

Flood Disaster Management Harmonizing with Socio-cultural Environment

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Frequency and severity of natural disasters like floods and droughts are increasing worldwide. These pose a serious threat to the development of many countries and regions. Losses are increasing worldwide as a result of weather related disasters and this increase is partly due to economic growth and the increasing world population that inhabits in vulnerable areas, such as flood plains and coastal zones. The number of water-related disasters is very likely to increase regardless of any change in the number and severity of extreme weather events.

Disaster management is still dominated by ex-post measures rather than pro-active coping strategies towards risk reduction. Coordination and networking between the various sectors and stakeholders – governments, the financial services sectors, non-governmental organizations, development agencies, science and engineering, and vulnerable communities – is largely lacking. Political support for disaster risk reduction has to be established from the apex of political power but is only realistic if the perceptions of risks and the action proposed accord with the cultural beliefs and habits of the society.

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in its Living with Risk report sets out contexts and policy framework of disaster risk reduction within the theme of sustainable development. It has been pointed out that the emergence of a disaster reduction culture is conditioned by the following contexts and processes: (i) political context, (ii) sustainable development in its three related contexts: socio-cultural, economic and environmental, and (iii) regional considerations linking disaster reduction and sustainable development. With an overview of the natural disaster from floods in regional context, the presentation will elaborate on the coping strategies towards risk reduction adopted in selected countries in line with the contexts and framework set out by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.