

DFDN

20 December 2010

The Development from Disasters Network calls on government to coordinate disaster risk reduction and response across the built environment professions.

The British Government and DFID should implement greater measures to reduce the risk of global humanitarian disasters by drawing on the extensive experience of built environment professionals in the UK and overseas.

The Government's Humanitarian Emergency Response Review – due to be published early next year – will consider how the UK can build on its leading role in international disaster response. The Development from Disasters Network (DFDN), has helped to facilitate a combined submission by the four major British professional institutions responsible for the built environment: the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE); the Royal Institute of British Architects, (RIBA); the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS); and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). Together, we have written to the review leader, Lord Ashdown, calling for greater links between humanitarian relief and disaster risk reduction and reconstruction strategies. The submission also calls for better use to be made of the UK's immense experience in built environment sector, much of which was generated as a result of previous DFID support.

Based on DFDN's experience, modest investments in disaster risk reduction and planning can substantially lower the damage to lives and livelihoods posed by both natural and man-made disasters. Evidence suggests that disaster risk reduction offers significant value for money; for example, every \$1 spent can prevent losses of \$7¹. DFDN, together with a number of active professional groups and their partners worldwide have considerable experience in disaster risk reduction, planning, and reconstruction and DFID should consider their experience in the current spending review.

-ENDS-

¹ 'Human Development Report: Fighting Climate Change' (2007/8), UNDP

Notes for editors:

DFDN is submitting these recommendations on behalf of Institution of Civil Engineers, Royal Institute of British Architects, Royal Town Planning Institute, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and Royal Institute of British Architects.

About DFDN

The Development from Disasters Network was founded at a meeting of built environment professionals, academics and NGO representatives at the University of Westminster, London in early 2005 as a response to the Asian tsunami of December 2004. It aims to influence policy and decisions on how funds for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction are allocated and spent.

DFDN believes that the planning and practice of disaster recovery should uphold the following principles: (1) development during and following recovery should be driven by the wishes and needs of local communities affected by the disaster, including the right to return; (2) the development process should be transparent and ensure financial accountability, with funds distributed to the lowest practical level; and (3) development should be comprehensive, long-term and should help to rebuild lives, not just houses and infrastructure.

We hope to share the skills and knowledge of DFDN members and other built environment professionals to strengthen capacity of vulnerable communities to reduce disaster risks and improve post-disaster recovery.

DFDN gratefully acknowledges the longstanding support for this initiative from the University of Westminster through the Max Lock Centre, which manages the Network's web site,

For further information, go to <http://developmentfromdisasters.net/>

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