of these hazards, the vulnerabilities that are constructed in the face of these hazards and the capacities that are necessary to address them. Again, through the auspices of the National Platform for DRR, the results of studies and research can be examined and recommended for inclusion in development planning.

### **HFA priority 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors**

**Recommendation 10:** In the context of reducing overall risks, and with consideration for increasing climate associated, seismic and geological associated risks, to develop national

capacities for climate (hydrological and meteorological) and geological (including seismological) services to support medium and long-term sectoral planning, as a critical aspect of disaster risk reduction. Enhanced investments are needed in climate data rescue, climate and geological modelling, forecasting and analysis to support sectoral planning in at-risk sectors. Development of these capacities would require a strong collaboration and coordination across many ministries and with the meteorological, hydrological and geological services, as well as enhanced regional cooperation in this area with other South East European and EU countries.

**Recommendation 11:** To improve networking with international institutions/institutions present in the region and to promote the increased involvement of such organizations in the strengthening of DRR in Albania. To enhance regional and international cooperation for the purpose of exchanging observation data, knowledge, technology and expertise regarding DRR, to share research findings, lessons learnt and best practice, participation in joint trainings and workshops all of which would contribute to enhancing the ability of Government of Albania to strengthen its DRR programme, raise overall awareness and improve capacity development measures.

#### **HFA priority 5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels**

**Recommendation 12:** To strengthen disaster preparedness for effective emergency response at all levels and to promote disaster prevention. First, ensure that emergency response plans are targeted to the individual needs of the vulnerable communities, authorities and emergency responders. Second, establish guidelines for systematic development of contingency plans at all levels that are backed by the requisite human, material and funding resources. Lastly, harmonise standard operating procedures governing response to emergencies and standardize terminology and capacity development taking into account roles and responsibilities in emergency response.

**Recommendation 13:** To strengthen awareness about the importance of preparedness. Promote the engagement of the media in order to stimulate a culture of preparedness and strong community involvement through sustained public education campaigns and public consultations at all levels of society.

**Recommendation 14:** To increase the involvement of the private sector in activities aimed at DRR with special emphasis placed on insurance companies for the purpose of building on achievements already made in promoting public private partnerships (PPP) to better engage the private sector in DRR activities. This can be done by encouraging the private sector to place greater emphasis on and allocate more resources to pre-disaster activities, such as risk assessments and early warning systems and through the promotion of the development of financial risk-sharing mechanisms, particularly insurance and reinsurance against disasters.

**Recommendation 15:** To strengthen regional and international links to support more effective fire risk preparedness and prevention. During the last two decades the occurrence of forest fires in Albania and across the region as a whole has increased in number and also in the size of the area affected, the main causes being human negligence and pasture burning. Preparedness to reduce forest fire impacts includes the creation of coordination mechanisms between the forestry administration, local authorities, hydro-meteorological services and the population, as well as civil emergency authorities (particularly fire fighters). Regional cooperation in addressing the fire risk should be strongly promoted as there is an increasing fire risk throughout the region. Existing regional cooperation can serve as a good basis for such developments.

**Recommendation 16:** To increase the use of simulation exercises (including table-top exercises) as a regular feature of emergency response and preparedness training. Increasing and cumulative experience of disasters allows for the understanding and lessons learned to be used in practising response and preparedness procedures through all types of simulation exercises either in field situations or the classroom.