

# Scaling up DRR in Humanitarian Action Pakistan<sup>1</sup> Snapshot 2021

This Snapshot has been prepared by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), in collaboration with OCHA, as part of pilot testing of the Checklist on Scaling up DRR in Humanitarian Action, in October 2020 – February 2021.

## 1. Situational Analysis

Pakistan is facing a multiplicity of humanitarian situations. In addition to the presence of Afghan refugees and other persons of concern in the country (about 1.4 million of whom will be included in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)), the country is currently still dealing with the aftermath of a large flood (as of late September, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicated over 1.8 million people affected, and Government initially declared 2.4 million people affected). In addition to recurring floods during the monsoon season, it also regularly faces drought, heatwaves, severe winter weather and locust plagues. While the country has not been part of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) process for the past 5 years, due to the compound effect of these disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Emergency Directors Group decided to include Pakistan for 2021. A Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and several sector groups are in place for the humanitarian response, but clusters were de-activated one year ago. For the formulation and implementation of the HRP, the HCT has established a number of ad-hoc thematic groups, among others on Integrating DRR and anticipatory action (co-facilitated by UNDRR) and on strengthening coordination with the National and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA/PDMAs).

## 2. Progress & Gaps Review in Scaling up DRR in Humanitarian Action in Pakistan

### a. Progress/opportunities

- Strong support from the UN senior leadership in Pakistan for the integration of DRR into the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)/HRP and linkages to other development plans for the country.
- Strong capacity of in-country actors (UN, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the NDMA) on DRR, including involvement in detailed multi-hazard risk and vulnerability assessment exercises.
- Multiple hazards considered in the selection of priority geographic areas for identification of People in Need (PiN) and the overall analysis to date.
- The Humanitarian Country Team has decided to establish a standing working group on integrating DRR and anticipatory action into the HNO/HRP. UNDRR and OCHA have facilitated the participation of the START Network and NDMA in the group to ensure linkages with activities of NGOs and the government, in particular for but not limited to Anticipatory Action. The working group is expected to improve management, analysis and application of climate and disaster risk information by humanitarian and development partners; advocate for and support strengthening and scaling up of anticipatory action; and supporting government and local partners and stakeholders in strengthening national and local capacities to reinforce local climate and disaster risk reduction action.
- Anticipatory Action has been included in the HNO/HRP. Concretely it is expected to contribute to the objectives of saving lives by strengthening coordinated response

to disasters at local, provincial and national levels while reducing the impact of recurring disasters through disaster risk management and use of early or anticipatory responses. The expansion of the use of early warning systems, anticipatory action in response to seasonal disasters and more operationalized contingency plans prepared with Government partners is proposed.

- Strengthening and scaling anticipatory action has been considered as related to the improvement of risk analysis allowing the identification of triggers for the implementation of anticipatory action which are proposed to be agreed and adopted by the government building on the START Network as the preliminary point for identifying financing mechanism to support early action.

### b. Gaps/barriers

- Short timeframe for HNO/HRP preparation (2 months for Pakistan) and active flood response operations at the time of planning the humanitarian response meant limited ability for partners (sector lead agencies) to have longer dedicated discussions on integrating disaster risk into the process.
- Lack of established clusters meant that staff from agencies with ongoing response had to take on the additional responsibility of leading sectors/preparing the HNO and HRP while attending to ongoing responsibilities.
- Need for further specific, practical guidance on how to implement DRR recommendations and to identify and assess contribution of concrete risk mitigation actions to address the risks analyzed.
- Stretched humanitarian resources/budgets/limited funding makes it difficult to include additional financial needs for anticipated hazards into the HRP.

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## 3. Good Practices

- Engagement of national and provincial governments in the risk analysis and response planning.
- The inclusion of anticipatory action as a new area of work and collaboration between DRR and humanitarian actors.
- Specific reference to need to strengthen collaboration among development – humanitarian actors and enhancing coordination of a risk-informed humanitarian action with national disaster risk management systems and actions pave the way for more efficient interventions to mitigate risk factors and provide a more comprehensive response.

## 4. Specific recommendations on how DRR could be further scaled up in humanitarian action in Pakistan

- Institutionalize/continue the working group on DRR and anticipatory action in the HRP: if this group can continue beyond the formulation of the HRP, it would be a good forum to drive further integration. This could also serve as a forum for monitoring of the evolution of risk throughout the HPC and linking with other actors to provide sustainable interventions.
- Further in-country support on DRR in the HPC and other/ further humanitarian responses.
- Strengthening engagement with the National and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities in the context of scaling up DRR in humanitarian planning and programming.
- Regular discussions with donors on linking DRR and humanitarian action would help mobilize funds for better alignment and integration.
- Strengthening capacities to assess disaster impact and needs associated in a way that contributes to future risk analysis as well as supports concrete and comprehensive humanitarian response.
- Supporting development and implementation of screening tools for projects and activities under the HRP which can be used to assess which risks factors the intervention might be reducing or exacerbating.





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### AT A GLANCE: DRR & Risk in the Pakistan 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)

#### Is the HNO risk-informed?

The HNO clearly identifies climate and disaster risk as recurrent and compounded factors that aggravate humanitarian needs by increasing vulnerabilities, exposure and undermining coping capacities. The risk analysis in the HNO comprises a relevant analysis of climate and disaster risks and their expected impact on the humanitarian needs expected to be addressed by the response plan. It analyses as key drivers of needs in 2021 the COVID-19 situation; the economic forecasts and related impacts on household debt, negative coping strategies and related protection risks; food insecurity and malnutrition; recurrent and increasing disaster risk and compounding effects of multiple overlapping disasters events, driven by climate change and environmental degradation. A seasonal calendar and a projected evolution of needs with planning scenarios have been incorporated, covering a detail on the changes on the number of people in need and the severity of their humanitarian situation.

Despite the immense amount of data already available on natural hazards and vulnerability in Pakistan, there is still more work to be done to ensure that information is integrated in a systemic risk and hazard analysis, including socio-economic shocks and the role of remittances and other factors, into joint planning efforts for emergency preparedness and response. Better analysis of vulnerability and exposure can be used to improve models and forecasts for disaster impact and reduce the need for time-consuming assessments by providing a rapid snapshot of severity of impact of earthquakes, cyclones, drought and flooding.

#### HNO Quotes

- *“Risks and impacts are present nationwide in Pakistan particularly the persistent risk of cyclical natural disasters, compounding the impact on people who have already fallen into humanitarian need over the past year.”*
- *“A scenario-based analysis is included for all hazards identified as relevant for the Pakistan context to provide a basis for the most appropriate measure planning: risk-informed humanitarian responses; anticipatory action for recurrent and forecastable hazards; and proposals for enhanced contingency planning and preparedness for intensive risks (low-frequency/ high-impact) which are not easily forecast.*
- *“For planning purposes, this analysis will focus on average impacts of natural disasters from the last 10 years, extrapolate from current trends and look at a few high-impact, low-probability events that could massively reshape the response.”*

#### Is the HRP risk-informed?

Risk reduction is incorporated in the strategic objectives of the response plan. In particular, strategic objective 2 includes reference to enhancing resilience of vulnerable people while the first part of strategic objective 3 makes explicit references to strengthening coordinated response, promoting anticipatory action and reducing recurrent disaster risks. References are also made to strengthening linkages between humanitarian and development actions.

While climate and disaster risk is clearly identified as a driver of humanitarian crisis not all sector response plans clearly identify how the proposed activities might contribute to mitigate risks. Rehabilitation and recovery of damaged infrastructures is considered but not always refers to build-back-better or to integration of risk reduction into the reconstruction actions.

#### HRP quotes

- *“The increasing severity and scale of natural disasters in Pakistan, driven by climate change, increased urbanization and environmental degradation, cannot be addressed through humanitarian action alone.”*
- *“A key priority will be closer coordination with the NDMA and PDMA, as well as the Asian Development and World Banks and other development actors on targeting and linking programs to reduce disaster risk in the most vulnerable areas to humanitarian interventions. To facilitate this, a standing Working Group on Anticipatory Action and Disaster Risk Management will be established under the HCT.”*
- *“The HCT and humanitarian partners will continue to work with technical partners as well as coordinate efforts to support capacity development around risk analysis and information management in the NDMA, PDMA and other relevant Government counterparts.”*

#### Are DRR stakeholders engaged in humanitarian coordination arrangements?

Yes in the sense that many of the key humanitarian organisations are also engaged in major DRR activities (for example WFP in the Multi Hazard Vulnerability and Risk Assessment mapping, UNICEF, FAO, etc.). The group on DRR & Anticipatory Action in the HRP includes the National Disaster Management Authority and the START Network as well.