

Roundtable

Roundtable on Harnessing Synergies Between Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction: Pertinent Issues, Success Cases and Way Forward

13:00 – 14:30 24 July 2014

There has been a growing consensus among scholars and practitioners on the synergies between disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA). IGES has embarked upon a scoping research on how best to operationalise this synergy in actual practices on the ground. To feed into the IGES research, participants discussed the current conceptual understanding on synergies and the differences between CCA and DRR; evaluated the current experiences of operationalizing these synergies between DRR and CCA in actual implementation; discussed existing bottlenecks and the way forward for harnessing these synergies, and identified crucial policy relevant research questions to be addressed in this field.

Presentation on Harnessing Synergies Between Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction: Pertinent Issues, Success Cases and Way Forward

Prabhakar SVRK, Task Manager, Adaptation made an overview presentation on the synergies between climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). He emphasised that both the CCA and DRR communities have the same aim of reducing vulnerabilities and risks and increasing the resilience but they achieve these objectives through different interventions and keeping different time scales in view. To this extent, the text of Hyogo Framework of Action and the several negotiation texts under UNFCCC differ in the way they recognise and interpret disaster risks emanating from climate variability and change. He indicated that most CCA projects consider traditional DRR measures as CCA interventions while mainstreaming CCA into DRR entails that the future risks and vulnerabilities are taken into consideration while designing the current DRR interventions. The current project level experiences suggest that the DRR elements are often comprised of infrastructure interventions and related to vulnerability assessments and disaster management plans while climate change adaptation interventions are often related to livelihoods and strengthening related social and economic elements. Concepts such as redundancy or precautionary actions may need to be viewed with more caution since that they entail higher costs that may not appeal to most policymakers. Often, there is limited interaction between CCA and DRR communities leading to lack of mutual understanding on the issues concerned to each other.

Roundtable Discussion

The roundtable discussion focused on the following four important questions: a. what are the synergies between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, b. to what extent these synergies are being captured in the ongoing interventions in CCA and DRR, c. what these synergies mean for DRR and CCA planning and processes and what indicators will help capture these synergies; and d) what bottlenecks are limiting the full realisation of these synergies and how they can be overcome.

Key messages (conclusion or a way forward):

- a) The roundtable discussion clearly indicated that there are several synergies between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and that the recognition of these synergies requires that both communities come together and work closely. Several interventions such as early warning and weather and climate forecasts, risk and vulnerability assessments, financing, institutional coordination and education can lead to both climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction synergies.
- b) There is a need to recognise that there is one climate, one damage and one victim and any hair splitting in terms of near term changes and long term changes would also lead to division of stakeholders on these lines, leading to undue competition and thinning of resources that could have been invested in actions that will have climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction synergies.
- c) Emerging lessons indicate that the local governments often do not understand climate change adaptation, even if they have perfected the art of disaster risk reduction in most parts of Asia. Hence, translating CCA language in a way that is understandable to DRR community could lead to holistic risk reduction strategies.