FOREWORD

With mounting international concern at the rising frequency and severity of natural hazards and disasters, in part due to factors related to climate change, there is increased impetus in many countries to put in place policy, legal, technical, financial and institutional measures that will reduce the destructive effects on the lives and livelihoods of individuals and communities. These concerns were intensively debated during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan, 18-22 January 2005. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), adopted by the Conference, seeks the outcome of "The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries". In order to achieve the stated outcome by 2015, the HFA emphasises a shift from reactive emergency relief (which nonetheless remains important) to pro-active disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the pre-disaster stages by strengthening prevention, mitigation and preparedness. A related approach that is gaining widespread support is that of disaster risk management (DRM) which combines, through a management perspective, the concept of prevention, mitigation and preparedness with response.

The effective implementation of both DRR and DRM systems is contingent on sound institutional capacities by key actors at different levels of government, the private sector and civil society as well as effective coordination between these actors and levels. These challenges were given emphatic recognition by the FA's second strategic goal: "the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards".

More recently, in the context of increasing climate variability and climate change, there is increasing recognition for the benefits from closely linking Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation efforts at different scales. The workshop on "Climate Related Risks and Extreme Events" held in June 2007 in Cairo by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the context of the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change recognised this crucial link. It recommended, inter alia, to identify and promote institutional mechanisms and processes for better coordinated actions related to climate risk and impact management, including those related to extreme events (DRR).

FAO's field experiences with DRM, supported by normative studies, revealed that there are few practical tools available to guide the analysis of national, district and local institutional systems for DRM and to conceptualize and provide demand-responsive capacity-building thereafter. The lack of tools to understand institutional responses and coordination mechanisms is of particular concern. This Guide attempts to fill this gap by providing a set of tools that have been developed and tested in various FAO field projects for DRM.

The methods and tools proposed in this guide are generic, and can be adapted to different types of natural hazards, sectoral issues, geographical areas, country-specific conditions and institutional settings. However, in view of FAO's mandate and experience, some practical illustrations are given of the application of these tools to the agricultural sector in developing countries. In order to strengthen FAO's assistance to governments and other concerned organizations in undertaking diagnostic assessments of DRM institutional systems as a first step in a capacity-building process, we would welcome feedback on this Guide from readers and users with a view to improving future versions.

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ABSTRACT

The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Systems Analysis Guide provides a set of tools and methods to assess existing structures and capacities of national, district and local institutions with responsibilities for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in order to improve their effectiveness and the integration of DRM concerns into development planning, with particular reference to disaster-prone areas, vulnerable sectors and population groups. The strategic use of the Guide is expected to enhance understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing existing DRM institutional structures and their implications for on-going institutional change processes. It will also highlight the complex institutional linkages among various actors and sectors at different levels. Finally, it will help identify gaps within the existing DRM institutions and/or systems including sectoral line agencies that are often responsible for implementing the technical aspects of DRM (e.g. agriculture, water and health sectors).

The assessment and analysis process outlined in the Guide is thus a first step towards strengthening existing DRM systems. The major areas of application are:

- Strengthening institutional and technical capacities for DRM at national and/or decentralized levels;
- Integrating key aspects of DRM in emergency rehabilitation programmes;
- Designing and promoting Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM);
- Operationalizing the paradigm shift from reactive emergency relief to pro-active DRM; and
- Mainstreaming DRM into development and sectoral planning (e.g. agriculture).

The Guide primarily focuses on risks associated with natural hazards of hydro-meteorological (floods, tropical storms, droughts etc.,) origin. Users interested in the management of other types of hazard risk are encouraged to adapt the general concepts, tools and methods to their own situations.

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