



## Disaster Risk Reduction

ECHO FACTSHEET

### Facts & Figures

In 2016, 9% of the EU's humanitarian funding went to disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, more than €175 million

The EU is committed to strengthening resilience worldwide. Resilience is embedded into the majority of humanitarian and development actions. For example, more than 57% of all ECHO funded projects include DRR activities

In 2016, EU funding for DRR activities reduced disaster risks for approximately 24 million people worldwide

Food, water and sanitation are the sectors where most ECHO funded DRR activities are undertaken



Children in Nicaragua receive training on how to respond to a disaster. ©CRIC 2009

### Key messages

- Natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, drought and cyclones cannot be prevented but the number of lives they take and the damage they cause can be greatly reduced thanks to preparation and protection measures. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) saves lives and strengthens the resilience of communities enabling them to anticipate, absorb, and bounce back from shocks.
- DRR programmes aim to protect lives and livelihoods. Communities are empowered to strengthen their capacities with simple measures such as training and community organising, establishing early warning systems and contingency plans, making shelters safe, and protecting livestock and assets from natural hazards.
- DRR is cost effective: on average, every euro spent of DRR activities saves between four and seven euros that would be spent to respond to the impact of disasters.
- In June 2016, the European Commission launched an action plan to implement the Sendai Framework and promote the integration of disaster risk reduction in EU policies.

### EU's contribution to disaster risk reduction

For nearly 20 years, the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department has consistently funded disaster risk reduction (DRR) programmes, in particular through the "DIPECHO" programme, with an aim of reducing the impact of natural disasters on populations and allowing early warning and early action.

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Since 2015, a more strategic and operational approach to DRR has been implemented with the purpose of strengthening coherence with other EU-funded humanitarian projects, better complementarity with local systems and EU development co-operation, and a clearer portrayal of the Commission's added value.

In response to increased political commitments and support to DRR by governments and institutions across regions, EU Humanitarian Aid is progressively re-focusing its approach on preparedness and people centred disaster management, based on its unmatched expertise in the EU.

The Commission addresses DRR also in the area of civil protection within the European Union, within the context of the European neighbourhood policy and in enlargement countries.

## DRR in main humanitarian sectors

### Disaster preparedness – DIPECHO

The DIPECHO programme is present in nine disaster-prone regions throughout the world. It helps the most vulnerable communities in rural and urban areas to be better prepared for and more resilient to natural hazards. It does this through activities such as setting up disaster committees, developing contingency plans, early warning systems and evacuation routes, and identifying safe places to evacuate to. Projects also promote coordination between disaster management institutions at all levels, from local to national and supra-national, in order to ensure that legislation is adopted or adapted and budgets are foreseen for preparedness and timely response.

### Health

Investment in making health systems accessible and more disaster-resilient should always be based on an assessment of local hazards, vulnerabilities and existing capacities. Following a disaster or epidemic, health systems should be further strengthened to cope with current and future risks.

### Food security and Livelihoods

There is a direct correlation between disaster risk and food insecurity. When a disaster occurs, exposure to high levels of disaster risk and lack of capacity to manage these risks trap poor households in a cycle of food insecurity and poverty that quickly deteriorates into a food crisis and acute under-nutrition.

Food assistance interventions contribute to disaster risk reduction mainly by protecting livelihood assets (particularly human and social capital). The EU's humanitarian food assistance seeks to avoid undermining community resilience and their coping capacity.

### Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

DRR considerations in WASH interventions are dependent on the type of hazard faced and a community's level of vulnerability. A rapid-onset event (e.g. flood, earthquake, hurricane) can destroy or severely damage infrastructure and limit the capacity of service providers (e.g. community, government or private sector) to operate and maintain systems. A slow onset or chronic event, such as drought, can critically reduce normal water resources by drying up surface water and lowering groundwater tables.

### Shelter

Shelter represents a key asset for any family, and its loss or damage can result in increased vulnerability and exposure. A lack of adequate and safe shelter presents major risks to people affected by disaster. Shelters which are poorly located, designed, constructed and/or maintained are a leading cause of death during natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods or typhoons.

Although the provision of shelter during the immediate response phase following a disaster tends to be temporary or transitional, people generally start repairing or reconstructing their homes very early. This stage presents an opportunity for building back better by raising awareness about how to reduce risk against future hazards. Building back better and prioritising assistance to the most vulnerable has driven EU support for recovery and reconstruction after the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

By considering durability and sustainability during reconstruction efforts, risks to disasters are reduced in the long-term. For example, by incorporating construction elements such as bracings and struts in earthquake-prone regions or by elevating the level of homesteads or building multi-purpose evacuation centres in flood-prone areas. These interventions can provide essential protection.

