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**CONCEPT PAPER ON
THE COOPERATION AMONG THE CICA MEMBER STATES
IN THE AREA OF NATURAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Introduction

To foster international cooperation, the Member States of the Conference of the Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), in the short span of its activity, have elaborated certain guidelines and principles for the voluntary participation of the Member States in the implementation of confidence-building measures within the framework of the international cooperation that positively influences on strengthening an atmosphere of peace and friendship. In the context of international cooperation, one of the important priorities within the CICA framework is cooperation in the area of Natural Disaster Management.

Disasters have most of the time been a result of human interaction with nature, technology and other living entities. Sometimes unpredictable and sudden, sometimes slow and lingering, various types of disasters continually affect the way in which we live our daily lives. Human beings as innovative creatures have sought new ways in which to curb the devastating effects of disasters. However, for years, human conduct regarding disasters has been reactive in nature. Communities, sometimes aware of the risks that they face, would wait in anticipation of a disastrous event and then activate plans and procedures. Human social and economic development has further contributed to creating vulnerability and thus weakening the capacity of communities with disasters and their effects.

Disasters impede human development. Gains in development are inextricably linked to the level of exposure to disaster risk within any given community. In the same light, the level of disaster risk prevalent in a community is linked to the developmental choices exerted by that community. The link between disasters and development is well-researched and documented. The fact that disasters impact development and development increase or decrease the risk of disasters (e.g. introducing earthquake-resistant building techniques) is widely accepted. Yet, every year some countries suffer disaster losses which set back development and leave our communities living in a perpetual state of risk.

Disaster management is a process of effectively preparing for and responding to disasters. It involves strategically organizing resources to lessen the harm that disasters cause. It also involves a systematic approach to managing the responsibilities of disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

In accordance with the Catalogue of the CICA CBMs accepted at the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of CICA in October 2004, and the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures adopted by the sixth CICA Ministerial Meeting on 12 October 2021, Member States have agreed to the realization of these guidelines in practice on bilateral and/or multilateral basis as voluntarily agreed upon.

Environmental issues, as one of the core ideas behind the CICA, is the main concern of all countries, not only in Asia, but at the global level. On this basis, the CICA has so far produced a number of documents in which the ways and means of strengthening regional cooperation on environmental issues have been agreed. One of these is the Catalogue where the Member States in clause 4 of article 2 have agreed to collaborate on “Natural Disaster Management”.

The present Concept Paper presents purposes, principles, basic directions, and approaches within the framework of cooperation in the area of Natural Disasters Management and assumes the development of the Plan of Action for the implementation of the aimed confidence-building measures in the direction of Natural Disaster Management within the CICA framework.

The policy of cooperation in the area of Natural Disaster Management within the CICA framework should be based on the norms of the international law and national legislation of the Member States. The CICA Member States adopt the present Concept Paper with a view to further implementation on a voluntary and selective basis in accordance with national priorities, in a view to enhance the national standards in their decisions.

Goals of the Concept Paper

The main goals of the Concept Paper on cooperation among the CICA Member States in the area of Natural Disaster Management are:

1. Reaffirming the importance to implement the CBM's contained in the Catalogue in accordance with the general provisions of this document; Emphasizing the significance of cooperation on natural disaster management among the Member States considering their differences in capacities and resources in particular their financial capabilities.
2. Exchange of information on natural and human-caused disasters among neighboring Member States before and during the disasters with emphasis on the necessity of collecting and putting on record experiences and achievements in the form of lessons learned.
3. To increase political commitment of Member States to disaster risk reduction projects and programs (transforming the traditional development approaches into risk-informed and resiliency in order to manage risks, sustainably seize opportunities, and strengthen resilience) in accordance with their national laws and regulations.
4. To pay more attention to macro environmental and climatic changes, sustainable development goals, food security and health.
5. To Create a platform for joint realization of the Goals and Priorities stipulated within the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 - 2030) with emphasis on Target F of the aforementioned documents, namely increasing Regional Cooperation in the field of Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Principles of the Concept Paper

Confidence building measures on cooperation in the area of Natural Disaster Management will be implemented by holding consultations and achieving a consensus for adoption relevant decisions in accordance with the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures and the Cooperative Approach for the Implementation of CICA CBMs.

1. Disaster management should be undertaken with the aim of maintaining and ensuring the safety, welfare, health, dignity and capital of the Member States in the face of disasters;
2. The main responsibility of disaster management at the national, regional and local levels rests with the government. Disaster management requires a common responsibility to be assumed by the government as well as national, regional and local stakeholders;
3. Disaster risk management is concerned with reducing the consequences and scope of disasters and preventing their spread to other areas;

Areas and Forms of Cooperation

Cooperation among the Member States may include, inter alia:

1. To improve identification, assessment and mapping of disaster risks.
2. To develop multi-hazard early warning system according to national law and regulations and ensure simple and prompt access of Members States.
3. To enhance knowledge management capacities for disaster and climate risk management.
4. To increase public awareness about the risks of natural (hydro meteorological, geological, biological, and environmental) hazards.
5. To improve risk governance through enhancing capacities of disaster risk management institutions.
6. To enhance engagement of public participation at all levels of implementation to create disaster resilient communities through increased partnership and expanded risk reduction networks at all levels.
7. To develop mitigation and adaptation measures and risk transfer mechanisms with supporting arrangements and resources for climate and disaster prevention at all levels of activity.
8. To facilitate the mainstreaming of disaster management concerns into the developmental planning and processes.

9. Disaster management focuses on the maximum realization of national goals and interests and it follows national security policies of the Member States.
10. Officials at various levels as well as local communities should enjoy sufficient authorities for taking measures to reduce risks of disasters.
11. Disaster risk reduction management should be carried out by the government with the active participation of authorities at various local and national levels, different stakeholders, the private sector and international organizations.
12. - The government should ensure the effective and complete roles of all executive and governing institutions at various levels from the local to national ones. Furthermore, the government should explicitly clarify details of the responsibilities of the public and private sector stakeholders.
13. Disaster management should be pursued with the participation and involvement of the whole society as well as utilization of the capacities of civil institutions. This participation needs to be pursued without any discrimination and with special attention to vulnerable groups of the society.
14. Disaster management requires all-hazard and multi-hazard approaches as well as decision-making processes based on disaster risk knowledge founded on the exchange and dissemination of accessible, up-to-date, comprehensible, science-based data and utilization of indigenous knowledge.
15. Policy-making and planning for the development of the country should account for disaster risk reduction and increased community preparedness.
16. It is essential to observe laws, adhere to rules and follow the plans for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, as well as reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Goals, Strategies and Priority Measures

In order to move towards the vision, four main goals have been defined. Each of these goals encompasses strategies that clarify the path towards achieving these goals. For every strategy, some priority measures have been determined in the sphere of disaster management in light of the current conditions of the country.

Goal 1: Improving governance and developing capacities with an emphasis on integrated and coordinated management

Strategy	Priority measures
<p>Strategy 1: Strengthening organizational structures with an emphasis on integrated and coordinated management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Promoting the participation of all beneficiaries at national and regional levels to achieve integrated and coordinated management. 2- Strengthening and developing the position, elevating the expert capacities and international cooperation in various stages of disaster management. 3- Strengthening and providing necessary requirements and structures to achieve integrated disaster management. 4- Establishing the “Natural Risk Management Center” as an institution for coordinating and organizing various institutions. 5- Exchange of views on developing the idea of establishing a “CICA Regional Emergency Management Center” in conformity with similar commitments of Member States and according to their national laws and regulations and benefitting from the experiences of other organizations in this regard.
<p>Strategy 2: developing effective rules for the disaster management system</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Strengthening legal and executive mechanisms to ensure performance of duties. 2- Developing technical and sectorial regulations on disaster management in accordance with temporal and spatial requirements.

<p>Strategy 3: Strengthening and developing capacities and efficient use of existing and potential resources for disaster management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Identifying existing capacities to elevate abilities against disasters and environmental changes. 2- Developing and providing the financial resources needed for risk reduction and rehabilitation. 3- Establishing a scientific-specialized council /think tank for disaster management.
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Goal 2: Realizing decision-making and policy-making based on a correct and comprehensive understanding of risk in disaster management

Strategy	Priority measures
<p>Strategy 1: Strengthening integrated information management and deepening risk and probable scenarios awareness</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Integrating disaster management information. 2- Assessing risks continuously and conducting future-oriented studies on risks of disasters including exposure to hazards and vulnerability of capitals with a multi-hazard. 3- Setting the ground and facilitating the access of different stakeholders to information systems. 4- Developing an atlas of hazards with a multi-hazard approach and its continuous updating while anticipating emerging hazards.
<p>Strategy 2: Promoting education and research and utilizing modern technologies and indigenous knowledge to achieve an effective and future-oriented disaster management system</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Increasing effective interactions and collaborations between policymakers and different groups of stakeholders. 2- Strengthening the system of documenting experiences, lessons learned and achievements of disaster management. 3- Utilizing findings contained in the report of

	<p>the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction which collectively stresses the importance of an integrated understanding of disaster risk in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UNFCCC and the Sendai Framework.</p> <p>4- Expanding and supporting researches, studies, technological developments and setting the ground for related innovations in the disaster management system with an emphasis on using the capacity of knowledge-based companies.</p>
<p>Strategy 3: Making effective use of disaster management knowledge and information for developing and implementing national developmental plans at national, provincial and local levels</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Integrating measures of risk reduction into national and regional developmental plans at all levels with an emphasis on climate change. 2- Updating and improving policies of the resilience of health system with a participatory approach. 3- Observing principles of resilience in designing, implementing and maintaining critical infrastructures along with continuous monitoring. 4- Reducing the vulnerability of infrastructures and manufacturing industries, especially in relation to food security during disasters.

**Goal 3: Prioritizing and developing risk reduction and investment measures
in line with increasing resilience**

Strategy	Priority measures
<p>Strategy 1: Strengthening and optimizing public and private investments in risk reduction measures with an emphasis on creating added value</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Assessing needs, providing financial resources in a timely manner at various levels and strengthening effective financial instruments in line with implementing risk reduction plans. 2- Strengthening and developing necessary mechanisms to encourage, offer financial support and promote governmental and non-governmental investments for reducing vulnerabilities. 3- Making the investment to improve resilience including fortification, ensuring sustainability, and increasing maneuverability in order to access infrastructural services (during emergencies). 4- Identifying capacities and planning to attract the participation of public and private sectors in order to implement risk reduction plans.
<p>Strategy 2: Sustainable development of the disaster insurance system in order to reduce risk and improve resilience</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Developing insurance coverage and specifying mechanisms in order to reduce and transfer risks. 2- Establishing efficient, sufficient and transparent financial compensation mechanisms after disasters. 3- Diversifying and developing insurance coverage for movable and immovable property in the private and public sectors against all types of hazards.

<p>Strategy 3: Developing supportive and encouraging mechanisms to strengthen resilience at microeconomic and macroeconomic levels in the field of disasters</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Strengthening supportive and encouraging financial mechanisms of the private sector in order to increase resilience of microeconomics. 2- Establishing a disaster risk prevention and reduction fund as well as a disaster insurance fund with priority given to vulnerable sections of society such as persons with disabilities, women, children and the elderly. 3- Defining livelihood supportive plans for low-income households and vulnerable persons.
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Goal 4: Effective response to disasters and community-based reconstruction in all physical, economic, social, institutional and environmental dimensions

Strategy	Priority measures
<p>Strategy 1: Enhancing preparedness for effective response to disasters</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Developing formal and informal education in all organizational levels and in order to improve risk knowledge in disaster risk management. 2- Quantitative and qualitative improvement of specialized exercises/maneuvers for probable scenarios. 3- Ensuring the sustainability of existing and new critical infrastructures in order to ensure preservation of safety, efficiency and effectiveness during and after disasters.

<p>Strategy 2: Improving organizational, operational and social capacities in order to formulate effective responses to disasters with an emphasis on unified management and command</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Establishing, developing and updating the response control and coordination centers in order to support pillars of disaster management. 2- Developing systems of early warning for priority hazards on the basis of the modern technologies. 3- Mobilizing capacities of governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, NGOs, armed forces and the private sector in order to increase the ability to respond to disasters at the national levels.
<p>Strategy 3: Community-based recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction with the “build back better” approach</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Reviewing and modifying recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction plans based on the “build back better” framework. 2- Integrating studies of probable scenarios in pre-disaster recovery. 3- Prioritizing the adoption of a people-centered reconstruction and in-situ policy. 4- Assessing, expanding, integrating and prioritizing the response to needs of vulnerable persons in all support, reconstruction and rehabilitation plans by responsible organizations.

Natural Disaster Management Vision for the Next 10 Years

The natural disaster management vision for the next 10 years is as follows:

In 2032, the natural disaster management system shall be a wisdom-based, integrated, coordinated, effective and efficient management. Such a system shall engage in planning, decision-making and policy-making regarding prevention, preparedness, response, reconstruction and rehabilitation based on a correct understanding of risks, and in accordance with physical, environmental, social, cultural, economic, political and organizational conditions of the country and shall play a key role in achieving sustainable development of the countries and ensuring the safety, welfare, health and dignity of the societies.

This will happen through increasing the resilience and adaptability of society to disasters including climate change based on spatial planning and reducing risk, in a community based manner and in collaboration with all sectors and stakeholders, using education, experiences, up-to-date knowledge and technology as well as future oriented research.

Confidentiality of information and documents

Confidentiality level of information and documents provided within the implementation of the present Concept Paper is defined by the providing party. Information and documents should not be transferred to a third party without prior written authorization of the providing party.

Meetings

In order to review the situation concerning Natural Disasters Management and progress made in the implementation of this Concept Paper, the Member States will meet whenever necessary on a voluntary basis.

Implementation

This Concept Paper will form the basis for conducting further deliberations aimed at elaborating an Action Plan.