



# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION WORKING GROUP (DRR WG)-MYANMAR

An Effective Partnership for Strengthening and Sustaining  
Disaster Risk Reduction  
in Myanmar



## MYANMAR “GOLDEN LAND” CHANGING CONTEXT, RISK AND OPPORTUNITIES

Myanmar is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards, triggering different types of small- to large-scale disasters across its territory, the country is relatively late in terms of DRR policy making. Myanmar's vulnerability to hazards is compounded by socio-economic factors: widespread poverty and poor infrastructures are at the heart of the country's relatively low capability to recover from a significant event, be it natural or man-made. Furthermore, disaster risks are likely to be further exacerbated due to processes attributed to climate change and variability. Since its independence in 1948, Myanmar has also been home to some of the longest-running insurgencies in the world. Years of civil conflict and unresolved ethnic grievances have contributed to mass displacement and an influx of refugees in neighboring countries.

Since 2010 and the election of a civilian Government, Myanmar has engaged in a crucial transition period, aiming to become a modern, developed and democratic nation. Recent liberalization processes in the country, along with its strategic location and wealth in natural resources frame Myanmar's potential for economic and social development. The development choices made by the country in coming months and years are likely to generate new disaster risks. The reform process creates a window of opportunity for DRR actors to help the Government lay the foundations for resilient development, provided that DRR becomes part and parcel of development processes in the country.



The Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRR WG) is an inter-agency coordination mechanism, for information sharing and coordination for DRR established after Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Since then it has grown into a diverse network of 56 agencies (UN agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations -INGOs and LNGOs, professional bodies) working for DRR interventions in Myanmar. Every year, the DRR WG members elect representatives who join the DRR WG Steering Committee (SC) with representation of UN agencies, INGOs, LNGOs, Red Cross and professional bodies. In turn, the members of the SC elect the Chair of the DRR WG.

Since its establishment, the mandate and work plan of the DRR Working Group has been articulated around four key areas: strengthening DRR institutions, community-based disaster preparedness and mitigation, building DRR knowledge and awareness, and mainstreaming DRR into development sectors. Over the years it has succeeded in strengthening partnerships among its members as well as with the government and other networks. Concretely, the DRR WG supported the Government in reporting National HFA1-monitoring and implementation (2009-2011 and 2011-2013); National consultation on HFA2, providing technical inputs into the DM Law (2013), during its development. DRR WG also collaborated with RRD for developing a curriculum for township-level DM courses, and facilitating DRR- trainings, requested by local and international NGOs, to name a few. An important driver of this evolution has been the opportunity to engage and support the Government, made possible by the political reform process. High levels of commitment, broad participation and relationship of trust with the line department of reference, the Relief and Resettlement Department, characterize the DRR WG.

The changes occurring in Myanmar highlight the need to have a robust DRR network that can support the Government as well as the communities in their efforts to build a resilient Myanmar.

### CHANGE IN STRATEGY

A Situational Analysis of DRR in Myanmar was undertaken as a planning tool to review the current capacity and scope of the DRR WG with recommendations on its future strategic directions in view of the changing context of Myanmar. The process was formulated by the Consultants supported by the Steering Committee comprising of UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNOCHA, ActionAid Myanmar, Malteser International, ACTED, Community Development Association (CDA), Myanmar Engineering Society (MES) and the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), as well as the members of the Strategic Planning Task Force, namely WFP, International Relief and Development (IRD), Oxfam and CARE throughout the process with the financial support of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) through the Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience (MCCR), UNDP, the Office for US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) through ACTED, and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through UN-Habitat. The DRR Situation Assessment highlighted the following overarching challenges for DRR in Myanmar:

- need for a more robust DRR network in Myanmar to support the Government's efforts on DRR
- lack of local level capacity; insufficient budget allocation and capacities for local level implementation
- enormous gaps between policies and implementation
- difficulties with implementing "multi-stakeholder" processes in which ownership is genuinely shared
- need to improve DRR linkages with sustainable development and poverty reduction

Further, as a pre-requisite to address above overarching challenges for DRR in Myanmar, a critical review of the current capacity of the DRR WG through internal and external consultations led to identify the areas of DRR WG's strengths and weaknesses.

#### A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN MYANMAR

MYANMAR DRR WORKING GROUP

June 2013





STRENGTHS

- Diversity and expertise, collective power and access to resources
- Strong commitment and linkages, recognition with the Government, especially RRD and the donor community
- Members with strong ties to and presence in the communities, in particular in the Delta and Rakhine
- Agreement on DRR terminology
- Successful outcomes of cooperation: celebration of IDDR Day, HFA reporting, DMC course, DM Law and rules
- Increased presence and participation of LNGOs
- Joint celebration of IDRR Day as key awareness instrument
- Common understanding of the need to mainstream DRR in development

WEAKNESSES

- Limited networking & communication with Ministries/Departments outside of RRD
- Different agendas, activities and mandates leading to time-consuming processes for consensus building
- Uneven participation of members, language barriers, inactive membership and DRR expertise concentrated with INGOs and UN agencies
- Weak information management systems: under-utilization of DRR Web Portal and DIAS
- Complex logistics and financial arrangements for joint initiatives due to policy differences
- Disconnect between priorities of the DRR WG and that of communities
- Over-reliance on a few members and inconsistency in the profile of participants
- Lack of funding to the DRR WG, follow-up on agreed work plan
- Coordination contingent upon information-sharing, resulting in coordination gaps and risks of duplication
- DRR WG not present at sub-national level, lack of mechanisms to share knowledge externally, especially with other sectors, weak coordination with other working groups
- Conflict not included in the mandate and Lack of discussion on CCA/CRM
- Lack of Government participation, private sector involvement & coordination
- Members with an exclusive humanitarian focus

DRR WORKING GROUP STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2013-2018)

To this end, the DRR WG devised and facilitated a multi-stakeholder process to develop its Strategic Framework (SF) 2014-2018 .

VISION

A DISASTER RESILIENT MYANMAR WHERE EVERYONE IS SAFE

MISSION

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS OF A DIVERSE MIX OF PARTNERS FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE THROUGH SHARING, LEARNING AND WORKING TOGETHER

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To strengthen the operationalization of a DRR framework that is inclusive, responsive to the needs of the hazard-prone communities and takes into account climate change.
- 2) To support the mainstreaming of DRR into development processes as a way to ensure that livelihood and essential infrastructures are protected in the face of disasters.
- 3)To become a Government-led model of DRR coordination, championing DRR learning and innovation.

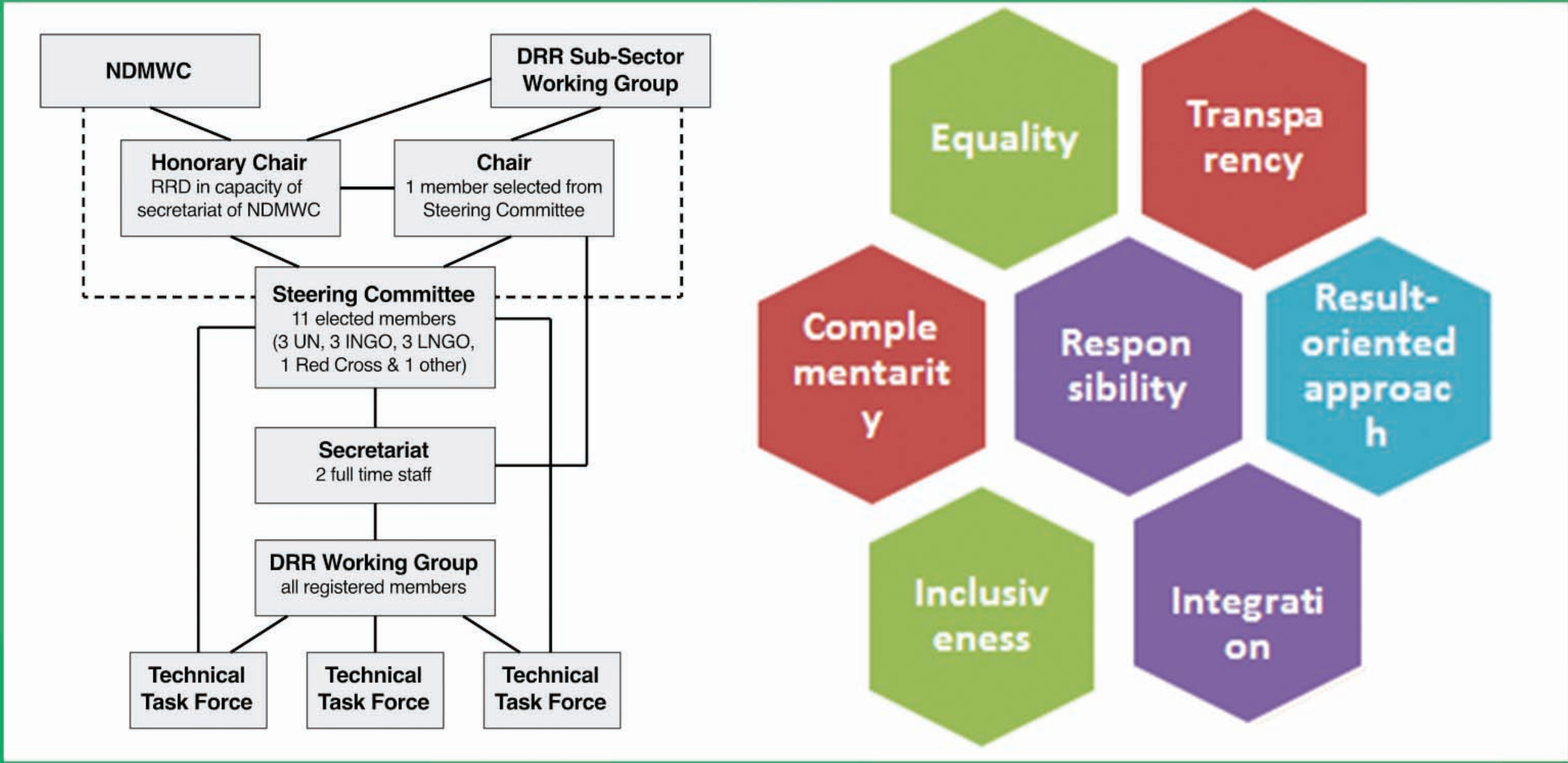
EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Outcome 1: A policy and legal framework on DRR that is inclusive, responsive to the needs of hazard-prone communities and takes into account climate change is in place.
- Outcome 2: Government partners at different levels have increased capacity to implement the DRR framework and mainstream DRR into development processes.
- Outcome 3: Communities and civil society organizations have access to information on the DRR framework and tools and resources to strengthen their resilience.
- Outcome 4: Local organizations have the capacity to take on leading roles in the DRR sector.
- Outcome 5: Effective partnerships for DRR are established with the private sector, professional bodies and other relevant stakeholders.
- Outcome 6: The DRR WG is effective and accountable and provides the Government with tools, experiences and capacities to coordinate the broader DRR Sector



## GOVERNANCE AND WORKING PRINCIPLES

In order to deliver on the Strategic Framework, the DRR WG members have agreed to the following governance structure with key roles and responsibilities of the different bodies of the DRR WG. The DRR WG adheres to the five Partnership Principles endorsed at the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007, and the additional two principles: Inclusiveness and Integration. These principles are translated into the governance structure of DRR Working Group.



The Strategic Framework focuses on activities that will be conducted by the DRR WG as a whole, building on the collective voice and combined expertise and resources of this diverse mix of agencies. Having completed this important milestone, the members of the DRR WG decided to operationalize the strategic framework into an annual work plan 2014-2015, which lays the concrete steps and indicators of success that will enable the Working Group to meet the objectives it set for itself in its Strategic Framework.

## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The DRR WG estimates that a total of 2,815,000 US Dollars is needed for the implementation of the Strategic Framework over the next 5 years. Overall, the DRR WG will use two strategies of resource mobilization, as detailed below:

- **Levying available resources from its members:** The DRR WG will levy resources available with its members for a particular activity or set of related activities. Resources include funding, materials, in-kind support, and staff time. Depending on the activity and available resources, a single member may support or a group of members can pool together.
- **Fundraising from institutional donors and other external actors:** Activities that are not funded by DRR WG members, or identified as priority areas of work can be presented as a coherent project, the DRR WG through its coordination unit or an appointed member will fundraise from institutional donors or other external actors. This would include preparing a full proposal package.

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