



# FRAGILITY & COHERENCE

## Summary of Recommendation Report

*Recommendations for integrating aspects of fragility in local disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and development planning processes based on a case study in Caraga Region, Philippines*

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**GI:DRM**

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## FRAGILITY AND COHERENCE: BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

To better understand the interlinkages between coherent planning and conflict, GIDRM has conducted a study in the Caraga region of northeast Mindanao, to explore the possibilities and limitations of coherence approaches in conflict-sensitive settings. Despite the multi-dimensional nature of the conflict in the Caraga region, the underlying causes are related to issues of land claims in areas of ancestral domains and forest lands, particularly in relation to the extraction of timber and mineral resources. Protracted conflict invariably leads to increases in poverty and vulnerability, together with forced displacements and reduced State capacities to provide basic services.

Disaster losses are a direct product of both the socio-political and environmental context.

### Caraga Region, Northern Mindanao

Caraga is home to a variety of religions and ethnolinguistic groups and has a **long history of violent conflict and insurgency**. Despite the multi-dimensional nature of the conflict, the underlying causes are related to issues of land claims in areas of ancestral domains and forest lands, particularly in relation to the extraction of timber and mineral resources. An estimated one third of Mindanao's 25 million population have been affected by the conflict. Caraga has the highest poverty levels (30%) and the lowest levels of human development in the Philippines.

According to World Bank Risk Report 2018, the Philippines has the third highest disaster risk among all countries worldwide. In Caraga, the most common natural hazards are weather-related (e.g. floods, landslides, droughts, typhoons, storm surges), with people's vulnerability and exposure exacerbated by environmental degradation and conflict. Local ecosystems and natural resources (agriculture; forestry; fishing; small-scale mining) are major sources of livelihoods and cultural identity for rural populations.

Disasters and conflict can be mutually reinforcing: disaster impact most on vulnerable people living in conflict-affected areas. They can further increase displacements, poverty and resource competition, placing a severe burden on already stretched government services and exacerbate grievances.

Conflict and associated displacements can undermine development gains and increase peoples' vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards. Globally, the majority of deaths from disasters triggered by natural hazards occur in the most fragile States. The interaction between conflict, disasters and development is an important dynamic in which disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation planning is undertaken.

### *Understanding conflict-sensitive planning*

The aim of conflict-sensitive planning is to ensure that the planned interventions do not inadvertently increase the likelihood of violent conflict and serves to reduce existing and/or potential conflicts. Key stages of conflict-sensitive planning are:

- 1 | Understanding the operational context where conflict exists
- 2 | Understanding the interaction between the planning intervention and the context
- 3 | Acting upon the understanding of the interaction to avoid negative and maximise positive impacts

*Conflict analysis* is the foundation of conflict-sensitive planning and implementation.

*To what extent do Local Government Units (LGUs) integrate issues of conflict and insecurity into development, DRR and climate adaptation planning processes?*

## KEY FINDINGS

There is widespread awareness of the negative impact of armed conflict in the Caraga region, with recognition that conflict, poverty, development and disasters are linked. Particular in conflict-prone environments, there was consensus that conflict-sensitive planning could be beneficial in increasing the effectiveness of planning interventions. However, clear evidence of the benefits is needed to build political

commitment for conflict-sensitive approaches. Local planners recognise conflict stressors as part of the context within which local development plans are undertaken and are well positioned to understand local conflict dynamics. However, local planners do not have the mandate, tools or technical capabilities to apply conflict-sensitive approaches.

### EXTERNAL SHOCKS AND STRESSORS:

<i>Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ecosystem decline</li> <li>– Climate change</li> <li>– Extreme natural hazards</li> </ul>
<i>Economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Poverty</li> <li>– Illegal &amp; inappropriate mining / resource extraction &amp; taxation</li> <li>– Inappropriate agricultural practices</li> <li>– Illegal trading: guns; drugs; resources</li> </ul>
<i>Social</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rapid Urbanisation and migration, incl. State sponsored resettlements</li> <li>– Violent conflict / insecurity / forced displacements</li> <li>– (Coronavirus) pandemics</li> <li>– Limited access to basic services</li> </ul>

### INTERNAL SHOCKS AND STRESSORS (related to State policies, plans and activities):

<i>Legal &amp; Regulatory Frameworks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Inadequate / dysfunctional legal frameworks for land use / tenure</li> <li>– Limited local jurisdiction to settle contested land claims</li> <li>– Limited local jurisdiction over external mining / agro-industry</li> <li>– Weak State legitimacy / trust / “social contract”</li> </ul>
<i>Institutional Policies, Plan and Processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Overlapping policies / Competing agency mandates and plans</li> <li>– Conflicting land title / tenure / ancestral domain system</li> <li>– Conflicting resource extraction permits</li> <li>– Inadequate vertical and horizontal coordination arrangements</li> </ul>
<i>Tools and Technical Guidance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Multiple, complex planning tools and guidelines</li> <li>– Inadequate guidance on definitions, roles, responsibilities and planning interfaces</li> <li>– Current local development and land-use plans and tools are not conflict-sensitive</li> </ul>
<i>Financing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Budget resource limitations to develop, execute, monitor plans</li> </ul>
<i>Human Resource Capacities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited local capacities to draft &amp; implement multiple plans</li> <li>– Inadequate training &amp; technical assistance</li> </ul>
<i>Risk Information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited access to relevant risk information</li> </ul>
<i>Cross-cutting Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited citizenry / civil society engagement</li> <li>– Political patronage / vested economic interests</li> <li>– Limited accountability &amp; transparency</li> <li>– Inequalities in resource allocations &amp; revenues</li> </ul>



### *Understand the systemic nature of risk*

Although it is recognised that sustainable development, disasters, conflict and climate change adaptation are linked, in practice these linkages are not well understood and are managed separately. Developing a systems' view of these interactions would be beneficial to understand the multi-dimensional nature of local risk dynamics, identify commonalities and unlock synergies that would improve the effectiveness of local plans; thereby contributing to sustainable and resilient development.

The starting point for strengthening resilience and sustainability lies in a better understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of risk. Developing a more "*conflict-sensitive*" risk assessment, that highlights the interconnections, commonalities and synergies of risk factors, is an essential step towards creating a more aligned planning process informed by a shared situational awareness and joint problem definition. The adoption of a *participatory* multi-risk assessment, paying attention to the inclusive to high-risk people, has the potential to identify local grievances and build consensus toward collective outcomes. The active role of communities exposed to disasters and conflict can provide a more grounded approach to local planning. This can increase the effectiveness of local plans by avoiding negative impacts, whilst maximising positive impacts, including contributing to conflict transformation and peace building objectives.

A better understanding and mapping of the true composition of risk can inform planning processes at local and sub-national levels, without the need to change or conflate existing planning regimes. Such an approach could be piloted in localised areas subjected to low severity, high-frequency events.

### *Adopt a "good enough" approach*

At a practical level, it is apparent the Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment methodology that is currently being used in the Philippines is already

a complex tool to use. There is a risk that further refinement into a multi-risk assessment tool may result in additional complexity. Notwithstanding these concerns, similar to GIDRM "good enough coherence" approach, there is considerable experience in developing relatively simple "*good enough*" participatory assessment and analytical tools. Although the analysis can never be exhaustive, a *good enough* approach can provide an appropriate basis to make informed decisions relevant to the local context.

**In conclusion**, in the near-term future, the shortcomings in the current planning regime are likely to remain, with conflict management remaining separate rather than integrated into local development planning processes. In this context, ***the main opportunity to strengthen coherence and unlock the benefits of more conflict-sensitive planning appear to lie in making improvements to existing planning tools, notably the Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment as developed by national government entities.*** This could be undertaken in support of existing planning processes without the need for changes in policies or legislation.

### *The cutting edge of international risk and resilience developments*

The development of a multi-risk assessment tool that encompasses natural and human-induced hazards would be aligned with the current shift towards a more holistic approach to risk management and resilience. The tool could remain framed under the "politically-neutral" disaster-climate change mandate, albeit factoring in the interaction between conflict, hazards, vulnerability and exposure. The sustainable management of natural resources (e.g. land, river basins, forests) and ecosystem services, provides a highly relevant context to understand these interactions and develop a more holistic approach.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 | Commitment and support (memorandum circular) from DILG to modify the CDRA into a more holistic systemic risk assessment tool
- 2 | Connect the development of a systemic risk assessment tool with the **National Risk Resiliency Program** approved by the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation and Migration and Disaster Risk Reduction
- 3 | Develop and pilot multi-risk assessment tool in selected conflict-affected provinces to inform local planning processes, e.g. to encompass natural and human-induced hazards
- 4 | Partnership with peacebuilding or related programs to access technical assistance on conflict-sensitive approaches
- 5 | Focused training and technical advisory for piloting the multi-risk assessment tool
- 6 | Enhancement of risk and resilience capacities of LGU planning officers in support of national Risk Resiliency Programme, including training and technical resources
- 7 | Contextually relevant research to improve understanding of the linkages, commonalities, interactions and synergies between disasters, development, conflict, climate change, paying special attention to linkages to natural resource management and ecosystem services
- 8 | Increased access to relevant, timely and contextually appropriate local risk information
- 9 | Develop internal CCA / DRR markers (tagging of budgets and actual expenditures) to measure inclusion of risk into planning and implementation process and contribute to the monitoring of national climate change commitments
- 10 | Promote localized collaborative and participatory planning processes in support of the sustainable management of common resources such as lakes, rivers, watershed, biodiversity corridors, etc. that provide essential eco-system services in the absorption and regulating of extreme hazards

**Disclaimer** | The recommendation paper is based on a study conducted by Marcus Oxley and Ed Quitariano as part of the Global Initiative on Disaster Risk Management (GIDRM), an initiative commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). GIDRM supports international and national, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in their efforts to strengthen coherent planning, implementation and reporting on DRR towards the goals of global development agendas. The global agendas include the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), the Paris Agreement, the Agenda 2030 also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the New Urban Agenda and others.