

# **Sharing Knowledge on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Himalayan Region**

**Proceedings from two workshops on  
planning processes, social inclusion, and  
local knowledge for disaster preparedness**

# About the Organisations

## International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is an independent 'Mountain Learning and Knowledge Centre' serving the eight countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas – Afghanistan 🇦🇫, Bangladesh 🇬🇧, Bhutan 🇧🇹, China 🇨🇳, India 🇮🇳, Myanmar 🇲🇲, Nepal 🇳🇵, and Pakistan 🇵🇰 – and the global mountain community. Founded in 1983, ICIMOD is based in Kathmandu, Nepal, and brings together a partnership of regional member countries, partner institutions, and donors with a commitment for development action to secure a better future for the people and environment of the extended Himalayan region. ICIMOD's activities are supported by its core programme donors: the governments of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and its regional member countries, along with over thirty project co-financing donors. The primary objective of the Centre is to promote the development of an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem and to improve the living standards of mountain populations.

## European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO)



The European Union as a whole (i.e., the Member States and the Commission) is one of the world's largest humanitarian aid donors; the Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) is the service of the European Commission responsible for this activity. ECHO funds relief operations for victims of natural disasters and conflicts outside the European Union. Aid is channelled impartially, straight to victims, regardless of their race, religion and political beliefs.

DIPECHO stands for disaster preparedness in ECHO. It supports projects aimed at increasing the resilience of communities at risk of natural disasters by funding training, capacity building, awareness raising, early warning systems, and advocacy activities in the field of disaster risk reduction.

# Sharing Knowledge on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Himalayan Region

**Proceedings from two workshops on planning processes,  
social inclusion, and local knowledge for disaster preparedness**

- a) **Regional Workshop on Disaster Preparedness Plans for Natural Hazards, Kathmandu, 7-9 August, 2006**
- b) **Regional Workshop on Social Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction in the Himalayan Region – Sharing Knowledge and Bridging Gaps, Kathmandu, 9-11 May, 2007**

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Agendas and lists of participants available at [www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org](http://www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org)

## Links to additional information

### Workshop on Disaster Preparedness Plans for Natural Hazards, 7-9 August, 2006

Agenda

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Excursion presentation: Bungamati Landslide

### Workshop on Social Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction in the Himalayan Region – Sharing Knowledge and Bridging Gaps, 9-11 May, 2007

Agenda

List of participants

### Other project publications

# Preface

Inhabitants in the Himalayan region are exposed to many natural hazards. The mountain ranges are young with an unstable geology, steep slopes, and a climate that is difficult to predict. As a result, the region is highly susceptible to natural hazards such as floods and flash floods, landslides, and earthquakes. In populated areas, these can lead to disaster. Vulnerable groups – the poor, women, and children – are often hit hardest.

Since its establishment in 1983, ICIMOD has dedicated much of its work to examining ways to reduce the risk of disasters from natural hazards, thereby working towards the decreased physical vulnerability of the people in the Hindu Kush–Himalayas. This work has encompassed training courses, hazard mapping, landslide mitigation and control, mountain risk engineering, watershed management, vulnerability assessment, and much more. ICIMOD has also fostered regional and transboundary dialogue for improved management of both the resources provided and the risks threatened by the big rivers in the Himalayan region. In this respect, sharing hydro-meteorological data and information among the countries in the region is of particular importance for mitigating the risk of riverine and flash floods in the major river basins.

These proceedings emanate out of two linked workshops organised as part of the project ‘Living with risk – sharing knowledge on disaster preparedness in the Himalayan region’, implemented by ICIMOD during a 15-month period in 2006 and 2007. The project was funded by the European Commission through their Humanitarian Aid department (DG ECHO) as part of the Disaster Preparedness ECHO programme (DIPECHO) in South Asia, and by ICIMOD. Through this project, ICIMOD has endeavoured to encourage knowledge sharing and to strengthen capacity among key practitioners in the field of disaster preparedness and management. This has been done through training courses, workshops, and knowledge compilation and dissemination, as well as through the establishment of a website ([www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org](http://www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org)).

During this project, eight publications have also been produced by ICIMOD: Two important workshops – one on disaster preparedness plans which looked at the status of disaster preparedness planning in the region and one at the end of the project which looked at social inclusion in disaster preparedness plans; baseline assessments of the disaster preparedness status in the four target countries, viz., Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan; two case studies and a framework on local knowledge for disaster preparedness; and gender and vulnerability aspects in disaster risk reduction. The present and final publication documents the results of two important workshops – one early in the project which looked at the status of disaster preparedness planning in the region and one at the end of the project which looked at social inclusion in disaster preparedness plans. The publications, training sessions, and workshops were undertaken in the context of the ‘Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015’ which recommends that regional organisations should promote sharing of information; undertake and publish baseline assessments of disaster risk reduction status; and undertake research, training, education, and capacity building in the field of disaster risk reduction.

The long term mission to bring the Himalayan region to levels of acceptable disaster risk has only just begun. Most countries in the region are among the most disaster prone in the world, counting number and severity of disasters, casualties, and impact on the national economy. Only by strong commitment, hard work, and joint efforts can this situation be improved. It is ICIMOD’s hope that our collective endeavours will help improve disaster risk reduction in the mountain region we are committed to serve.

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The organisers would like to thank all the participants for their valuable contributions to making the two workshops successful events. For the first workshop, thanks go to the authors of the national status reports on Disaster Preparedness Plans: Masroor-ul Haq Siddiqi for Bangladesh, Chandrani Bandyopadhyay for India, Bhubanesh Kumar Pradhan for Nepal, and Asif Khan for Pakistan. These reports introduced a platform for discussion during the workshop. We thank the Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP) and Nepal Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) for their collaboration and guidance during the field visits. We also thank Practical Action for its valuable collaboration in group work activities.

For the second workshop, the organisers are indebted to Pratap Kumar Pathak for graciously launching three of the project books; to Xu Jianchu, Manjari Mehta, Dechenla Sherpa, and Brigitte Leduc for contributing to the group work; and to all the presenters for sharing their experiences.

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Bangkok
AIDMI	All India Disaster Mitigation Institute
BUP	Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad
CBDP	Community Based Disaster Preparedness Plans
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme
CEGIS	Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services
DM	disaster management
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DP	disaster preparedness
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ERRA	Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority, Pakistan
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HKH	Hindu Kush-Himalayas
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NGO	non-government organisation
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
PVA	Participatory Vulnerability Analysis
RMC	Regional member country
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SOD	Standing Orders on Disaster