

Disaster Risk Governance at the local level

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Prof Dilanthi Amaratunga of GDRC was the moderator of the high level Panel on "Disaster Risk Governance at the Local Level" held at the United Nations High Level Forum on "Implementing Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction at Local Level" held at the Historic Florence City Hall, Florence, Italy, from 16-17 June 2016.



Photo: Panel on "Disaster Risk Governance at the Local Level"



Photo: Prof Amaratunga opened the session with a short presentation on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework at the Local Level within the context of risk governance including some of the very complex and challenging issues of risk governance

Disaster Risk Governance refers to "the way in which public authorities, civil servants, media, private sector and civil society coordinate at the local, national and regional levels in order to manage and reduce disaster- and climate-related risks." Strengthening governance has been identified as essential to reduce disaster risk. There is also the emphasis for the need for strengthening disaster risk governance at the local level for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation. Addressing fundamental issues that underpin risk – including governance, within the context of DRR creates a global platform for addressing risk in a way that ushers it into the mainstream of daily political and civil life. Stakeholder participation, collaboration, flexibility, learning, accountability and transparency—are indicative of good governance, and are enablers of long-term DRR and adaptation.

The empowerment of local governments should be a key priority in order to encourage democratic decision-making that involves the citizens and all key stakeholders at the local level. A full understanding of disaster risk governance at the local level will need a thorough understanding of the role of the various actors, and how they operate and invest in governance needs to be seen as a new opportunity. In this context, this session will focus on the need and how to improve our understanding of risk governance at the local level, including accountability and transparency, stakeholder participation and public awareness, and encouraging action on stakeholder feedback.

GDRC's Prof. Richard was a panel member. Rest of the Panelists included:



Feedback
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Photo: Prof. Richard Haigh delivered a key note on DRR accountability as a component of governance

1. Helena Lindberg, Director General, Civil Protection, Sweden
2. Riyanti Djalante, Local Government of Kendari City, Indonesia
3. Ebru Gencer, Executive Director, Center for Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Resilience, USA
4. Nicola Valuzzi, President, Province of Potenza, Italy
5. Alberto Ferrando, Mayor of Quiliano, Italy

The panel shared their perspectives, considering the following questions:

- How can we establish the importance of good governance at local government settings to facilitate the disaster risk reduction agenda?
- How can we achieve an understanding on the role of governance in a local government context in contributing to the Sendai Framework for DRR?
- What are the real actions addressing the challenge of the implementation and achievement of those targets for local authorities with a focus on governance?
- How can we share knowledge and good practices?
- What are the key plans and actions to be considered in the future?

Outcomes of the session included:

- Further emphasising the importance of good governance at local government settings to facilitate the disaster risk reduction agenda
- A better understanding of the role of governance in a local government context in contributing to the Sendai Framework for DRR
- Real actions addressing the challenge of the implementation and achievement of those targets for local authorities with a focus on governance
- Sharing knowledge and good practices
- Identifying plans and actions to be considered in the future including contributing positively towards the "Words into Action"

"The Florence Way Forward" on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework at the Local Level was adopted at the High Level Forum. This can be read here.

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