Online Consultation Briefing Paper.

Health and the post-2015 framework for reducing risks of disasters

15 April 2013

Introduction

Hazards pose significant risks to communities and may result in emergencies and disasters with substantial consequences for public health in terms of deaths, injuries, illness and disabilities\(^1\). A greater focus on reducing risks of disasters is described in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA), which was agreed at the World Disaster Reduction Conference in Kobe, Japan in 2005. The HFA describes the work that is required from all sectors and actors to reduce disaster losses and improve the management of risks associated with emergencies and disasters.

As the current HFA is due to end in 2015, consultations are under way across the world to shape the recommendations for the development of a post-2015 framework. As of mid-April 2013, the issue of health has not featured much in the consultations, and only a few people from the health community have been actively engaged in the process at national, regional and global levels.

The purpose of this online consultation is to stimulate discussion on health, and to gather the perspectives from the global community on how a post-2015 framework and the actions of all stakeholders can achieve optimal health outcomes for people at risk of emergencies and disasters. The consultation will provide vital inputs to papers and dialogues at the 4th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which will be held from 19-23 May 2013 in Geneva, including in the informal plenary sessions on the post-2015 framework and in side events with a health dimension to them. This paper aims to provide (1) a summary of current

\(^1\) EM-DAT The International Database (CRED). http://www.emdat.be/
discussion topics surrounding post-2015 framework and (2) start a discussion on health aspects of in the post-2015 framework development process.

1. Emerging themes from consultations on the post-2015 Framework

A series of consultations on global, regional and national levels was launched in 2012 to assess the current HFA and to shape inputs and recommendations for a post-2015 framework. Some of the recurring themes from these consultations have been as follows:

- Improve the mechanisms of measuring the impact and consequences of disasters
- Set specific, sustainable, goals and targets, which allow measurement and comparison of outcomes within and between countries
- Align disaster risk reduction (DRR) goals with the overall Sustainable Development Goals agenda and the post-MDG agenda
- Increase the resilience of communities towards DRR
- Build capacity on the local level
- Increase resilience of the poor and most vulnerable, with focus on poverty reduction and increasing quality access to education
- Move away from word “disaster” to “risk management” – focus should be on preparedness, response and recovery and not solely response
- Encourage multi-sectoral action sectors across sectors, such as health, education, infrastructure, water and agriculture
- Mainstream DRR into development planning, sectors, multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships
- Find appropriate funding mechanism and ensure effective cost-benefit within DRR goals
- Improve linkage of DRR with climate change adaption
- Ensure the private sector accountability and transparency
- Strengthen DRR in legal frameworks for recovery
- Recognize the different responsibilities between local, national, regional and global levels

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2. UK Collaboration on Development Sciences; Overseas Development Initiative. Workshop Report, Disaster Risk Management in the post-2015 international policy landscape.
• Encourage better engagement in the planning of roads and infrastructure
• Set clear targets rather than policy statements
• Enhance global cooperation system so that countries affected by disaster can be assisted at the initial phase of recovery

2. Health and the post-2015 framework process

While arguably many, if not all, of the emerging themes above, are related in some way to health, explicit references to health in the consultations have been scarce. This observation runs counter to the preliminary results of on-going UN global survey which asked individuals which issues need to be addressed foremost in the wider post-2015 development agenda. The top three priorities were (1) a good education, (2) better healthcare and (3) an honest and responsive government. It may be argued that by focusing on issues, such as health, that are closest and most relevant to communities should also be central pillar to the approach to the development of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, and linked to the post-2015 sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, the importance of multi-sectoral engagement has been identified as critical to the post-2015 framework consultation process. In this context, the health sector has been grouped with many other sectors. However, in order to set the scene for this online dialogue, the discussion of health must move beyond identifying health as a sector; rather health is a set of vital community and individual outcomes to which all sectors contribute. An objective of this online consultation to is to encourage people who readily identify as members of the health sector to a more active role, not only in this consultation, but in the wide range of dialogues on the future of disaster risk reduction.

Conclusion

Given the impact of hazards, emergencies and disasters on people’s health worldwide, there is a need to facilitate discussions on how health and health-related outcomes should be addressed in
the dialogues on the post-2015 global framework aimed at reducing risks of disasters. The online consultation presents an opportunity for the global community to voice their views on how a post-2015 framework and the actions of all stakeholders can achieve optimal health outcomes for people at risk of emergencies and disasters.