SUMMARY REPORT, CLUSTER CITIES PROJECT OCTOBER 2003 – MARCH 2004

Introduction

This report summarizes the activities undertaken by the Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative (EMI) under the Cluster Cities Project (CCP) for the period, October 2003 – March 2004. These activities were funded in substantial part by the Disaster Management Facility, World Bank. It is a basic operating principle of the Cluster Cities Project that the host city organizes the program, in consultation with EMI Board members, and funds, in large part, the local costs for the Workshop. The host city, in turn, is encouraged to invite local experts and a broad range of stakeholders to participate in the Workshop and to engage in a continuing dialogue on disaster risk reduction for the metropolitan region. In this respect, financial support from the Disaster Management Facility serves as "seed money" to stimulate investment and engagement by local agencies and organizations in a continuing dialogue on risk reduction in the respective regions.

Goal

The Cluster Cities Project serves as the primary mechanism for the EMI to develop the shared understanding and commitment to action among scientists and policy makers that is essential to build a sustainable program of disaster risk reduction in metropolitan regions. It provides an integrating focus among the many national and international organizations that are seeking to reduce disaster risk to complex metropolises. The Cluster Cities Project, focusing on large cities exposed to seismic and other hazards, seeks:

- To promote applied research on problems of complex urban environments in order to reduce losses in lives and property;
- To develop a global network of cities that will share information, tools and techniques for disaster risk reduction and response;
- To build a broad and informed coalition of stakeholders engaged in local actions for urban disaster risk reduction;
- To initiate and facilitate a systematic program of inquiry, action and continuous learning within and among the member cities that informs practice, reduces vulnerabilities, and enables metropolitan communities to manage increasing disaster risk effectively

Workshops, October 2003 – March 2004

Four major workshops were held in different regions of the world to bring together interdisciplinary, international groups of disaster management personnel, academic researchers, public managers, and a significant group of international researchers and administrators. These groups constitute the leadership for a new generation of managers, policy makers, and educators committed to disaster risk reduction. Workshops were held in the following locations:

- East Asia Cluster: Kobe, Manila, Shanghai, Seoul. Workshop held in Kobe, Japan, October 5-6, 2003

- Asia Cluster: Mumbai, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Tashkent, Beijing. Workshop held in Mumbai, India, December 4-6, 2003
- Euro-Mediterranean Cluster: Naples, Istanbul, Cairo, Tehran (Algiers in observer status). Workshop held in Naples, Italy, December 19-21, 2003.
- Americas Cluster: Bogota, Quito, Mexico City, Los Angeles. Workshop held in Los Angeles, California, March 4-6, 2004.

The agendas and summary reports for each of these Workshops[1], as well as lists of participants, are available for review on the EMI web page, and will not be repeated here. Please see http://www.earthquakesandmegacities.org. The workshops involved a total of 17 cities as fully participating members, 3 cities in observer status, and 21 universities and research institutions. Participation at the workshops ranged in size from over 250 participants, including 40 international participants from 10 countries at the inaugural Asia Cluster in Mumbai, India to 18 participants from 4 countries at the Americas Cluster meeting in Los Angeles. The East Asia Cluster meeting had approximately 30 participants from 4 countries, and the Euro-Mediterranean Cluster had approximately 40 participants from 10 countries. In total, the four Workshops engaged approximately 350 experts and city administrators from 25 countries. This represents a significant global network of professionals committed to disaster risk reduction.

Primary Areas of Focus and Action

While each Cluster of cities has specific needs for program development in areas of disaster risk reduction, all Clusters share common needs in specific fields of practice. The experience developed from working with the cities, and the review of current risk reduction projects in progress and exchange of information have resulted in focusing the CCP agenda more concisely on the following fields of practice:

- Integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in disaster management and disaster risk reduction;
- Gaps, needs and opportunities for capacity enhancement in local governments;
- Risk communication and community participation.

Each of the workshops included workshops and educational opportunities to disseminate sound practice as well as to define strategies for building resilience both within and among the cities in their respective clusters. Further, the 2003-2004 workshops provided an opportunity to brief the participants about the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction – WCDR -(Kobe, Jan. 2005).

Emerging Commitment to Disaster Risk Reduction in Megacities

The cumulative findings from the four regional workshops point toward an increased awareness and an emerging commitment to disaster risk reduction among public officials and professionals in the Cluster Cities. This represents a significant shift away from the reactive policies and

[1] The Oceania Cluster, a small cluster that pairs the cities of Wellington and Tianjin, did not hold a Workshop during this period, but is planning one for 2005.

practice of the past. This shift is nascent, but indicates the potential for enabling cities to build the capacity to manage their exposure to hazards more effectively and efficiently.

While the participating cities clearly have different degrees of exposure and different means of access to information regarding threats, they all share some common perspectives. These perspectives include the following assumptions:

1. Information and communication technology (ICT) is critical in building the capacity to share information within and among the participating cities. Strategically ICT is an enabling tool for risk assessment and risk communication.

2. City administrators are generally aware of the hazards confronting their populations, but they often do not have the means or the knowledge to implement disaster risk reduction plans in a timely, efficient way.

3. The Cluster Cities Project facilitates the processes of communication and knowledge sharing among the member cities. The Workshops provide a valued process of awareness raising, reflection and redesign of risk reduction activities among cities at regular intervals in regions of shared risk.

4. At each workshop, city officials and local researchers determine practical strategies for action to reduce disaster risk. However, significant obstacles exist in terms of scarce resources and lack of appropriate models and knowledge.

5. The Cross-Cutting Capacity Development program (3CD) was presented and discussed at each of the four workshops. The proposed program was favorably reviewed by each set of participants as a vehicle for enabling cities to advance disaster risk reduction in their respective regions.

Continuity for Disaster Risk Reduction

Significant progress has been made toward building an international community of professionals with skills, responsibilities, and experience that spans the regions of the world represented by the five sets of Cluster Cities. Such a group forms an "epistemic community" of knowledgeable people who can provide the leadership for disaster risk reduction in their respective cities, and demonstrate effective strategies for risk reduction in practice that other cities can observe and adopt. As each city develops its own "Disaster Risk Management Master Plan (DRMMP)[2]," the cumulative process within and among the sets of Cluster Cities contributes to the growing global knowledge base and cultural shift toward prevention and mitigation. The opportunity for public officials to exchange ideas, experiences, and innovative approaches regarding disaster risk reduction is critical to maintaining a learning approach. The Cluster Cities Project provides a mechanism for regular reflection, review, and redesign of risk reduction projects undertaken by the member cities, as well as across the regions.

The Cluster Cities workshops also engage other organizations within each region in the process of assessing their vulnerability against their existing capacity for disaster risk reduction. For

[2] DRMMP is a model proposed by EMI for risk management of complex urban regions.

example, over 250 participants attended the Asia Cluster Workshop, with 40 international participants representing 10 countries other than India, the host country. Each of the Workshops has also emphasized the importance of regular meetings of personnel in cities exposed to seismic and other risks. Such meetings enhance the individual and organizational learning processes that are so essential to changing the basic policies and practices for disaster risk reduction within and among cities. These learning processes lead to new initiatives for disaster risk reduction, within and among the Clusters.

Summary of Initiatives Proposed for Disaster Risk Reduction by Cluster Cities, 2003-2004

Each of the four Cluster Cities Workshops addressed the problem of disaster risk reduction and discussed strategies for action that would be appropriate for the member cities and the region. Each Workshop adopted a set of recommendations for action that represent a work plan for its member cities for the coming year. These "action plans" vary in specificity among the Clusters, reflecting the degree of consensus on goals and objectives that has been reached within the four Clusters, and the coherence in planning and performance that has been achieved among the cities in each Cluster. Yet, taken as a collective set of proposed initiatives, the action plans represent a significant commitment to disaster risk reduction by the eighteen cities that participated in this set of four Workshops, held between October, 2003 and March, 2004. Briefly, the major initiatives proposed for action by the respective Cluster Cities Workshops are summarized below.

EMI will build on these regional initiatives as the basis for implementing the 3CD Program[3] and will support the continued refinement of the respective work plans in the Cluster Cities Workshops planned for 2005. Workshop participants confirmed their support and commitment to the following principles:

1. Reinforce partnerships and collaboration among the Cluster Cities and their related research institutions. Institution-to-institution arrangements were developed in each of the meetings, e.g., Seoul is supporting Makati City in the development of a disaster information management system; Bogota is supporting Quito in the development of a community awareness program; and Mexico City and Los Angeles are developing bilateral agreements.
2. Recognize that development of effective regulation and appropriate means of enforcement are essential to urban disaster risk reduction. These means include rules for the control of development, land use regulations, and suitable compliance mechanisms for building construction.
3. Recognize that capacity building requires commitment and resources, but is essential to implementation of disaster risk reduction[4].
4. Publicize disaster management plans and incorporate relevant feedback from various stakeholders in each city to develop an informed citizenry, compel transparency, and form partnerships among active agents of society to sustain the disaster risk reduction agenda.

[3] More information on the 3cd Program is provided on EMI's website.

[4] In this context, Kobe University will provide training opportunities for Cluster Cities participants in the context of its 5-year JICA supported disaster management training program.

5. Overcome the chronic weaknesses of lack of resources, rigid bureaucratic processes, misunderstanding of risk, and institutional self protection through the design and implementation of capacity development programs supported by intensive risk communication processes using ICT and other means.
6. Collect and disseminate knowledge and recent experiences in this area to improve collective knowledge and reduce current difficulties in implementation. Document risk reduction that is achieved when programs are in place (e.g., Quito achieved 77% reduction in wild fires and major reduction in floods through its FUEGO and LLUVIA programs, respectively).
7. Engage in an assessment phase as part of Phase 1-Component 1 of 3cd Program to collect
   data on current practice from each city to build a regional knowledge base for supporting the implementation of sound practice within the Clusters.

The Workshop reports provide detailed recommendations and accomplishments achieved during each of the workshops (workshop reports)

Participants also showed interest in the agenda and in being informed regarding the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction. It is hoped that the conference will adequately address the issue of risk to megacities and provide opportunity for participation to local actors.

Conclusion

The series of Cluster Cities Workshops held between October, 2003 and March, 2004 represent a significant step in cementing and reinforcing the relationships not only within each of the member cities, but also among the cities in each Cluster, and among the four Clusters. At each Workshop, representatives of other Clusters shared information about their activities and identified common interests. The Cluster Cities Project continues to provide a regular forum for the systematic review of disaster risk and opportunities for reducing and managing that risk within the respective regions.

Building on the foundation of increased awareness and self assessment of disaster risk initiated by the Cluster Cities Project, EMI has engaged in the implementation of the 3CD Program in close cooperation with all the cluster cities partners. The 3CD Program will use the "infrastructure" of the Cluster Cities Project to support the implementation of sound disaster management practice among the cluster cities. The ultimate objective is to support the cities in making the shift from post-event response to pro-active mitigation by providing them with knowledge and tools in information and communication technology (ICT) that enable megacities to understand their risk and take actions to reduce their exposure to disasters. The knowledge of hazards and risks builds institutional strength, increases accountability, and triggers pro-active intervention. While institutionalization of disaster mitigation at the local level remains a distant goal, the Cluster Cities Project is helping to develop the conditions and mechanisms for engaging local government and local communities in disaster risk management.

The member cities of this program are grateful for the financial support and advice from the Disaster Management Facility of the World Bank in sustaining the momentum and activities of the Cluster Cities Project.