

Name of the Partnership/Initiative

Resilient Communities

Expected date of initiation: August 2003

Expected date of completion: ongoing activity; (first program cycle December 2005)

Partners Involved:

Governments:

Local governments: International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)

Intergovernmental organizations:

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) (*invited*)
Further partners invited

Major groups:

Partners invited

Other

Leading Partner:

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative

The goal of the Resilient Communities initiative is to support the development of greater resilience in the institutions, infrastructure, and social and economic life of cities and towns worldwide. A Resilient Community is a city, town or neighbourhood that reduces vulnerability to extreme events and responds creatively to economic, social and environmental change in order to increase its long-term sustainability.

The initiative focuses on introducing policies, tools and methods developed in the disaster management (DM) community into the established worldwide movement for sustainable communities. In this way, the initiative links preventative DM know-how with established local methods for participatory sustainable development planning (SDP), and engages communities involved in Local Agenda 21 (LA21) and activities in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Resilient Communities will apply DM know-how to a broad spectrum of local vulnerabilities, including environmental change, economic losses, industrial accidents and violence. As such, Resilient Communities will endeavour to define a comprehensive 'urban resilience' concept and policy agenda with implications in the fields of urban governance, infrastructure, finance, design, social and economic development, and

environmental/resource management.

The primary activities of the initiative will be the following, and will involve both local populations and public, private and civil society organisations.

- Capacity-building in vulnerability assessment and reduction, particularly in and with poor communities and socially-excluded groups, with a specific emphasis on vulnerabilities to natural disaster, conflict, and economic dislocation;
- Capacity-building in risk assessment and resilience planning, focusing on existing infrastructure, services, institutions responsible for basic services and urban systems, as well as new plans and investments;
- Awareness raising activities, both locally and internationally;
- Best practices identification and support for local action research projects to develop new best practice models for urban resilience;
- Policy recommendations to national governments and the international community.

The initiative will build upon the experiences and findings of cities and communities that have responded effectively to extreme events and change. It will also build upon the work of, and seek to disseminate the findings of the UNCHS Safer Cities program and the UNEP APPELL program.

Relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration

The initiative will address numerous objectives in Agenda 21 to strengthen local capacities for poverty alleviation (paragraphs 3.5-3.8), health (paragraph 6.5), sustainable human settlements development (Chapter 7), integrated land resources management (Chapter 10), combating deforestation (Chapter 11) and drought (Chapter 12), coastal zone management (paragraphs 17.5-17.6), provision of sustainable infrastructure for waste and waste water management (Chapter 18), safe management of hazardous and toxic substances (Chapters 20 and 21), adaptation to environmental change etc.

In addition, the initiative will directly support achievement of UN Millennium Declaration objectives stated in paragraphs 23 and 26.

Expected results

- Increased awareness and skills of staff of sub-national and local governments, public utilities, NGOs, and community-based organizations, and their respective decision-makers, about tools, methods and strategies to decrease vulnerabilities associated with extreme natural, industrial and social events as well as longer term environmental and economic change.
- Increased level and breadth of implementation by sub-national and local governments and associated public utilities of disaster reduction and management practices.
- Increased application of risk reduction and management techniques in the context of urban development planning particularly associated with settlement, housing, and infrastructure.
- Increased community capacity at the neighborhood level to reduce vulnerability and respond to extreme events.
- Establishment of a body of 'best practice' to provide guidance regarding the elements and approaches to resilience-building in cities and towns worldwide.
- Improved institutional linkages between international institutions and NGOs associated with disaster management and local communities worldwide.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement

August 2002

Convene first meeting of the Resilient Communities Consultative Group at the World Summit Local Government Session to conclude program strategy, first year work plan, and establish new partnerships.

December 2002

Establish Resilient Communities ‘best practice’ database.

Establish Resilient Communities recruitment campaign.

2003

Establish Resilient Communities action research project with a consortium of participating local governments and their communities to review concepts, policies and methodological approaches for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

Publish a Resilient Communities tool kit for distribution and application in communities engaged in Local Agenda 21 and similar sustainable development planning efforts.

Finalize a Resilient Communities training curricula and convene a training-of-trainers session with partner institutions. Simultaneously hold second meeting of the Consultative Group.

Continue to develop best practice resources.

Promote integration of ‘resilience’ objectives and measures into other establish local sustainability programs, such as the UN Campaign for Good Urban Governance, ICLEI Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, World Bank/UNCHS Cities Alliance etc.

Finalize guidelines for the application of ‘resilience’ criteria in the design of overseas development assistance projects.

2004

Establish and support Resilient Communities ‘model community’ programs in selected cities and towns to create country-level models and best practices that can serve as national ‘field sites’ for future training activities.

Establish a Resilient Communities register that will collect and manage local ‘action plans’ and other documentation on local disaster reduction measures, and use these for monitoring and reporting progress. The register also will collect documentation on the application of ‘resilience’ guidelines in ODA activities.

Establish a Resilient Communities monitoring and reporting system which both identifies major vulnerability ‘hot spots’ and recommends precautionary responses, and policy and practice changes required at the national, regional and international levels.

2005

Establish a ‘resilience’ assessment method, associated with existing, instituted assessment (e.g., EIA, EMS) and project approval procedures to be employed during design-stage review of both local infrastructure and development projects as well as ODA projects.

Establish commitments from participating local authorities and utilities as well as ODA institutions, private companies, and national government departments to apply resilience

assessment in their project cycles.

Establish a mechanism with the insurance industry to more accurately and fully factor vulnerability mitigation/resilience measures in client risk evaluation.

Coordination and Implementation mechanism

ICLEI will co-ordinate the partnership and its governance as well as the participant recruitment and management process. The work programme will be developed jointly by the partners and be approved by the Consultative Group. The Consultative Group will consist of representatives from partners and a rotating committee of participating sub-national and local authorities. The Consultative Group also will decide by consensus on the addition of new partners to the initiative. Local representation on the Consultative Group will reflect perspectives of all regions and developing, transitional and developed economies.

Ongoing activities, as outlined above, will be implemented jointly with the relevant partners. In addition, one-time or short-term activities will be undertaken with collaborating organisations. ‘Ownership’ of specific initiative products/services (e.g., databases, curricula etc.) will be distributed among partners, according to their commitment to maintain these products/services.

Arrangements for funding

A budget of \$US 4-5 million will be required for the period of August 2002 to December 2005. A status report on sources and commitments for this budget will be provided at the World Summit Local Government Session in August 2002.

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

See above. The initiative is designed to serve as a bridge between an extensive community of expertise—the ‘disaster management’ community—and an extensive community of ‘demand’, i.e., the ‘sustainable communities’ community. As such, the initiative is a service window that will facilitate provision of established expertise to the sub-national/local government community on a demand-driven basis. As the initiative evolves, increasing levels of applied know-how and expertise will be developed in the local government community itself. Therefore, over time, the initiative increasingly will facilitate lateral transfer of know-how from community-to-community through the above described ‘best practice’, training, and ‘model communities’ activities. At the same time, the growing community of participating Resilient Communities will increasingly hold ODA and other development assistance institutions accountable to applying resilience criteria in their local projects and investments.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level

The partnership will immediately link with the world wide Local Agenda 21 initiative and its numerous networks, presently involving more than 6,000 communities in 113 countries. It will link with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and strive to serve as the leading vehicle for ISDR promotion and implementation at the local level. To address issues of local adaptation to climate change, it will link with the ongoing Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, now active in 549 cities and towns in five world regions. Discussions are underway to link with complementary initiatives of UNCHS, UNEP, the World Bank and non-government organisations.

Monitoring Arrangements

Progress reports will be prepared each year for review by the Consultative Group and submission to relevant international bodies. In addition to progress reports, the initiative will establish the aforementioned reporting mechanism for participants, whereby they register their action plans and related measures with the Resilient Communities secretariat, which are managed on a central database. This database will be used in preparing progress reports, newsletters, best practice materials and guidance materials. A variety of materials will be publicly available through a Resilient Communities web site. ICLEI also will include reports in its quarterly newsletter, Initiatives, and it is expected that other partners will include similar reports in their information materials as well.

In addition, the initiative will establish an assessment methodology to be used by local participants, institutions and the Resilient Communities secretariat to evaluate, among other things, levels and types of community vulnerability. A kind of vulnerability index will be developed to draw attention to 'hot spot' communities in order to mobilize their local response as well as any appropriate national, international or partner assistance.

Other relevant information

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