

Disaster Management- Terminology⁸

Acceptable risk: The level of potential losses that a society or community considers acceptable given existing social, economic, political, cultural, technical and environmental conditions.

Capacity: The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within a community, society or organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals.

Capacity development: The process by which people, organizations and society systematically stimulate and develop their capacities over time to achieve social and economic goals, including through improvement of knowledge, skills, systems, and institutions.

Climate change:

(a) The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as: “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use”.

(b) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”.

Contingency planning: A management process that analyses specific potential events or emerging situations that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses to such events and situations.

Coping capacity: The ability of people, organizations and systems, using available skills and resources, to face and manage adverse conditions, emergencies or disasters.

Critical facilities: The primary physical structures, technical facilities and systems which are socially, economically or operationally essential to the functioning of a society or community, both in routine circumstances and in the extreme circumstances of an emergency.

Disaster risk: The potential disaster losses, in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period. **Disaster risk management:** The systematic process of using administrative directives, organizations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

Disaster risk reduction: The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts, to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events. **Early warning system:** The set of capacities needed to generate and disseminate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities and organizations threatened by a hazard to prepare and to act appropriately and in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of harm or loss. **Emergency management:** The organization and management of resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and initial recovery steps.

Emergency services: The set of specialized agencies that have specific responsibilities and objectives in serving and protecting people and property in emergency situations.

Environmental degradation: The reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives and needs.

Environmental impact assessment: Process by which the environmental consequences of a proposed project or programme are evaluated, undertaken as an integral part of planning and decision-making processes with a view to limiting or reducing the adverse impacts of the project or programme.

Forecast: Definite statement or statistical estimate of the likely occurrence of a future event or conditions for a specific area.

Hazard: A dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

Mitigation: The lessening or limitation of the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters.
Natural hazard: Natural process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

Preparedness: The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.
Prevention: The outright avoidance of adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters.
Public awareness: The extent of common knowledge about disaster risks, the factors that lead to disasters and the actions that can be taken individually and collectively to reduce exposure and vulnerability to hazards.

Recovery: The restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors.

Response: The provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately

after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.

Retrofitting: Reinforcement or upgrading of existing structures to become more resistant and resilient to the damaging effects of hazards.

Risk: The combination of the probability of an event and its negative consequences.

Sustainable development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Vulnerability: The characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

References:

¹<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/disaster>

^{2,3,5}Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, Disaster Management in India

⁴http://unisdr.org/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyEnglish.pdf

⁶<https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disaster-management/>

⁷Module 4 - Capacity Building in Asia using Information Technology Applications (CASITA) - Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Bangkok .

⁸<http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

⁹<http://www.emdat.be/>