CHAPTER 2
ASSESSING REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' WORK IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

This chapter looks at one group of important but little-studied actors in disaster risk management (DRM): regional organizations.[171] Although regional mechanisms are playing increasingly important roles in disasters, there has been remarkably little research on their role in disaster risk management. In fact, there are few published studies about the relative strengths and weaknesses of regional bodies, much less comparisons of their range of activities or effectiveness in DRM.[172] A recent study carried out by the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement sought to address this gap by providing some basic information about the work of more than 30 regional organizations involved in disaster risk management and by drawing some comparisons and generalizations about the work of thirteen of these organizations through the use of 17 indicators of effectiveness.[173] This chapter provides a summary of some of that research.

SECTION 1
Introduction and Methodology: Why a Focus on Regions?

Since the 1950s when European regional integration seemed to offer prospects not only for the region's post-war recovery, but also for lasting peace and security between former enemies, regional organizations have been growing in number and scope. They have

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[171] There has been a trend to move away from a rigid dichotomy between activities intended to reduce risk/ prepare for disasters and those associated with emergency relief and reconstruction. Thus the term "disaster risk management" (DRM) is used as the overarching concept in this study. However, as the dichotomy between pre-disaster and post-disaster activities is still prevalent in international institutions, international agreements and frameworks, government institutions and regional institutions, the disaster risk reduction (DRR) is also used as a catch-all term for pre-disaster activities while the term disaster management (DM) refers to all post-disaster activities. While epistemologically this is not the cleanest of distinctions, it was found to be helpful for the analytical framework.

Also, note that a distinction is usually made in the literature on regionalism between regional and subregional organizations. For example, in Africa, the African Union (AU) would be seen as a regional organization, while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) would be classified as a subregional organization. As this distinction is not clear-cut in all global regions, this study refers to all organizations as regional organizations unless the distinction is clear.

[172] Exceptions include Patricia Weiss Fagen, *Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean: National, regional and international interactions.* HPG Working Paper, October 2008, www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/ files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3415.pdf. For analysis of the engagement of regional organizations in disaster risk reduction initiatives, see: Ana-Cristina Costea and Tania Felicio, *Global and Regional Mechanisms of Disaster Risk Reduction and Relief: Review, Evaluation, Future Directions of Integration*, UNU-CRIS Occasional Papers, 0-2005/12, www.cris.unu.edu/fileadmin/workingpapers/20051021102742.O-2005-12.pdf

[173] Elizabeth Ferris and Daniel Petz, *In the Neighborhood: The Growing Role of Regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management*, Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, February 2013, www.brookings.edu/ research/reports/2013/02/regional-organizations-disaster-risk-ferris. This research was made possible thanks to support from the Australian Civil-Military Centre.

become more active in many areas – from free trade agreements (which now number in the hundreds) to cooperative initiatives on resource management to counter-terrorism measures.[174] As Louise Fawcett summarizes, "the regional momentum has proved unstoppable, constantly extending into new and diverse domains."[175] In terms of global governance, she argues that "what is emerging is a de facto, albeit often ad hoc, division of labour, sometimes consensual, sometimes contested, where regional actors take on increasingly important roles…"[176]

In today's globalizing world, regions can be seen as serving as an effective bridge between the international and national systems. As Haver and Foley point out, "a regional entity, working from cultural and linguistic commonalities, can provide a forum for building trust and familiarity that is not possible on a global scale. For these reasons they can often be more effective in establishing common policies and resolving issues of contention."[177]

One particular area where regional organizations seem to be playing a leading role is in the relationship between migration and climate change. Regional processes to deal with labor migration have been increasing in importance over the past decade or so, leading one international official to observe that migration governance has "witnessed a marked shift to the regional level."[178] With growing recognition of the potential effects of climate change, regional organizations are becoming aware that they have particular roles to play in policy discussions.[179] Regions are more likely to face similar environmental phenomena and hazards. If or when people are forced to leave their countries because of the effects of climate change, they are likely to turn first to nearby countries. Writing about possible ways of addressing cross-border disaster-induced displacement, Kälin and Schrepfer argue that "regional and subregional organizations are often more coherent in terms of interests of member states and thus more likely to reach consensus on issues."[180]

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[174] See for example: Kati Suominen, "Globalizing Regionalism: Harnessing Regional Organizations to Meet Global Threats," UNU-CRIS Occasional Papers, 2005/11, www.cris.unu.edu/UNU-CRIS-Working-Papers.19.0.html, pp. 8-11

[175] Louise Fawcett, "Exploring regional domains: A comparative history of regionalism," *International Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 3, 2004, p. 431.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Katherine Haver and Conor Foley, *International and Regional Initiatives*, Background paper prepared for the International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response, October 2011, www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/93533/Background%20paper%202.pdf

[178] Karoline Popp, "Regional Policy Perspectives," in Frank Laczko and Etienne Piquet (eds.), *People on the Move in a Changing Climate: Comparing the Impact of Environmental Change on Migration in Different Regions of the World*, IOM and Springer (forthcoming).

[179] Interestingly, regional processes set up to deal with labor migration have been reluctant to address the potential impact of climate change on regional migration patterns. Rather, it seems that regional political organizations such as ASEAN, the OAS, the African Union and the Pacific Islands Forum have been more active in considering these issues.

[180] Walter Kälin and Nina Schrepfer, *Protecting People Crossing Borders in the Context of Climate Change: Normative Gaps and Possible Approaches,* UNHCR Legal and Protection Policy Research Series, PPLA/2012/01, February 2012. Similarly Roger Zetter also calls for the development of regional mechanisms to govern cross-border movements resulting from climate change. See: Roger Zetter, *Protecting environmentally displaced people Developing the capacity of legal and normative frameworks*, University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Center, February 2011, www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/workshop-conference-research-reports/Zetter-%20EnvDispRep%2015022011.pdf

In terms of disaster response, regional mechanisms may not only be able to respond more quickly than international ones, but their intervention may also be politically more acceptable, as evidenced by the key role played by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in responding to Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Regional organizations have developed innovative and effective forms of regional collaboration that could serve as models for other regions. For example, in Central America, the Central American Integration System's Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) organizes regional training initiatives, while in the Caribbean there are joint protocols for the use of military assets for a clearly-defined period after a disaster strikes. In the Pacific, UN agencies have organized a regional protection cluster (rather than a national one) and developed a rotation system to ensure a rapid international response to disasters in the region.

Humanitarian organizations tend to stress the role that regional organizations can play in immediate response to disasters, while development actors tend to see the importance of incorporating disaster risk reduction measures into long-term development plans. Other researchers make the case that natural disasters are security threats and argue that:

> [R]egional organizations are particularly well-equipped to carry out today's threat management functions. They have solid information and expertise on their regions, inherently tailor their responses to the regional realities and can get on the ground fast. ROs [regional organizations] are also innately compelled to continue their engagement and monitoring of the scene when the other actors depart. And having reshaped their policies and plans over the years to meet newly emerging challenges, ROs have a record of responsiveness and institutional flexibility.[181]

While this chapter examines the role of regional organizations in the specific area of disaster risk management, it is important to keep in mind that these emerging forms of regional cooperation could have larger implications. It may be that countries that can work together to reduce the risks of natural hazards will find other areas for cooperation. Thus, a focus on regional organizations is of interest not only to those working in the field of disaster risk management but also to those who see regional cooperation as an important part of global governance and as a force for peace, security and development.

The particular roles of regional organizations in a complex network of actors and relationships are sometimes difficult for the outside observer to discern. Thus, this focus on regional organizations necessarily leaves out some important regional initiatives that are not directly related to the work of the regional organization. So, for example, the Asian Development Bank is an active actor on disaster-related issues but is not a part of sub-regional Asian organizations. Rather than providing a comprehensive picture of all DRM activities taking place in a particular region, this chapter examines a subset of a far larger network involved in disaster-related work.

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[181] Kati Suominen, "Globalizing Regionalism: Harnessing Regional Organizations to Meet Global Threats," UNU-CRIS Occasional Papers, 2005/11. http://www.cris.unu.edu/UNU-CRIS-Working-Papers.19.0.html, p. 7.

Regional Actors in DRM: A Plethora of Initiatives

Regional organizations come in many different forms and were established to serve different purposes. Some were intended to coordinate political positions on broad issues of peace and security, others to enhance free trade and still others were intended to enhance cooperation on very specific scientific or logistical issues. As one recent overview concluded:

> By and large, the rhetoric of many regional organizations is ahead of the reality. Actors in many regions have called attention to the importance of strengthening national capacities for disaster response and to developing relationships between international and national disaster-management officials, but there remain significant gaps between 'what is established in principle and what happens in practice.'[182]

In many cases, regional mechanisms were established or strengthened after a particularly severe natural disaster, such as CEPREDENAC after Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998. In some cases, such as ASEAN's response to Cyclone Nargis in 2008, regional engagement in natural disasters involved a high-profile initiative after a particular disaster, but then seemed to take a less prominent role. However, there does not seem to be a direct correlation between the frequency of disasters in a particular region and the role of regional organizations.

While almost 90 percent of those affected by natural disasters globally for the past decade have been from Asia, Asia's regional mechanisms for responding to disasters are relatively weak, perhaps reflecting the fact that some of the key states in the region do not perceive a need for external assistance as well as political tensions within the region. In some regions, such as Europe and the Caribbean, regional actors seem to be quite active in both disaster response and in mitigation efforts. In other regions, international actors such as UN OCHA and other UN humanitarian agencies have played the leading role in disaster response while regional bodies have been more active in mitigation efforts. This may be the result of funding patterns. In Latin America, for example, Patricia Fagen found that disaster prevention activities are "almost invariably" funded by international donors, often through regional bodies.[183] This may have the effect of strengthening regional bodies, but may also contribute to a disconnect between prevention and response work.

In many regions, disaster risk management involves a wide array of actors from national disaster management organizations and ministries, regional organizations, national and regional universities, NGOs and civil society organizations, international organizations, UN agencies, regional and international development banks, military forces, donor

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[182] See for example: Katherine Haver and Conor Foley, *International and Regional Initiatives*, Background paper prepared for the International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response, October 2011, www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/93533/Background%20paper%202.pdf. Quotation is from Paul Harvey, *The role of national governments in international humanitarian response*, ALNAP meeting paper, 26th Annual Meeting, 16-17 November 2010, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. p. 17.

[183] Patricia Weiss Fagen, *Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean: National, regional and international interactions*. HPG Working Paper, October 2008, www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3415.pdf, p. 22.

governments and the private sector. There are sometime overlaps and inconsistencies between regional mechanisms intended to address disaster risk reduction, the effects of climate change, weather and meteorological systems and longer-term recovery efforts.

Moreover, the global architecture of regional organizations is very complex. Some regions, such as the Americas and Africa, have a regional 'big-tent' organization that includes most countries of the continent as members (Organization of American States, African Union) and at the same time have many sub-regional organizations in which some of the continent's members participate. Thus in Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the South African Development Community (SADCC) are important sub-regional actors. Other regions, such as Asia, have many sub-regional organizations but no continent-wide regional organization.

There are also many regional bodies which were not established primarily as DRM mechanisms, but which play important roles in disaster response, such as the Pan-American Health Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank. Following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, most regional organizations in the area – and most regional offices of international organizations – were involved in responding to the disaster, including some had no previous experience with disaster response.

In many cases, international bodies, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR),[184] the Global Facility for Disaster Risk and Reconstruction (GFDRR) and the World Bank include regional processes which also overlap with independent regional mechanisms. The relationship between these international initiatives and regional mechanisms is an interesting and dynamic one. In at least some cases, regional mechanisms have been strengthened by international action. For example, "…the UN's International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction launched in 1990 propelled ROs [regional organizations] to take on a more pro-active role in humanitarian emergency management."[185] International initiatives can foster regional organizational involvement with disaster risk management. Indeed one of the tasks of regional offices of international humanitarian actors is to support the engagement of regional organizations.

Analysis of regional mechanisms presents other difficulties, beginning with the fact that regional and subregional organizations have overlapping memberships. For example, in the Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum has 16 members, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) has 21 and the Pacific Regional Environmental Program has 24 (including the US and France). In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has 15 members while CDEMA (the region's disaster response mechanism) has 17 members. There seem to be particular overlaps between membership in regional organizations in East Asia and the Pacific and between North Africa and the Middle East (with, for example, Egypt being a member of both the League of Arab States and African Union.) The situation is further complicated by the fact that many international organizations – from the World Bank to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

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[184] The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) is the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and is mandated by the UN General Assembly to ensure its implementation.

[185] Sumonin, op. cit., p. 20.

– have regional offices and programs, often covering a different assortment of countries than those included in regional organizations. These different regional definitions make comparisons difficult.

Cooperation between military forces in responding to disasters takes different forms. For example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has developed very clear protocols for the use of military assets in responding to disasters. In other cases, military forces within a region cooperate on a less formal basis. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has developed guidance on how military forces within the region will respond to disasters in member countries. The ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus has a working group on humanitarian and disaster response but has not developed formal protocols for the ways that military forces will be used to respond to disasters in the region. Bilateral and multilateral relations between military forces in a given region are often strengthened by collaborative efforts to prepare for disasters; for example, in Asia and the Pacific, there are dozens of training exercises every year on disaster response. In some cases, international military assistance is used to support regional initiatives, such as training centers.

Methodology

It is difficult to compare the work of regional organizations in DRM given the great variety of regional organizations in terms of history, purpose, size, capacity and other characteristics. In order to facilitate comparisons between diverse organizations, a set of seventeen indicators was developed to serve as a baseline for comparison.

These indicators are:

> Does the regional organization have:
> 1. Regular intergovernmental meetings on DRM
> 2. A regional DRR framework/convention
> 3. A regional DM framework/convention
> 4. A specific organization for DRM
> 5. A regional/sub-regional disaster management center
> 6. A regional disaster relief fund
> 7. A regional disaster insurance scheme
> 8. A way of providing regional funding for DRR projects
> 9. A means to provide humanitarian assistance
> 10. A regional rapid response mechanism
> 11. Regional technical cooperation (warning systems)
> 12. Joint disaster management exercises/simulations
> 13. Regional capacity building for NDMA staff/technical training on DRM issues
> 14. Research on DRM issues
> 15. Regional military protocols for disaster assistance
> 16. A regional web portal on DRM
> 17. A regional IDRL treaty/guidelines

The research focused on thirteen regional organizations, which was a sample of over thirty regional organizations actively engaged in DRM.

The thirteen organizations for which we analyzed the indicators are:

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CAN	Andean Community of Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CoE	Council of Europe
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
LAS	League of Arab States
OAS	Organization of American States
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SICA	Central American Integration System
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community

SECTION 2
Comparing Regional Organizations: Applying the Indicators

This section looks at some of the trends that emerge from comparing regional organizations according to these indicators.[186]

Indicator 1: Regular Intergovernmental Meetings on DRM

Intergovernmental meetings on DRM are common in many regional organizations. Almost all of the organizations covered in this study have had meetings on DRM, but these take different forms. While some organizations have regularly scheduled meetings on DRM issues, in other organizations intergovernmental meetings are more irregular or even one-time events. The frequency of intergovernmental meetings is a clear indication of the importance that member countries ascribe to DRM; it is therefore not surprising that organizations that meet regularly have generally developed broader cooperation on DRM than those which have only occasional or one-off meetings.

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[186] A more comprehensive analysis of the research methodology and results can be found in the original report: Elizabeth Ferris and Daniel Petz, *In the Neighborhood: The Growing Role of Regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management*, Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, February 2013, www.brookings. edu/research/reports/2013/02/regional-organizations-disaster-risk-ferris

Indicators 2 and 3: Regional DRR and DM Frameworks

Two different approaches were evident in looking at these indicators. While a majority of organizations have developed a comprehensive framework for DRM activities, other organizations have developed separate frameworks for DRR and DM.[187] Regional differences on these indicators were also observed, with African organizations tending to use an approach based on separate frameworks for risk reduction and disaster management, while organizations in the Americas have clearly favored the development of comprehensive frameworks. Table 7 below gives an overview of when organizations established DRM frameworks.

While most regional organizations had developed a framework that included risk reduction and prevention before the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted in 2005, this trend has intensified in recent years with the formation of regional platforms and networks on DRR, a development called for by the HFA. In many cases, regional organizations have played leading roles in the creation of these platforms and networks. Advocacy and technical support from the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) have also led to the translation of some of the regional frameworks into action plans, such as the Madang Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the African Union's Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Strategy.

Table 7 Year of Establishment of Regional DRR/DM Frameworks		
Regional Organization[188]	**DRR Framework**	**DM Framework**
AFRICA		
AU	2004	*in progress*
ECOWAS	2007	2012 (humanitarian policy)
SADC	2005-6	2001
AMERICAS		
OAS	2003	
SICA/CEPREDENAC	1999	
CARICOM/CDEMA	2001	
CAN/CAPRADE	2004	
ASIA		
LAS	2010	1990
SAARC	2007	
ASEAN	2005	
EUROPE		
EU	2009	2001
Council of Europe	1987	
PACIFIC		
Regional Pacific Framework	2005	

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[187] However, it should be noted that more in-depth analysis might show that some of the nominally comprehensive frameworks are strongly biased towards either DM or DRR.

[188] See list of acronyms at the beginning of this report.

By far the dominant approach to governing regional disaster management is through the use of strategic frameworks or policy documents rather than legally-binding agreements. There are only three binding treaties that deal specifically with disaster management as their primary focus: ASEAN's Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, SAARC's Agreement on Rapid Response to Regional Disasters and CARICOM's Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) Agreement (which continues to inform the work of CDERA's successor, CDEMA). Notwithstanding these important exceptions, the majority of DM instruments at the regional level are non-binding in nature.

Generally speaking, the preferred approach can thus be characterized as one of encouraging cooperation and implementation, rather than attaching legal consequences to non-compliance. Two main mechanisms exist in these informal arrangements that serve to promote compliance and implementation of regional strategies or programs: (i) indirect compliance with regional constituent treaties; and (ii) the establishment of bodies for monitoring compliance or implementation, for coordination, or for support to the framework more generally.

Indicator 4:   A Specific Organization for DRM
Indicator 5:   A Regional/Sub-Regional Disaster Management Center

There is clear evidence that the formation of a distinct entity, whether it is called an agency, center, mechanism or division is a clear expression of the regional organization's involvement with DRM, while the development of an operational disaster management center is a good indicator of the technical capacity of a regional organization. The trend of having distinctive organizations engaged in DRM seems to be especially pronounced in Latin America and the Caribbean where the CARICOM, SICA and the Andean Community all have formed specific entities to deal with DRM issues: the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) and the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Assistance (CAPRADE). Central America and the Caribbean were among the first regions tasking regional organizations with work on DRM. CEPREDENAC was founded in 1987 and the predecessor of CDEMA was founded in 1991 – at least five to ten years before most other regions started to seriously look at DRM on a regional level. This is likely due to the prevalence of disasters in these regions and the need to supplement limited national capacities with regional expertise.

The advantage of having a specialized entity for DRM is that it is usually better staffed and has a higher profile and visibility within a wider organization than when there is no specialized entity. Such a mechanism also brings together the technical expertise on DRM issues which in other cases might be dispersed between different departments. In other regions, DRM activities are also centralized in secretariats or departments but are often bundled with different issues. For example, in ECOWAS, DRM is part of the Directorate on Humanitarian and Social Affairs while in the EU, the Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM) is part of the Commission's European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).[189]

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[189] As DG, ECHO deals with humanitarian assistance in and outside the EU. Given the scope of the EU's CPM we have classified it as having a specialized institution.

Several regional organizations also have disaster management centers. Some of the centers have operational capacity for disaster management, such as the EU's Monitoring and Information Center or the recently-opened ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance. These disaster management centers are tasked with collecting data, monitoring disaster situations and facilitating the process of assistance. In other instances, such as the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, the regional disaster management centers are research and training institutions. Overall, less than half of the 13 regional organizations analyzed seem to have a specific organization for DRM and between a quarter and a third have disaster management centers.

While the organizational structure of DRM activities is important, a major factor determining the effectiveness of the organizations dealing with DRM is the budget and staffing for those activities. Available data seem to indicate that DRM activities are funded through a combination of membership contributions and donor funds with donor contributions apparently responsible for a large percentage of funding for DRM work in most regional organizations. For example, in SOPAC's 2010 budget, about 12 percent of funding was planned to come from membership contributions with the entirety of its projects on disaster reduction funded by donors (almost 50 percent of SOPAC's overall budget).[190] ASEAN member countries are obliged to pay $30,000 per year in support of the AHA center with the rest of the center's budget provided by donors. One of the better-funded regional initiatives is the CPM, which has a budget of about Euro 25 million ($31.8 million) from EU membership fees. Staffing levels also vary widely. While the CPM has a staff of about sixty and SOPAC has more than twenty people working on risk reduction projects, SADC's Disaster Risk Unit had only one employee in 2010.[191]

Indicator 6:   A Regional Disaster-Relief Fund

Indicator 7:   A Regional Disaster Insurance Scheme

Indicator 8:   A Way of Providing Regional Funding for DRR Projects

Funding mechanisms are important but take different roles. Several regional organizations have disaster relief funds, in particular the AU, the EU and the OAS. In some instances, relief funds were an early expression of solidarity among members of regional organizations but have more recently been overtaken by a stronger interest in regional initiatives for disaster insurance and risk-sharing. The AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund, which has dispersed $40 million for risk reduction and relief activities since 1984, was down to $2.8 million by 2010 and the Inter-American Emergency Relief Aid Fund of the OAS has only disbursed relatively minor amounts in recent years. The EU's Solidarity Fund on the other hand, disbursed Euro 2.15 billion ($2.8 billion) for major disasters in Europe between

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[190] SOPAC, Final Annual Report Summary of the SOPAC Secretariat, 2010, p. 80.

[191] Latest information available from SADC, "Report on the SADC Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness Planning Workshop Gaborone, Botswana, 05□08 October 2010," April 2011, http://reliefweb.int/report/angola/report-sadc-disaster-risk-reduction-and-preparedness-planning-workshop-gaborone

its founding in 2002 and 2009, which is significantly more than the amount provided by any other regional organization to any of its member states.[192] Other organizations, while not officially having relief funds, do at times provide financial assistance to affected countries. ECOWAS, for example, in November 2012 provided nearly $400,000 to the Nigerian government for flood relief.[193]

In terms of the provision of funding for DRR projects, only two regional organizations provided direct financial assistance for DRR projects: the EU through both the CPM and the EU's Structural Funds and the AU through the Special Emergency Assistance Fund discussed above. That regional organizations are not strong donors for DRR projects is not surprising, as much of the funding for most regional organizations themselves comes from donor governments and international development actors. Rather than funding DRR activities, regional organizations often provide technical assistance to member governments on DRR issues and work on joint projects with member governments.

Other, innovative, regional approaches include risk insurance and risk finance mechanisms for disaster response. Caribbean states pioneered the concept of risk insurance with the establishment of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) in 2007. The CCRIF provides emergency liquidity for countries hit by hurricanes or earthquakes. Following the 2010 earthquake, the government of Haiti received $7.7 million from the CCRIF — the only direct funds the government received in the initial weeks after the disaster. Other regions have since begun to explore risk insurance and finance options, including Pacific countries and ASEAN.[194] For Pacific countries, pooling their insurance policies has allowed them to access global reinsurance markets for the first time. In June 2012, the AU decided to establish an African Risk Capacity Secretariat with the aim of developing a risk-insurance scheme for African nations.[195] Similarly, the Indian Ocean Commission has been exploring options regarding risk insurance.[196]

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[192] European Commission, European Union Solidarity Fund, *Annual report 2009,* 23 March 2011, COM(2011) 136 final, p. 11. US dollar equivalent was calculated using exchange course of 12 March 2013. See: www.oanda.com/currency/converter

[193] ECOWAS, "ECOWAS Supports Nigerian Flood Victims with US$382,000," 13 November 2012, Press release No. 312/2012, http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=312&lang=en&annee=2012

[194] See: CCRIF, "About us," www.ccrif.org/content/about-us

[195] UNISDR, "UNISDR champion applauds African Union for decision on disaster insurance," 5 August 2012, www.unisdr.org/archive/27926

[196] Interview with Laura Bourdreau, GFDRR Risk Finance, 2 November 2012.

Indicator 9:   A Means to Provide Humanitarian Assistance
Indicator 10: A Regional Rapid Response Mechanism
Indicator 11: Regional Technical Cooperation (Warning Systems)
Indicator 12: Joint Disaster Management Exercises/Simulations
Indicator 13: Regional Capacity Building for NDMA Staff/Technical Training on DRM Issues
Indicator 14: Research on DRM Issues

In looking at regional response mechanisms and technical cooperation, it becomes clear that regional organizations play an important role in fostering technical cooperation on DRM issues. Ten of the thirteen organizations reviewed were doing at least some work to foster technical cooperation and at least seven were engaged in capacity building and technical training. As is the case with other indicators, cooperation takes a variety of forms. In many cases, regional organizations support the development of specialized technical centers and units in the region. In some cases, such as the SADC Climate Services Center or the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, the technical centers are directly affiliated to regional organizations. In others, such as the African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) or EUR-OPA's (Council of Europe) network of over twenty Euro-Mediterranean Centers, the institutions are based on cooperation between regional organizations and an array of other actors, such as international agencies, universities and specific host governments.[197]

The area of capacity building and research is closely related to the issue of technical cooperation and about half of the organizations analyzed are active in one of these two areas. For some organizations, such as CDEMA, training is an important part of the disaster management framework while SAARC's core institution, the SAARC Disaster Management Centre, seems to be mainly focused on research and training activities.[198] In the Pacific, several organizations (SOPAC, OCHA, IFRC, etc.) have formed the Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group (PEMTAG), which provides a forum for agencies involved in the design and delivery of emergency management training.[199] In many cases, regional organizations cooperate with international actors in research and training and serve as important conveners for regional training activities and/or research projects.

A small number of regional organizations (such as the EU and ECOWAS) also organize regional disaster management exercises and simulations. For example, disaster focal points from ECOWAS member states convened in Abuja in June 2011 to simulate a regional

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[197] Detailed footnotes provided in the specific organization's description in Annex 1 of the original paper. See: Elizabeth Ferris and Daniel Petz, In the Neighborhood: *The Growing Role of Regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management,* February 2013.

[198] SAARC Disaster Management Center, "Training Programmes," accessed 31 August 2012, http://saarc-sdmc.nic.in/training.asp

[199] SOPAC, "Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005 – 2015, Regional Synthesis Progress Report, Report for the period 2007 – 2009," June 2009, p. 20.

emergency and forge a joint response.[200] The EU Commission financially supports civil protection exercises at EU-level which are multi-country thematic exercises, organized by member states.[201]

In terms of humanitarian assistance and rapid response mechanisms, it appears that:

❖ Regional organizations that have invested in disaster response capacity often take on the roles of: (a) monitoring and relaying disaster information and (b) coordinating regional response efforts, as in the EU's CPM. The ASEAN's AHA Centre seems to aim at providing a similar type of services to ASEAN member states. In the Caribbean, CDEMA, if requested by a member state, is responsible for soliciting and coordinating assistance from governments, organizations and individuals both within and outside the region.

❖ In addition, several organizations have developed rapid response capacities which can be deployed in disaster situations to (a) assist in coordinating assistance and/or (b) provide damage and needs assessments.

❖ Some regional organizations go further and play active roles in pooling and training rapid response capacity from member states as in the case of the EU. In the Caribbean when the national capacities of affected states are overwhelmed, CDEMA can activate the Caribbean Disaster Relief Unit (CDRU), which comprises representatives from the military forces within CARICOM.

❖ Large-scale humanitarian assistance still seems to lie in the realm of other actors' responsibility, including national disaster management agencies, military forces, UN agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), international NGOs, etc. Aside from the EU, which is a major donor for humanitarian assistance and also a provider of assistance, most regional organizations seem to have neither the mandate, nor the will or capacity to engage in large-scale humanitarian operations.

Indicator 15: Regional Military Protocols for Disaster Assistance

In looking at the development of regional military protocols/treaties/conventions on disaster assistance, the main international instrument on this issue is the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defense Assets in Disaster Relief, updated in November 2006 ("The Oslo guidelines") and the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA) to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies.[202] Several

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[200] IRIN, "Disasters: ECOWAS stepping up response," 13 July 2011, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/93222/DISASTERS-ECOWAS-stepping-up-response

[201] See: European Commission, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, "Preparedness,"last accessed 12 March 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/prevention_preparedness/preparedness_en.htm

[202] OCHA, *Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief ("Oslo Guidelines"),* November 2007, available at: www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/47da87822.html; OCHA, *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defense Assets to Support United Nation Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies,*

regional organizations have incorporated these guidelines into their policies, such as the EU, the AU and ASEAN.

Indicator 16: A Regional Web Portal on DRM

One trend in recent years has been for regional organizations to develop web portals on DRM issues. Some of the portals, such as ASEAN's Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) website, relay real-time information about hazards and disasters.[203] Others, such as Pacific Disaster Net, are comprehensive information platforms which serve as tools to support national action planning and decision making and are also rich in resources from reports to risk management plans.[204] In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Virtual Disaster Library provides resource materials for disaster management.[205]

Indicator 17: A Regional IDRL Treaty/Guidelines

A final indicator examined whether regional organizations had developed International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL) guidelines or treaties in line with the IFRC's 2007 Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (the "IDRL Guidelines").[206] The guidelines deal with four major areas: emergency planning, emergency management and co-ordination on site, logistics/transport and legal and financial issues. While the IFRC has mainly encouraged states to incorporate IDRL in their disaster laws and policies, two regional organizations have activities on IDRL: the OAS and the EU.

One important asset of regional organizations in DRM which is not captured by any of these indicators is their convening power. Their knowledge of the ways member governments work and their staff's contacts with the relevant ministries and agencies make them important facilitators of communication between international actors, donor governments and governments of affected countries.

January 2006, available at: www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/publications#

[203] See: ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management, http://www.ahacentre.org/

[204] Pacific Disaster Net is a collaboration of SOPAC, UNDP, OCHA, IFRC and ISDR. See: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdn2008/

[205] See: Caribbean Disaster Information Network, http://www.mona.uwi.edu/cardin/virtual_library/searchlibrary.asp

[206] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "IDRL Guidelines," accessed 15 November 2012, www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/idrl-guidelines/

SECTION 3
Conclusion

In almost all regions of the world, regional organizations are playing increasingly active roles disaster risk management. While each region has unique characteristics that shape the nature and activities of its regional bodies, it seems as if they all (or almost all) see value in working together to prevent disasters and to a lesser extent to respond to disasters occurring in the region.

International organizations seem to play an important role in building regional capacity and in supporting the development of strong regional organizations. International humanitarian agencies have developed an impressive operational capacity in disaster response and international development agencies are leading the way in advocating for disaster risk reduction. Regional organizations also add value in cases where disasters have regional consequences – whether through warning systems for tsunamis or sharing seismic data or monitoring volcanic activity. However, for governments with far less capacity, such as Myanmar, Laos, Haiti, Bolivia and Liberia, regional organizations may have an important role to play in responding to disasters, particularly in smaller-scale disasters that do not trigger major media coverage and international funding.

The principle of subsidiary suggests that a regional organization will play different roles vis-à-vis its members depending on their capacities and needs. Thus ASEAN played a more crucial role in responding to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008 than it did in responding to the Thai floods in 2011. In this respect, one of the important roles which regional bodies can play is in addressing the needs of its weaker members and working to build their capacities for future response.

Regional organizations are playing an increasingly important role but more research is needed to understand the interaction between national governments, regional bodies and international actors in order to determine the particular value added by these different layers of DRM. More analysis is also needed of the way in which national and regional politics affects the work of regional bodies. The relationship between military and civilian regional mechanisms is an area in which more in-depth analysis would be useful. Finally, it would be helpful to survey member states of regional organizations about their expectations of regional bodies: What do they need? What do they expect? What are they willing to contribute? What are they willing to give up?