



SAARC
SAARC Disaster
Management Centre (IU)

NEWS LETTER

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Contribute

Interested in getting involved and sharing your stories to SDMC(IU).
Contact SDMC Team at
pm-ro1@saarc-sdmc.org



Director's Message



Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to present to you this fourth edition of SAARC Disaster Management Centre (IU)'s Newsletter. In such a disaster-prone region as the SAARC, sharing of knowledge and best practices amongst each other is absolutely crucial.

Since its inception in new campus, SDMC (IU) has worked closely with international, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders for capacity development towards DRR.

This edition of newsletter focuses on the capacity building initiatives taken up by SDMC (IU). Amid the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) the initiative taken by the SAARC Leaders anchored by Prime Minister of India on combating COVID-19 is also demonstrated. Further, a brief information on the platform developed by SDMC (IU) towards sharing knowledge and become a repository of best practices for the SAARC Region regarding COVID-19 is given. We are looking forward to your suggestions / inputs/ feedback on the same.

P K Taneja
Director

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SDMC (IU) conducts workshop Towards Coherent Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Development, Implementation and Monitoring among SAARC Member States

SDMC (IU) along with UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Global Education and Training Institute (GETI), and Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) has organized three days training program on Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Development, Implementation and Monitoring among SAARC Member States.

Specifically, the Sendai Framework calls for strong political leadership, commitment, and involvement of all stakeholders at all levels from local to national and international to pursue a goal to:

“prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience”.

To ensure resources are efficiently used across all sectors and by all stakeholders. Reflecting this foundational requirement, Target E of the Sendai Framework calls to “substantially increase the number of countries with

national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020”.

This precise target is shared with indicators of Sustainable Development Goals- SDG 1 that calls for an end to poverty, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 13 on climate action.



*Dr. Animesh Kumar, UNDRR
Understanding Disaster Risk and Disaster Risk Management:
Concepts and Trends*

Dr. Animesh explained the concept that hazards can be natural but disaster cannot be natural. He presented the statistics of last 30 years reflecting the magnitude of losses, especially in the South Asian region, with flood and storm being the most prominent causative factors.



Group Photograph "Towards Coherent Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Development, Implementation and Monitoring among SAARC Member States" conducted during 9th to 11th July 2019

SDMC (IU) conducts workshop on Post Disaster Needs Assessment

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the European Union (EU) and the World Bank (WB) signed a joint declaration in 2008 on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning committing their Organizations to collaborate and harmonize post-crisis frameworks to support post-disaster needs assessments and recovery planning.



L to R: Ms. Rita Misal (UNDP), Mr. Kamal Kishor (NDMA), Mr. P.K. Taneja (Director SDMC-IU), Mr. Krishan Vatsa (UNDP), Mr. Ricardo Zapata (EU)

These efforts envisage a systematic approach to develop Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF) capacities covering different regions around the world. To this end, Intergovernmental Organizations, such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are principal stakeholders

to encourage member countries to prepare and undertake recovery processes in a more effective and efficient manner. The regional workshop on Post Disaster Needs Assessment and Recovery Frameworks, targets Member States of SAARC, in particular officials from the Ministry of Disaster Management or Ministry of Planning and Finance. The training helped in collaboration between SAARC Disaster Management Centre and UNDP.



Group exercise for analysis of damage and loss in different sectors & developing baseline data

The main purpose of the training on PDNA and DRF was to inform Government officials from the SAARC Member States about the advantages of applying a standardized approach and methodology to conduct post disaster needs assessments, formulate a recovery strategy and plan for its successful implementation.

In addition, 26 delegates from member countries were trained on the use and application of the PDNA and DRF methodology and approach.



Group Photograph "Post Disaster Needs Assessment" conducted during 27th to 30th August 2019

SDMC (IU) conducts workshop on Regional Severe Weather and Flash Flood Hazard Early Warning Mechanism

SDMC (IU) organized a three days training workshop on Regional Severe Weather and Flash Flood Hazard Early Warning Mechanism.



Mr. P K Taneja, Director SDMC (IU) inaugurating the workshop along with participants from SAARC member states

South Asia is the fastest growing region in the world and at the same time, it is one of the most vulnerable regions towards hydro-meteorological hazards including floods, cyclones, droughts and extreme temperatures. Climate, weather and hydrological hazards do not recognize national boundaries. During the program, various tools and facilities to enhance currently operational severe weather and flash flood early warning systems in various

countries in support of delivery and communication of warnings for the DRR entities at the regional, national and local levels was demonstrated.



Visit to India Meteorological Department, Ahmedabad

Participants were briefed on South Asian Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF) - A Mechanism for preparing consensus climate forecast outlook for South Asia, perspectives of severe weather predictions in SAARC Region covering Multi - Hazards, integration of space technology in severe weather warning and flash floods monitoring, regional framework for lightning EWS for South Asia.

Few case studies of Kerala and Odisha floods were also discussed to understand the importance of Priority 4 of Sendai Framework 'Enhancing Disaster preparedness for effective response, and to build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction'. Participants also shared their experiences of end-to-end Early warning systems and dissemination techniques from their respective countries.



Group Photograph "Regional Severe Weather and Flash Flood Hazard Early Warning Mechanism" conducted during 15th to 17th October 2019

SDMC (IU) celebrates 35th SAARC Charter Day

35th SAARC Charter Day was celebrated on 8th December 2019 at SDMC (IU). On this occasion, two publications were also launched by the Director, SDMC (IU) and Dignitaries from United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and International Water Management Institute (IWMI):

1. Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019
2. Policy Brief- Insurance as an agricultural disaster risk management tool: Evidence and lessons learned from South Asia

Dr Sanjaya Srivastava from United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) presented the findings of Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019 specific to SAARC region. He explained about the disaster risk hotspots in South Asia- transboundary river basin and South West region, which are expanding and becoming more intensified. The report takes into account convergence of disaster risks with critical socio-economic vulnerabilities which are threatening sustainable development in the sub region. It also covers the slow onset disaster and extreme events to calculate annualised losses.

Dr Giriraj Amarnath from IWMI presented on IWMI's Disaster Insurance Program and explained about the policy brief. He also showcased a pilot project on index based flood insurance in Bihar.

A panel discussion on "Contribution of Earth Observation Information and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction- Opportunities, cooperation and challenges" was also conducted. The expert panel consisted of Dr Shirish Ravan and Mr. Moses Duguru from UNOOSA, and Dr Giriraj Amarnath from IWMI. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by Director, SDMC (IU). The panel discussed on the key challenges for the governments in utilizing the space-based technologies to achieve targets of the Sendai Framework, solutions for risk transfer, etc.

An open discussion on women participation in major activities of DRR in the South Asian Region, was also done. Delegates from member states discussed on how

member states can ensure participation of women and ensure gender inclusive implementation of DRR.



Launch of Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019



Launch of Policy Brief



Panel Discussion on Contribution of Earth Observation Information and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

SDMC (IU) conducts workshop on Role of Earth Observation in Multi-hazard Disaster Risk Assessment and Monitoring Targets of the Sendai Framework

This event was the second regional event in South Asia under the umbrella of SAARC Disaster Management Centre (IU) and UNOOSA, through its United Nations Platform for Space based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), in collaboration with IWMI, Sri Lanka and Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP), India. It was built on the outcome of the 1st regional workshop on 'Utilization of space based and geospatial information for achieving the targets of the Sendai Framework', which was held in December 2018 at SDMC (IU).

Natural hazards exacerbated by climate change threaten to jeopardize sustainable development around the South Asia. Understanding the exposure of people and assets to hazards, forecasting and preparing for the impacts of disasters, and planning emergency response operations require accurate and easy-to-access information. Space technologies such as Earth observation satellites, telecommunication technologies and global navigation satellite systems can provide such necessary information. The SFDRR has rightly assessed the need to enhance the use of space technology for assessment and management of risks. The objectives of the workshop were to impart skills of using earth observation techniques in multi-

hazard disaster risk, with emphasis on climate induced disasters - flood and drought disasters.



Resource persons from ISRO, UNSPIDER, & IWMI



Open discussion on working on the rapid response mapping products



Group Photograph "Role of Earth Observation in Multi Hazard Disaster Risk Assessment and Monitoring Targets of the Sendai Framework" conducted during 4th - 8th December 2019

SDMC (IU) conducts workshop on Rapid Structural and Non-Structural Risk Assessment of School Buildings

Considering the high vulnerability of South Asian Region to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change events and the devastating effect of such events on the children's education, a four-day workshop on assessment of structural and non-structural hazards in school buildings was conducted.

Schools are critical infrastructure where children spend majority of their time. Different types of damages, structural and non-structural, to the school buildings can cause direct harm to children, teachers, and the school community. Also, many times schools act as temporary emergency shelters. This program aimed at preparedness measures, assessment and mitigation of structural and non-structural hazards for maintaining the functionality of school buildings during any disaster. The training aimed to highlight the need for robust school infrastructure and understand how different hazards can affect the infrastructure and hamper education. The focus was mainly laid at addressing the non-structural hazards.

The workshop followed a pedagogy of presentations by different experts followed by practical or hands-on session. GeoHazard Society provided the technical and administrative support in conceptualizing the workshop and State Project Director of *Sarv Siksha Abhiyan* provided with the school building for RVS and hands-on mitigation exercise. Sessions were taken by experts from

L D College of Engineering, Gujarat; IIT Gandhinagar; T. U. Teaching Hospital, Nepal. The practical sessions gave great exposure to the participants in understanding the technicalities of on-ground implementation.



Resource persons from GeoHazard Society and LD College of Engineering



Prof. Manish Kumar, IIT Gandhinagar



Group Photograph "Rapid Structural and Non-Structural Risk Assessment of School Buildings" conducted during 21st -24th January 2020

Glimpse of Hands-on Sessions

Rapid Visual Screening (RVS) of School Building

Participants were taken to a nearby primary government school to conduct structural assessment of school building using RVS format. They closely observed the school building for various structural damages.



Discussion on RVS observation

Visit to Earthquake Engineering Lab

Participants were taken to the earthquake lab at the L D College of Engineering, Ahmedabad. Here the concept of behavior of different types of building and structural system during an earthquake was explained with the help of various models and shake table testing.





Identification of Falling Hazards in School Building

Participants were taken to a school to identify non-structural hazards in classrooms, principal office, corridors and other open spaces of the school. They hazard identification was done keeping in mind the multi hazard scenario like fire, earthquake, wind, etc.



Participatory NSM in GIDM Building

On the last day of the program, the participants were given responsibility to identify and fix the non-structural components by themselves. The area selected for this hands-on exercise was GIDM library and a staff room. The participants were provided all the necessary equipment and guidance by GeoHazard Society.

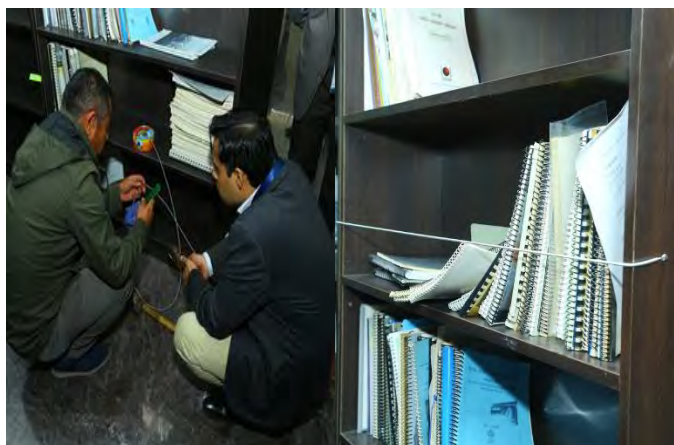


Participants explained the librarian about the non-structural hazards in the library and why it is necessary to fix them



Participants fixing the printer & computer using rubber mat and nylon strap to avoid sliding and falling during earthquake shaking

Participants fixing a tall cupboard to the wall in a staff room using L angle to avoid falling during earthquake shaking



Participants securing books on the shelf using curtain string to avoid falling during earthquake shaking

The Pandemic: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, has been spreading globally and was announced as a pandemic by World Health Organization on 11th March 2020. The first case was reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019, links of which are not well established on how it started. The incubation period of the virus is variable up to 14 days. Due to a variable incubation period, many times it is not detected in screening during initial days. This is when a person is carrying the virus but is not showing any symptoms, or is asymptomatic, and then it spreads further.

The rampant virus spreads via respiratory droplets of the infected person and remains active for considerable amount of time on the surface. Symptoms are mostly fever, cough, severe pneumonia and respiratory problems. Elderly people and people with comorbidities are most vulnerable. With currently no vaccine or treatment available, the virus is a threat to the global population. Reaching the highest level of emergency, the coronavirus is now an all stakeholder emergency and not only limited as medical emergency. It has led to economy disruption, production loss, affecting social fabric, political issues, which are also a matter of concern.

Current Regional Situation (as on date 27.3.2020)

Country	Total Cases	Total Deaths
Afghanistan	80	2
Bangladesh	44	5
Bhutan	3	0
India*	724	17
Maldives	13	0
Nepal	3	0
Pakistan	1057	8
Sri Lanka [#]	106	0
Total	2030	32

Source:

- WHO Corona virus Situation Dashboard(Data as reported on 18:00 CET 26th March 2020),
- *Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India(as on 27.03.2020 at 09:15AM),
- #Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (as on 09:50AM, 27th March 2020)

Protect yourself and others!
Follow these **Do's** and **Don'ts**

Do's ✓

- Practice frequent hand washing. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand rub. Wash hands even if they are visibly clean
- Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use
- See a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficult breathing and cough). While visiting doctor wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose
- If you have these signs/symptoms please call State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24x7 helpline at 011-23978046
- Avoid participating in large gatherings

Don'ts ✗

- Have a close contact with anyone, if you're experiencing cough and fever
- Touch your eyes, nose and mouth
- Spit in public

Public Awareness Material on COVID-19 (mohfw.gov.in)

How should I greet another person to avoid catching the new coronavirus?

To prevent COVID-19 it is safest to avoid physical contact when greeting. Safe greetings include a wave, a nod, or a bow.

World Health Organization #Coronavirus #COVID19 9 March 2020

Public Awareness material on COVID-19 (who.int)

Video Conferencing of SAARC leaders on combating COVID-19

In view of the alarming situation, Prime Minister of India interacted with the leaders of the SAARC countries through video conference to chart out a common strategy in order to combat COVID-19 in the region.



Interaction of SAARC leaders on COVID-19

Prime Minister Modi proposed creation of a COVID-19 Emergency Fund based on voluntary contributions from all the countries, with India making an initial offer of US \$10 million for the fund. The fund can be used by any of the partner countries to meet the cost of immediate actions. He informed that India is assembling a Rapid Response Team of doctors and specialists, along with testing kits and other equipment, which will be on stand-by, to be placed at the disposal of the countries, if required.

Prime Minister also offered arranging for online training capsules for the emergency response teams of the neighbouring countries and sharing of software behind India's Integrated Disease Surveillance Portal to help trace possible virus carriers and the people they contacted. He suggested that existing mechanisms like SAARC Disaster Management Centre can be used to pool in best practises.

He also suggested creation of a common Research Platform to coordinate research on controlling epidemic diseases within the South Asian region. He suggested further brainstorming by experts on the long-term economic consequences of COVID-19, and how best to insulate internal trade and local value chains from its impact.

Experience Sharing by Member States

India: Prime Minister said the guiding mantra for India has been “prepare, but don't panic”. He laid down the proactive steps taken, including a graded response mechanism, screening those entering the country, public awareness campaigns on TV, print and social media, special efforts to reach out to the vulnerable groups, ramping up of diagnostic facilities and developing protocols for each stage of managing the pandemic.

He said that India has not only successfully evacuated Indians from different countries but also evacuated some of the citizens of the neighbouring countries in accordance with the 'neighbourhood first policy'.

Afghanistan: President said that the greatest vulnerability of Afghanistan is an open border with Iran. He proposed modelling diffusion patterns, creation of common framework for telemedicine and greater cooperation amongst the neighbouring countries.

Maldives: President thanked the Indian government for the medical assistance from India to deal with COVID-19 cases and for evacuating nine Maldivians from Wuhan. He highlighted the negative impact of COVID-19 on tourism in the country and its impact on the nation's economy. He proposed closer cooperation between the health emergency agencies of the countries, formulation of economic relief package and long term recovery plan for the region.

Sri Lanka: President recommended that SAARC leaders work together to help economy tide over the difficult period. He also recommended establishment of a SAARC Ministerial level group to share best practises and coordinate regional matters on combating COVID-19.

Bangladesh: Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Modi for bringing 23 Bangladeshi students back from Wuhan along with Indian students during the quarantine period. She proposed continuance of the dialogue at technical level through video conference between Health Ministers and Secretaries of the region.

Nepal: Prime Minister apprised the SAARC leaders of the steps taken by Nepal to combat COVID-19. He said that the collective wisdom and efforts of all the SAARC nations could help in devising a robust and effective strategy to deal with the pandemic.

Bhutan: Prime Minister said the pandemic does-not follow geographical boundaries, hence it is all the more important for the nations to work together. He said the pandemic will affect the smaller and vulnerable economies disproportionately, talking about the economic impact of COVID-19.

Pakistan: State Minister of Health proposed that SAARC Secretariat be mandated to establish a working group of national authorities for health Information, data exchange and coordination in real time. He proposed hosting SAARC Health Ministers' conference and development of regional mechanisms to share disease surveillance data in real time.

(Source: pib.gov.in)

Developments post Video Conferencing of SAARC leaders

- Ahead of the video conferencing, following Member States made contribution towards the COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

Contributions (As on date 23-03-2020)		
Sr. No.	Country	Contribution
1	Afghanistan	USD 1,000,000
2	Bangladesh	USD 1,500,000
3	Bhutan	USD 100,000
4	India	USD 10,000,000
5	Maldives	USD 200,000
6	Nepal	NPR 100,000,000
7	Sri Lanka	USD 5,000,000

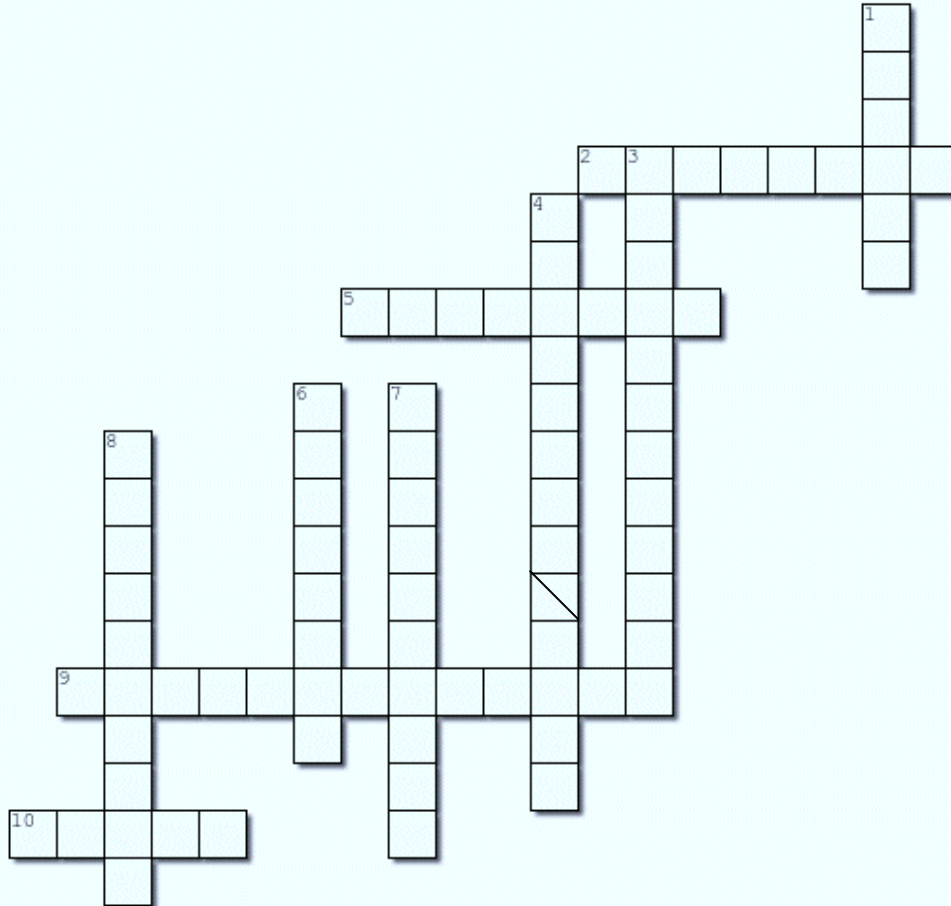
The Fund has been operationalized and the requirements of urgent medical supplies and equipment in individual countries in the region are being met through this Fund. Government of India responded to the request from the Royal Government of Bhutan for provision of medical supplies in the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19. The first consignment of medical supplies was handed over by the Ambassador of India to Hon'ble Minister of Health of Bhutan on 23 March 2020. The consignment of medical supplies has been arranged through the SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

- SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC-IU), Gandhinagar has set up a website (<http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/>) on COVID-19 for shared use of SAARC countries. The website aims, with the active participation of all member countries, to disseminate reliable information and updates on the evolving situation relating to COVID-19 in the region, and best practices being followed in member countries.
- A video conference of health professionals representing all SAARC countries at the level of Director General of Health Services (DGHS) was held on 26 March 2020. At this conference, chaired by the DGHS of India, a wide range of issues relating to Covid19 were discussed extensively with active and purposeful participation of all sides.

(Source: mea.gov.in)

Puzzle for Readers

Puzzle It



Across

- 2.** The physical structures, facilities, networks, etc. which provide services that are essential for the functioning of society
- 5.** The situation of people, infrastructure, and other tangible human assets located in hazard-prone area
- 9.** Integration of DRR strategies into development and planning activities
- 10.** In terms of the number of events, which natural hazard affects the region the most

Down

- 1.** The phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other impacts, property damage, etc
- 3.** Reinforcement or upgrading of existing structures to become more resistant and resilient to the damaging effects of hazards
- 4.** Risk that remains in unmanaged form, even when effective DRR measures are in place
- 6.** Resources available within an community to manage & reduce disaster risk
- 7.** Ability to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, and recover from the effects of a hazard
- 8.** The lessening or minimizing of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event

Answers:
 1. Hazard 2. Critical 3. Retrofitting 4. Residual Risk 5. Exposure
 6. Capacity 7. Resilience 8. Mitigation 9. Mainstreaming 10. Flood



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