

LEVERAGING RISK ASSESSMENTS IN A COMPLEX, MULTI-HAZARD ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract – Practitioner talk.

This presentation focuses on the application of risk assessments, successfully employed in a disaster risk reduction environment, for decision support in a broad array of regional, national, and subnational natural and man-made security challenges. A risk assessment, as defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), is: “A methodology to determine the nature and extent of risk by analyzing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability that together could potentially harm exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend.” The presentation provides an overview of the Pacific Disaster Center’s (PDC) risk assessment approach that has been validated at global, regional, national and sub-national levels and used by governments and regional organizations in Asia, the Americas, and in Africa. The approach conceptualizes disaster risk as a function of Multi-Hazard Exposure (MHE), Vulnerability (V) and Coping Capacity (CC). Each risk component (MHE, V, CC), as well as the sub-component themes and sample datasets that can be used to describe them, are discussed. Examples of the application of the approach and the new emergency application of the data and method to support the role of NATO are outlined.

Key objectives of the methods and applications outlined in this presentation are to:

- Strengthen emergency manager capabilities by providing the necessary information and data for evidence-based decision making;
- Provide an alternative view for examining the relationship between each actor and a repeatable approach to understanding the complex relationships towards commonly prioritized disruptors (threats/challenges);
- Enable governments by identifying opportunities to reduce institutional fragility through building resilience against natural hazards and threat networks; and
- Empower civil society – citizens, the private sector and non-governmental organizations – by reducing vulnerability to natural hazards and influences of threat networks in a cooperative, multi-sector operating environment.

Keywords: Risk assessment, Emergency management, Coping capacity, Resilience, Vulnerability.

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