

Report from the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico, 22nd to 26th of May 2017

Content

The report first provides an introduction to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Global Platform-GPDRR), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the 2017 Global Platform in Cancun, including the key expected outcomes during the 2017 Global Platform, as stated by UNISDR (Source: The Global Platform invitation and program).

The report then clarifies the purpose of SMC's participation at the Global Platform including SMC's specific questions/issues to follow up during the conference. This is followed by a presentation of the Global Platform and program and notes from important conference events and informal meetings.

The report then provides a summary of SMC's outcome of the Global Platform and provides final comments and recommendations to SMC, its Member Organisations and their implementing Partner Organisations.

The report does not include any summary regarding the overall outcome of GPDRR. This is found on the UNISDR website, <http://www.unisdr.org/>

The report is mainly compiled for SMC and its Member Organisations, especially those active in DRR and Resilience focused operations, but also for the members of the Swedish Network for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (Svenska Nätverket för Katastrofriskreducering och Resiliens - SNKR).

Introduction

The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Global Platform)

The biennial Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Global Platform), as recognized by the UN General Assembly, is the main forum at the global level for strategic advice, coordination, partnership development and the review of progress in the implementation of international instruments on disaster risk reduction. It was established in 2006 and is now the world's foremost gathering of stakeholders committed to reducing disaster risk and building the resilience of communities and nations.

The Global Platform is characterized by a format that facilitates dialogue and exchanges among all stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental. It features a high-level dialogue which brings together senior government officials, including heads of state and government, ministers, mayors and parliamentarians as well as leaders from the private sector, science and civil society.

The Global Platform has, until now been held in Geneva in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013. The 2015 edition did not take place, given that that year saw the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which included a significant multi-stakeholder dimension.

Moreover, the Global Platform is expected to provide contributions from a disaster risk reduction perspective to the deliberations of UN governance bodies and mechanisms, such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and especially for the follow-up processes to UN conferences and summits, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) was the coordinating body of the 2017 Global Platform in Cancun. UNISDR, which was established in 1999, is part of the United Nations Secretariat and its

functions span the social, economic, environmental as well as humanitarian fields. UNISDR supports the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sendai Framework. The Sendai Framework is a 15-year voluntary, non-binding agreement that maps out a broad approach to disaster risk reduction, succeeding the 2005-2015 Hyogo Framework for Action.

UNISDR's vision is anchored on the four priorities for action set out in the Sendai Framework:

- understanding disaster risk,
- strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk,
- investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and
- enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The 2017 Global Platform in Cancun

The 2017 Global Platform in Cancun, Mexico on 22-26 May, marked the first opportunity for the international community to review global progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was adopted in Japan in 2015. About 5,000 participants attended the conference, including policy makers, disaster risk managers and civil society (26% according to GNDR). The conference was held at Moon Palace, an international conference centre just south of Cancun.

GNDR at the Global Platform

The Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) <http://www.gndr.org> - the largest international network of organisations committed to working together to improve the lives of people affected by disasters world-wide - and the Climate Action Network (CAN) <http://climatenetwork.org/about/about-can> had been designated by UNISDR as the focal points for NGOs. GNDR was providing information to help NGOs navigate the Global Platform in the run up to and during the conference.

GNDR is working globally with a range of networks to coordinate its messages and put together a joint advocacy initiative calling for more systematic collaboration between governments and civil society in the

design of DRR strategies. GNDR had a booth at the marketplace which was planned to showcase the work being undertaken by its members around the globe.

GNDR was sharing the visual and interactive *Frontline* data and stories of local risk and resilience at a special pre-event on the 22nd May, as well as launching its plans to initiate a new *Views from the Frontline 2017*.

Key expected outcomes during the 2017 Global Platform, as stated by UNISDR:

- A stronger and more sustainable movement to reduce disaster risk worldwide that leads to increased responsibility for strengthening resilience to disasters.
- A dynamic and trend-setting forum for decision makers, partners, experts and practitioners to announce initiatives, launch products, share information, promote campaigns, and provide evidence around disaster risk reduction.
- Guidance and new alliances for the development and use of tools and methodologies aimed at understanding and applying the economics and investment of disaster risk reduction.
- A forum to discuss progress under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Events that follow up and advance the agenda of the 2013 Global Platform.
- Priorities and directions reflected in the outcome document: The Chair's Summary.

The Purpose of SMC's participation

The purpose of SMC's participation at the Global Platform in Mexico was to get a better understanding of the international agenda and cooperation for improved DRR, to network and to advocate for the important role of the civil society in DRR and Resilience.

As Sida approved the SMC Resilience pot within the CIVSAM budget for 2017-2021, which has received attention by some other Swedish frame organisations and which can be seen as a test balloon from Sida, it is

important for SCM to raise the profile in DRR and resilience and actively be a part of the global agenda and networks.

SMC is one of the founding organisations of the Swedish Network for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (Svenska Nätverket för Katastrofriskreducering och Resiliens - SNKR) which was formed in May 2015. The most active organisations today are Church of Sweden (chair), Diakonia, Plan International Sweden, SMC and Action Aid. Tamas Marki from Church of Sweden and Olivia Forsberg from Plan International Sweden did also participate in the Global Platform. The Global Platform was thus also an opportunity for the network to reflect together on the future activities of the network.

SMC is a member of GNDR since 5-6 years back but has not had any active dialogue or cooperation, except for GNDR support with capacity building at the humanitarian workshop which SMC organised in Burkina Faso in April 2015. The value of the membership has so far not been properly assessed but is included in the SMC Workplan for 2017 (Undersöka förutsättningar för och värdet av ett närmare samarbete med GNDR och/eller andra relevanta nätverk).

Before the GPDRR, SNKR received a Swedish participation list from the Swedish MFA (through Plan International Sweden) regarding the participants from MFA (three repr.), Sida (one repr.), MSB (five repr.), and SMHI (one repr.) and we had announced in advance that we wanted to meet with MFA.

SMC's specific questions/issues during the GPDRR

The following specific questions/issues were discussed and followed up during the conference:

- How to develop a more systematic collaboration between governments and civil society in the design of DRR strategies and plans? (This is relevant for the DRR/Resilience projects which SMC currently is processing).
- Would it be possible for the Swedish frame organisations to get a share of the Swedish DRR/Resilience funding which today goes mainly to UNISDR and partly to MSB for bilateral cooperation?

- What can SMC and its members learn from other NGO's regarding improved DRR/Resilience?
- What are the specific advantages of FBO's in DRR/Resilience?
- Are there any benefits for SMC in a closer linkage and collaboration with GNDR?

The program and notes from important meetings

The structure of the conference program

Two first days of the conference are considered as preparatory days and the last three days constitutes the main conference days. I had examined the very comprehensive program with plenary sessions, seminars, workshops, site events etc. and selected the most important events in relation to the specific SMC questions/issues.

During 22 - 23 May I attended the GNDR seminar *Views from the Frontline*. The event shared findings and practical lessons from GNDR's Frontline programme which over the last 2 years has been collecting data on local risk and resilience priorities. I further attended ACT Alliance seminar - *Locally-led Disaster Risk Reduction by Faith-Based Organisations – Implementing the Sendai Framework*, and also GNDR preparatory meeting for all NGOs in Cancun. In addition, I attended a seminar regarding national DRR platforms and presentation of some specific countries.

On Wednesday 24, the official open ceremony was held in the presence of the President of Mexico, H.E. Enrique Peña Nieto. He declared that protection of the population from natural disasters is one of the most important humanitarian responsibilities. This is a task in which we should all participate and where we can all contribute. We should work together, society and government, to improve the protection of our communities.

The UNISDR leader Mr. Robert Glasser (Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction) clarified that we now have to take the step from commitment to action. He stated that there are two major questions for governments when it comes to disaster risk management. Are we reducing the numbers of people affected

by disasters? And are we reducing the economic losses which siphon off billions each year from taxpayers' money as disasters threaten development gains?

During the main conference days 24-26 May I participated in some plenary sessions as well as in a number of working sessions, seminars and side events etc. according to the relevance of the events in relation to the specific SMC questions to follow up.

Linking to Act Alliance and GNDR

I stayed at the same hotel (Real Inn) as the ACT Alliance delegation of 8 people and participated in the morning briefing and debriefing with GNDR which gathered around 20 people. The ACT Alliance delegation constituted a large part of gatherings. I also participated at the GNDR 10 year anniversary on Thursday evening.

This offered excellent opportunities to get to know the key people within ACT Alliance Community of Practice for DRR and key staff at the GNDR office in London as well as with the GNDR Regional Advisors (network members, not employed) and also some Country Focal Points (also network members). GNDR discussed and developed an official statement which was presented to the board of the Global Platform.

ACT Alliance presented an Interfaith FBO statement.

Meeting with Swedish MFA (UD), MSB and Sida

Swedish MFA

On Wednesday SNKR met with the delegation of MFA; Ambassador Andreas von Beckerath, who is currently the head of the Department for Humanitarian Aid and Conflict Prevention, and with the Department Secretary Andrea Ivarsson.

Andreas informed us about the Swedish Priorities and key messages at the conference which were Climate and Security, Women Participation including Resolution 1325, and Children and armed conflicts. SNKR confirmed the relevance of those priorities. SNKR was encouraged to provide MFA with concrete examples of how climate change has led to conflicts.

MFA was positive to further closer discussions with civil society organizations and SNKR.

Based on the fact that Sweden is the largest individual donor country of UNISDR, and that the Sendai Framework emphasise the importance of a people centred approach with inclusion of the local communities and NGO's, SNKR stated that it would be relevant to also channel some funding for the civil society.

MSB

On Thursday we met with Petronella Norell, Strategic Adviser, Management support, Resilience Development and Analysis Department, and Johan Köhler, Programme Manager, DRR and Early Recovery, Operations Section, Operations Department, Petronella is responsible for the development and management of the Swedish National Platform. Johan is the Disaster risk reduction and early recovery advisor in the operational department, which focus is international operations and bilateral cooperation.

SNKR informed that the network has two interests in relation to MSB, that is to understand how the Swedish Platform is working in Sweden as a reference to the development of national platforms in the partner countries of our member organisations, and also to identify any cooperation possibilities in countries in which MSB is working together with for National disaster management authorities. SNKR suggested a meeting at MSB for further dialogue. Petronella also asked for contacts with the Swedish civil society but was informed that it's out of SNKR's mandate.

Sida

On Friday the SNKR finally met with Johan Schaar who was the head of Sida's humanitarian Unit 2000 – 2005 and has been working at the consulate in Jerusalem the last three years. Johan is currently Senior Policy Advisor for Environment and Climate in the department for international organisations and thematic support. He has a special agreement to assist Sida to present a report regarding Environment and Security. This will be an internal report which will be included in Sida's Annual report.

Due to many years in Sida, Johan has very good insights in the work of the organisation. He informed us that there are internal challenges due to lack of institutional memory and lack of overview. We encouraged Johan to bring up with Sida the relevance of directing some of the DRR funding to the civil society, for example GNDR, which is in need of core funding for its regional advisory groups.

Johan also advised the SNKR to keep advocating for DRR to Sida staff and support in building their capacities in DRR and resilience as the institutional memory at Sida is low when it comes to DRR due to major staff rotations and re-organizations.

Conclusion

It was fruitful to meet with the different parts of the Swedish Delegations and SNKR will follow up the meetings and send the SNKR Terms of Reference as well as the GNDR and ACT Alliance statements.

Other important meetings for the future

Meeting with RAED in MENA and UNDP in Jordan

On Wednesday I attended a side event headed by the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), the major development NGO network in the Arab world and officially recognised dialogue partner to some Arab regional institutions. The subject was Building resilience in the Arab community. The meeting was headed by the President of RAED Dr. Emad Adly with the title General Coordinator, based in based in Kairo. Dr Adly is also a GNDR board member and the Arab Region Advisory of GNDR.

As SMC will organise a Humanitarian training in MENA in November 2017 it is relevant to link up with RAED which also organises various trainings in order to access cooperation possibilities. SMC should assess the relevance for promoting linkages between the partners of SMC's member organisations in the region and RAED and their members.

At the seminar I also met with Mr Zubair Murshed who is working for UNDP in Jordan. He provided a very good overall context analysis of MENA and clarified that the Arab countries generally are behind in DRR.

The reason is that the region has not been affected by major natural disaster. It is, however, a fact that the region is affected by many natural disasters such as floods which causes displacements and human suffering, besides the serious conflict situations in many countries. The Strategic Advisor Michelle Yonetani from Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), which is supported by NRC and based in Geneva, keeps record of displacements and estimates that there currently are 400 000 people displaced in the MENA region as a result of natural disasters only.

All regions are currently developing Regional DRR platforms but Mr Murshed from UNDP informed that MENA is far behind all other regions in this regard and have to speed up its work.

Meeting with the Chairman of the Kenyan DRR Platform

I had a spontaneous meeting with Col Charles O. Owino, Director of the Kenyan National Disaster Operation Centre (NDOC), at the Office of the President. He also functions as the Chairman of the Kenya DRR Platform. He explained that each of the 47 counties in Kenya are forming local development plans related to the Kenya Vision 2030 and the SDG which also includes DRR components. Plans are developed also on sub-county level and further down on community level.

I explained that SMC will organise a Resilience Workshop in Nairobi in March 2018 and Mr Owino was ready to attend a seminar with focus on the Kenyan platform. This will constitute an excellent opportunity for the partners in Kenya to interact directly with a key duty bearer in DRR.

In addition, I met with GNDR's Focal Point in Kenya, Mr Sheik Mohammed who also would be very relevant to invite for the workshop. The SMC member organisations and their Kenyan partners, who plan to implementing Resilience projects, should be encouraged to contact Mr Sheik Mohammed as soon as possible for learning, coordination and advocacy.

SMC's outcome of the Global Platform

Below I describe the outcome of the Global Platform for SMC in relation to the pre-specified questions:

- How to develop a more systematic collaboration between governments and civil society in the design of DRR strategies and plans? (This is relevant for the DRR/Resilience projects which SMC currently is processing).
- Would it be possible for the Swedish frame organisations to get a part of the Swedish DRR/Resilience funding which today goes mainly to UNISDR and partly to MSB for bilateral cooperation?
- What can SMC and its members learn from other NGO's regarding improved DRR/Resilience?
- What are the specific advantages of FBO's in DRR/Resilience?
- Is there any benefit for SMC in a closer linkage and collaboration with GNDR?

How to develop a more systematic collaboration between governments and civil society/local communities in the design of DRR strategies and plans?

Background

The Sendai Framework claims to be "People centred" and does repeatedly states the importance of involvement of local communities for DRR and resilience. DRR/resilience projects bring together development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and with a RBA perspective, the organisation can approach national and local platforms for advocacy as well as for cooperation and implementation of specific projects.

Conclusions at the conference

The importance of having a local community approach and a multi-stakeholder approach in developing DRR strategies and plans was repeatedly emphasised. So was the importance of a coherent approach for

the implementation of Agenda 2030, the Paris agreement and the Sendai Framework.

Recommendations to SMC' Member Organisations (MO) and their Partner Organisations (PO)

All MO and PO who are implementing DRR/resilience projects are encouraged to be members of GNDR, see <http://www.gndr.org>, and assess the benefits for networking and learning.

All PO implementing SMC funded resilience operations are strongly recommended to contact the GNDR Focal Points, alternatively the GNDR Regional Advisor in case no GNDR Focal Point exists, and take active part in the national networks of GNDR members for networking, learning, cooperation and advocacy, and thus link the local perspective and local projects to the national level.

Would it be possible for Swedish frame organisations to get a part of the Swedish DRR funding?

Background

Sweden is the largest individual donor of UNISDR. Until recently the funding has come from Sida's humanitarian budget but now the major part comes from the development budget, indicating that DRR is considered as a development issue.

Besides UNISDR, a part of the DRR funding also goes to MSB for bilateral cooperation in improved DRR. A relevant question is if it wouldn't be relevant for Sida to also channel some DRR funding through the Swedish frame organisation in line with the importance of DRR and resilience building on local level with local actors and the civil society?

Conclusions at the conference

Sida was the second institutional donor, after the Irish Government, to step in and provide important financial support after the birth of the GNDR network in 2007. It was Sida's humanitarian department who realized the advantage of a global NGO network to promote DRR. At a personal meeting, the GNDR director Marcus Oxley mentioned the name

of Johan Schaar, Patric Kratt and Per Byman, and how supportive they were, but that GNDR unfortunately have lost the contact with Sida due to change of staff at Sida.

From Sida's perspective it would most probably be more relevant and strategic to support GNDR, rather than Swedish NGO's for strengthening the linkages between local communities and NGO's, and the national DRR platforms. Sida is in general also rather supportive of other international NGO networks such as CHS Alliance and ALNAP.

Johan Schaar, the only Sida representative at GPDRR mentioned, however, that there is probably no current staff at Sida who knows of GNDR. He promised, however, to bring up the possibilities of resuming the financial support to GNDR, when reporting back at Sida.

Recommendations to SMC (SNKR)

SMC should, within the framework of SNKR, further discuss with GNDR their specific financial needs (support to the GNDR Regional Advisors was briefly mentioned by Markus Oxley as a specific need), and based on that advocate for some DRR funding to GNDR in line with its strategy for 2016-2020, and in line with the Sendai Agreement which emphasis a People Centred approach.

What can SMC and its members learn from other NGO's regarding improved DRR/Resilience?

Background

The Agenda 2030, the Paris climate agreement and the Sendai Framework are all targeting sustainable development. There are clear linkages between disasters, poverty and lack of development, and the Sendai Framework can be considered as a part of Agenda 2030.

Conclusions at the conference

A high profile panellist made clear that development too long has been seen as a linear process but that the reality is much more complex with constant challenges including disasters. Thus risk analysis is today a key in development including mitigation of new risks. Improved Risk analysis

can be said to be the starting point and essence improved resilience on local as well as national and regional levels. This brings the development and the humanitarian agendas together. The element of risk is the bridge.

The UNISDR leader Robert Glacier Mr. Robert Glasser, the leader of UNISDR (Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction) stated that we have to stop working in silos and truly promote multi stakeholder cooperation and coherence between the global agreements for sustainable development.

Recommendations to SMC, MO and PO

SMC, the MOs and their POs all need to relate to the three global commitments with a RBA approach and work for a coherent approach. It would be relevant to reflect on how our future outcome reporting should relate to the goals and indicators of the global commitments.

We all have to fully recognise and understand the element of risk. This bridges development and humanitarian agendas and improved risk analysis and mitigation on different levels will need to influence our strategies and our operations.

What are the specific advantages of FBO's in DRR/Resilience?

Background

SMC has since many years advocated for the important role of FBO's in Development and it's a part of SMC's humanitarian strategy for 2017-2021 to further elaborate on the role of FBO in humanitarian assistance.

Conclusions from the conference

ACT Alliance organised the pre-event *Best Practice of Local led DRR by Faith based organisations*, which include presentations of a Lutheran Church in Indonesia, the Japanese Buddhist organisation Songa Gokkai and the Mexican Jewish organisation CADERA. The two last organisations mainly presented their humanitarian operations and unfortunately the presentations raised questions regarding their adherence to the Humanitarian Code of Conduct.

ACT Alliance had formulated a statement for the platform, focusing on the importance of FBO in DRR based on the fact that about 85% of the world population consider themselves as religions and are linked to local religions communities. It was not possible to further dig into to the question of role of FBO specifically in DRR/resilience.

Recommendations to SMC

When elaborating further on the role of FBO in development as well as in humanitarian aid, SMC is recommended to also include the issue of the role of FBO in DRR/resilience, and to identify if there might be any specific values of FBO in DRR.

Is there any benefit for SMC and its members in a closer linkage and collaboration with GNDR?

Background

As mentioned, SMC has not had an active relation with GNDR since SMC became a member 5-6 years ago. Any NGO who shares the values of GNDR can become a member of the network by registration on their website, and the organisation has today 850 members from 137 countries. There is no member fee.

Conclusions from the Global Platform

As GNDR, together with CAN, had been designated by UNISDR as the focal points for NGOs it's obvious that those networks are the most influential global networks in the DRR sector. During the GPDRR I came to know the key staff of GNDR in London and met also with five of their Regional Advisors and with two National Focus Points.

CAN is mainly focusing on Climate Change issues and thus of less relevance for SMC even though it would be relevant to assess a link with CAN.

Recommendations to SMC

As already mentioned above, SMC should promote a closer link between MO and SO and the GNDR Regional Advisors and National Focal Point.

Some final comments and recommendations

Comments

Measuring disaster losses was a key subject during the conference. 78 countries have now developed disaster loss databases. This is accompanied with a strong focus on developing the insurance systems and in Africa there are now 36 countries which have connected to an African insurance scheme.

UNISDR is now developing a database for measuring the Sendai Framework goals, including reduction of loss of lives. It's was considered to be a key issue to really be able to measure reduction in loss of lives.

Recommendations

GNDR has developed score cards regarding organisations success in approaching and influencing national DRR platforms, see www/gndr.org SMC Member Organisations (MO) and their Partner Organisations (PO) are encouraged to test those score cards as they also have the potential to be used for project monitoring and evaluation.

SMC is recommended to bring up within the SKNR the relevance of a closer connection and cooperation with GNDR, based on an analysis of their strategies. It might be relevant to invite GNDR to SNKR for exchange and in order to boost the advocacy efforts of SNKR.

SMC and its MO and PO should discuss the relevance of forming a delegation to participate at the next GPDRR which will be held in Geneva in 2019.

2017-08-21

Lennart Nolvall

Swedish Mission Council