



SDMC(IU) Webinar Series

Enhancing Preparedness for Responding to COVID19 and Extreme Weather Events

Date: 04th November 2020 | Time: (13:30 – 16:30 hrs IST)

Background

SAARC region comprises nearly 23% of the world's population and is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Given the geographical location of the region and the cascading impacts of climate change, the extreme weather events are increasing in intensity and frequency. These events include cyclones, excessive rainfall, heatwaves, drought conditions, locust attack, etc.

Climate change and the complexities associated with disasters are creating deep uncertainties. Enhanced technology and greater data availability allow many hazards to be predicted with greater accuracy, however, climate change results into deviation and amplification of disaster impacts. It is therefore increasingly difficult to determine risk of the given area and prepare accordingly.¹

As per the Global Climate Risk Index 2020, some of the SAARC Countries are ranked in top 20 most vulnerable countries to the fatal impacts of climate risks.² Owing the population density other SAARC countries are also highly vulnerable. In 2019, floods and storms events accounted for 68% of the total number of affected people globally. The total number of disaster events occurred in recent years have almost doubled as compared to total number of disaster events in last decade. The South Asian region has recently experienced the brunt of extreme weather events. Cyclones have developed both in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, there have been extreme heat events leading to extreme water stress conditions, attack of the locust swarms destroying food and agriculture, and heavy flooding. Most of these events happened amidst the COVID19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic already brought in new challenges for the humanity. In such situation the compounding impact of two or more simultaneous events has been experienced.

With the advent of science and technology South Asian Countries have shown enhancement in preparedness to deal with events like cyclones. They have significantly reduced loss of life from hydro-meteorological events in recent years because of effective early warning systems combined with timely evacuations in the face of extreme weather events. National Disaster

¹ Summary of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019

² Global Climate Risk Index 2020

Management Organizations (NDMOs), humanitarian agencies and iNGOs already engaged in the COVID-19 response are now blending those efforts with response to heavy rainfall due to monsoon and cyclone seasons which usually impact millions of people across Asia.³

Community-based actions are becoming more vital as emergencies increase in number and frequency, due to changing hazards (e.g. seasonal probable hazards during ongoing COVID 19 pandemic) and growing vulnerabilities (e.g. reduced economic activities, food logistics systems, etc.). This has put more communities at risk, and has challenged the response capacity at national and local levels. Thus, it is essential that greater localization of risk information, preparedness and response efforts, underscored by local partnerships needs to be up scaled considering their crucial role in DRR. This also focuses on the Target E of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction which states to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020. With this it also touches upon other targets like reduction of mortality, affected people, and economic loss.

Community-based actions have demonstrated its significance in reducing disaster impacts against hazards by:

- Enhancing knowledge of the local risk and new emerging risk ensuring that the actual capacities of the communities are developed and utilized;
- Preventing and mitigating risk at local level by avoiding exposure to hazards;
- Preparing and organizing communities to respond in planned and structured manner, taking care of their vulnerabilities;
- Ensuring comprehensive actions in the initial hours after an emergency, thus saving many lives.

Therefore, there is a need to encourage governments and all – of- the – institutions working in DRR to reinforce the community by facilitating preparation of local level action plans, strengthening existing systems, and providing resources to support local actions towards reducing disaster risks and manage residual risk.

Aim

The webinar will aim to highlight lessons learned from the past flood events, challenges faced during recent cyclone response due to COVID19 and deliberate on methods through which Member States can enhance community preparedness through local level action plans for climate related hazards & risk management to build more resilient systems that are better placed to prevent such crises in the future.

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/india/extreme-weather-events-time-covid-19>

Target Audience

This webinar aims to engage Senior Officers from Ministries from Member States dealing with Disaster Risk Management, Disaster Response; National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMOs); Ministries working with Community Preparedness towards Public health in emergencies and other concerned ministries.

Sessions

#	Topic	Time	Resource Person/ Moderator
1	Inauguration of the Webinar	20 min.	SDMC (IU)
i	Welcome & Introduction of the Director - SDMC (IU)	1 min.	Mr. Sumedh Patil PM/RO – SDMC (IU)
ii	Introductory Address	3 Min	Director, SDMC (IU)
iii	Introductory remarks from the representative of each of the Member States	16 min. (2 min. each)	Representatives from all SAARC Member States (Alphabetical order) Moderator – Director, SDMC (IU)
2.	<i>Introduction of the Speaker</i>	20 min.	<i>Moderator- SDMC (IU)</i>
	Climate Change & Extreme Weather Events in the SAARC Region + Q&A		Dr. Roxy Mathew CCCR, IITM, India
3	<i>Introduction of the Speaker</i>	20 min.	<i>Moderator- SDMC (IU)</i>
	Emerging Risks of Locust attack in the SAARC Region: Genesis, Warning and Response + Q&A		Mr. Keith Cressman Senior Locust Forecasting Officer, FAO, Rome
4	<i>Introduction of the Speaker</i>	20 min.	<i>Moderator- SDMC (IU)</i>
	Lesson Learnt from the Cyclone Amphan: Local Level response and challenges caused by COVID-19 situation + Q&A a. India Experience b. Bangladesh Experience	(10 min. each)	Mr. S N Pradhan DG -NDRF, India Representative from Bangladesh (TBD)
5.	<i>Introduction of the Speaker</i>	15 min.	<i>Moderator- SDMC (IU)</i>
	Strategy for development of Local Level Action Plan for enhancing preparedness towards Extreme Weather events compound with COVID19 situation + Q&A		Mr. Aslam Perwaiz Department Head, ADPC, Thailand
6.	Experience sharing from Member States towards recent compound disaster events in SAARC Region + Q&A	60 min. (7 min. each)	Representatives from all SAARC Member States (Alphabetical order) Moderator – Director, SDMC (IU)
7.	Concluding Remarks	5 min.	Director, SDMC (IU)