



# **Seminar Report**

## **Central Asia Regional Seminar**

### **“Hyogo Framework for Action and Disaster Risk Reduction in Education”**

**25-26 March, 2009**  
**Almaty, Kazakhstan**

#### **Introduction**

From March 25-26, 2009, the Central Asia Regional Seminar entitled “Hyogo Framework for Action and Disaster Risk Reduction in Education” was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Organizers of the conference were UNICEF Country Office for Kazakhstan, UNICEF Regional Office for Central Asia (CEE/CIS) and UNISDR Regional Office for Central Asia. The event was made possible through the financial support of the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO under its Disaster Preparedness (DIPECHO) programme. The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, namely Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, hosted the conference.

#### **Background**

The “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters” is a key instrument for implementing disaster risk reduction, adopted by the Member States of the United Nations. Its overarching goal is to build resilience of nations and communities to disasters, by achieving substantive reduction of disaster losses by 2015 – in lives, and in the social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and countries. In Central Asia, the HFA has been signed by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Despite the progress made in achieving the Hyogo Framework for Action commitments, there is still a need for the Governments in the Central Asia region to more systematically address the issues of disaster risk reduction in the area of education and, in particular, the problems of children’s preparedness to emergency situations and disasters caused by natural hazards. There is also a need to share relevant experience among the partners at the regional level in order to strengthen the knowledge base and increase the level of disaster prevention and preparedness to disasters.

With an aim to address the above-mentioned challenges, UNICEF and UNISDR organized the two-day Central Asia Regional Seminar under their respective DIPECHO projects in the region. The meeting brought together senior government officials, experts and practitioners and international partners from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The conference aimed to:



- a) introduce participants to the Hyogo Framework for Action, International Strategy to Disaster Reduction system and linkages between Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Education,
- b) provide an opportunity to the participants for exchange of knowledge, experience and views on disaster preparedness and mitigation in the education sector, and
- c) lay an important foundation for improving existing governmental strategies and policy documents on disaster risk reduction in the region with a particular focus on education.

## Participation

In total, 52 people attended the conference, representing the following governments, organizations and donors. A number of experts and practitioners in disaster risk reduction were also present in the meeting.

- Ministry of Education and Science,
- Ministry of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence, Kazakhstan
- Committee of Emergency Situations, Tajikistan
- Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Tajikistan
- State Committee on Investment and Management of State property, Tajikistan
- Ministry of Finance, Tajikistan
- Ministry of Education, Tajikistan
- Ministry of Emergency Situations, Uzbekistan
- Ministry of Public Education, Uzbekistan
- European Commission office for Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Tajikistan
- UNICEF Country Offices for Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- UNICEF Regional Office for Central Asia (CEE/CIS), Geneva, Switzerland
- UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes, Geneva, Switzerland
- UN Department of Public Information, Kazakhstan
- UNDP, Kazakhstan
- UNDP, Tajikistan
- UN OCHA Regional Office for Central Asia, Kazakhstan
- UNESCO Regional Office for Central Asia, Kazakhstan
- Red Crescent Society (Kazakhstan) / Red Cross Netherlands
- USAID/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Office for Afghanistan & CIS

The Seminar was opened by **Mr. Ablay Sabdalın**, Deputy-Minister for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, **Ms Hanaa Singer**, UNICEF Representative in Kazakhstan, **Ms Goulsara Pulatova**, Head of UNISDR RO CA, **Mr. Haybullo Abdulloevich Latipov**, Chairman of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of Republic of Tajikistan and **Mr. Fahridin Golomov**, representing Ministry of Emergency Situation of Republic of Uzbekistan.

Closing remarks were provided by **His Excellency Ambassador Norbert Joustén**, Head of European Commission Delegation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, **Mr. Meiram**



**Kabdenovitch Iskakov**, Director of the Civil Defense Department of the Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan and **Ms Hanaa Singer**, UNICEF Representative in Kazakhstan. The conference was facilitated by Ms Elena Sialchonak, UNICEF Deputy-Representative in Kazakhstan and by Mr. Sergej Anagnosti, UNICEF Technical Advisor, CEE/CIS RO, who compiled this report.

A complete list of participants, including names and functions, can be found in the **annex**.

## **Objectives and Structure**

Summarized objectives of the Regional Seminar were to:

- Familiarize with the key concepts of disaster risk reduction and education
- Learn about the Hyogo Framework of Action, its five priorities and the National Platforms
- Be introduced to the global ISDR system and its structure, role, membership and management
- Appreciate the significance and role of education (formal and non-formal) in reducing disaster risks posed to children
- Share information, experiences and good practices on the integration of DRR into educational policies and programmes.
- Contribute to the intra-regional cooperation and collaboration between the different governments in Central Asia

The two-day Regional Seminar was divided in three segments. The **first segment**, “Introduction to Hyogo Framework for action and Disaster Risk Reduction in Education”, focused on ISDR system, Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), National Platforms, DRR in Education, UNICEF’s global vision in DRR and UNICEF’s DIPECHO V “Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction amongst vulnerable communities in Central Asia” Project. The second segment, organized on the second day of the conference as a round table debate on “DRR in school programmes and curricula”, was facilitated by the experts from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and concentrated on current status and challenges existing in DRR in education in Central Asia. The third segment, “Integration of DRR in school programs and policies”, provided an opportunity to Government representatives from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to present the audience with national experiences, plans and activities. Detailed agenda is available in the **annex**.

## **Key discussion points**

The three working themes were preceded by the opening remarks. All speakers pointed out the risks posed by natural hazards to families, communities and nations in the whole of Central Asia region. Beyond human health and life, disasters are seriously threatening the development pace, fight against poverty as well as achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The education has been recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development and prosperity. In that view, the focus on children and the importance of practical implementation of DRR activities has been emphasized.



The concept of disaster risk reduction essentially implies a shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. And for UNICEF and UNISDR, as well as for the Government counterparts, this means in addition to preparing to respond to future disasters, being proactive in advocating for and implementing measures that will help reduce the disastrous consequences of natural hazards on women and children. All speakers agreed that the best DRR investment that a government can make is in children, who represent the future of their countries. Children are the future policy and decision makers; they could and should serve as a conduit for DRR education, reaching their families and communities. Equipping children with relevant knowledge and skills will build a foundation for a better and safer world. In that respect, the opportunity to build upon success already accomplished in the region and importance to expose and influence children as future leaders to the “culture of prevention” has been highlighted as a mutual objective in order to make the whole region more resilient to disasters.

These opening remarks set the tone for the whole Regional Seminar, as the rest of the conference presentations and discussions focused on ideas, suggestions and recommendations to better comprehend requirements and obligations presented in the Hyogo Framework for Action, and relevance and importance of DRR to development and to education. National experiences, programmes and plans were shared, with an aim to advocate for and facilitate implementation of DRR efforts in the region. All presentations are available upon request.

**Key points**, from the conference are summarized as follows.

- At the global level, the frequency and impact of disasters have increased drastically: by 800% in the past 40 years; 82% of disaster mortality between 1975-2005 occurred in 20 large disasters with over 10,000 deaths each, mainly in developing countries; and 38.5% disaster economic loss in 21 large disasters with over US \$10 billion losses each, mainly in developed countries.
- Central Asian countries continue to be prone to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, mudflows, debris-flows, landslides, rock-falls, avalanches, droughts, storms (heavy precipitation, winds), deforestation, land erosion, desertification, pest infestations/plagues; man-made/technological events, for example, those related to water reservoir management, industry, wastes, etc. and communicable diseases such as HIV-AIDS on transit corridors, avian-influenza, etc.
- Some of the factors contributing to the increased exposure to natural disaster risk in Central Asia include: pressure on land i.e. people settling in disaster prone areas; industrial development and industrial waste; population growth, urban development; climate change leading to the increased severity and frequency of storms, glacial melt, floods, droughts and heat-waves; and the transition to capitalism which in many countries have led to the relaxation in the application of building codes and land use plans.
- States, Governments, population, private sector, potential investors and all social groups need to be recognized as DRR stakeholders. In Central Asia, these include Ministries/Committee of Emergency Situations, Ministries of Education (Departments



of Education), Ministries of Economy (planning of national budget), Ministries of Finance (budget management), Academic institutions (Universities and Schools), UN Agencies, International organizations, NGO's, mass-media, civil society and communities. All sectors have an important role to play in order to make communities and countries disaster resilient.

- Key national DRR coordination mechanisms in Central Asia include: National Platform in Kazakhstan, Draft National Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan in Tajikistan, National Reports on the implementation of HFA submitted by Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, and National UN ISDR focal points assigned to represent Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Various approaches and methods to integrate DRR in primary school education were discussed. Some of these are: inclusion of DRR and safety concepts in all or most of the school subjects (mother-tongue, mathematics, arts classes, nature studies, physical trainings); utilization of modern methodological guides, visual and technical equipment, and video presentations (CD, DVD); use of movies and films, mass media materials; adventure and science-fiction literature that will raise the interest of children; as well as organization of study tours to observe the natural phenomena, presenting the lectures on scientific analysis of that phenomena.
- Kazakhstan experience: a system exists for the training of management staff, civil defense and emergency formations as well as population on actions during emergency. This has been defined by the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “About Natural and Anthropogenic Emergencies” of July 5, 1996. The Article 11 empowers the Central Executive Emergency Authority of the Republic of Kazakhstan to organize researches, knowledge advocacy, training of population and experts in the area of emergency. In addition, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “About Civil Defense” of May 7, 1997 and, specifically, the Article 19 empowers the Central Executive Emergency Authority of the Republic of Kazakhstan to arrange civil defense training for civil defense military brigades staff, heads of organizations and civil defense formations and population and to develop corresponding training programmes. Students, schoolchildren, preschool children, professors and teachers undergo seismic drills in seismic regions four times per year, mudflow drills in mudflow-prone regions once per year, and accident drills on a quarterly basis.
- Tajikistan experience: integration of DRR in formal primary education was initiated with the establishment of official Curriculum Revision Working Group (CRWG) by the Decree of the Minister of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense. The CRWG objectives were to analyze, adjust and enhance the existing school programme and curriculum to develop new training programmes, which integrates DRR concepts and takes into consideration the changing conditions, disasters, accidents and catastrophes in the country. CRWG was, and still is tasked to develop, organize, conduct and monitor DRR, emergency situations and civil defense related trainings in the educational institutions in Tajikistan. One of the key objectives of the curriculum revision was to make children knowledgeable and thus self-confident and well-prepared to face disasters and emergency situations. A two-pronged approach was adopted to integrate



DRR into primary education: informal education (outdoor exercises, drill, workshops and seminars) and formal education (curricula, learning standards and school programmes). In total, 6 hours were introduced into the second grade curriculum in the primary school. Key challenges remain the modest number of teaching/training hours, lack of qualified teaching staff, lack of relevant training materials, tools and visual aids, insufficient introduction of scientific and technical issues into curriculum as well as lack of funding.

- Uzbekistan experience: introduction of DRR in education has been addressed through the trainings implemented in preschools, primary and specialized secondary schools, professional and higher educational institutions, in medical universities and colleges, in ministries, agencies and other governmental organizations and through trainings of unemployed population. Within these activities, Basics of Social Safety (BSS) Program has been developed for preschools and primary schools and integrated into current curriculum, subjects and lessons. For the annual “Day of Civil Defense in the school”, posters for learning and obtaining skills on protection against different emergencies were developed in cooperation with ICD, paying special attention to the age of children. In addition, Student’s Safety Passport and Student’s Personal Safety booklet were developed for children and their parents containing information on appropriate behavior during all kind of emergencies. As a result, teachers and students obtained knowledge and skills on disaster prevention; teaching specialists and trainers received appropriate training; schools and preschools received modern teaching aids, training films and multi-media books and programmes; school directors, and teachers and staff of preschool institutions received knowledge on disaster prevention.
- Commitment has been reached to assist teachers, children and their families to make schools and communities a safer place to live; all participants believe that schools need to be safe, need to have their preparedness plans and, through the school curricula, children have a crucial role to play to protect themselves and others around them

### **Recommendations and Follow-up Actions**

- Additional efforts should be further invested to contribute to the general cultural shift on disaster management, which includes disaster risk prevention and mitigation, in addition to emergency preparedness and response.
- Information and knowledge about the commitments of HFA and ISDR system within in three respective countries of the region should be disseminated at the national and sub-national levels.
- Activities to advocate for the inclusion of DRR and education into the existing national coordination mechanisms and plans will need to be strengthened and intensified.
- Steps to improve intra-regional cooperation and coordination in DRR and education will be set in motion. Regional cooperation and collaboration with an aim to support a mutual approach to the issue of DRR in education will be enhanced.



- DRR stakeholders in Central Asia are encouraged to participate in the UNICEF-UNISDR Regional Knowledge Management Conference, which will take place in November 2009. The conference will provide an opportunity to review progress in DRR and education; share good practices and lesson learnt; as well as map out the way forward.

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