



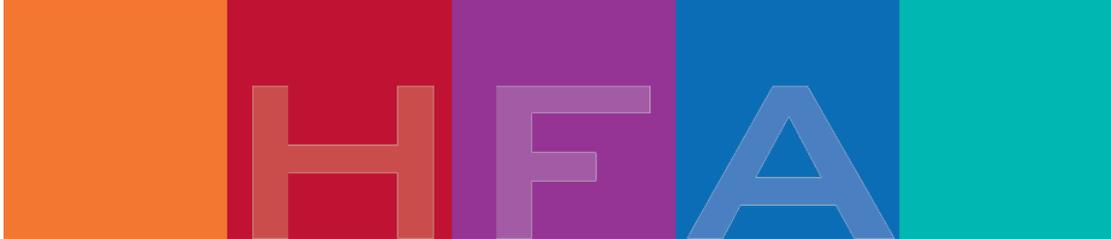
**NATIONAL HFA PROGRESS REPORTS**  
**2011-2013**

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**THE AMERICAS**

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## **National HFA Progress Reviews 2011-2013**

### **Preliminary analysis of indicators**

# **Americas**

#### **Disclaimer:**

The narrative aspect of this analysis reflects those countries and overseas territories from the Americas region having marked as final their 2011-2013 national HFA progress reviews at the time this review was carried out. In order to review the region's progress reported at the national level prior to the Global Platform session, it was necessary to define a cut-off date for inclusion of reports to be consolidated. As such, the narrative analysis included here therefore does not reflect all of the reports from the region but only 19 reports having been marked as finalized as of 6 May 2013: Anguilla, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Uruguay.

As such, while the narrative analysis and self-assessed levels of progress are based on the above-mentioned 19 reports, the responses provided to key questions and means of verification correspond to those countries and overseas territories having submitted and granted permission to publish their reports online as of 19 May, 2013: Anguilla, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, British Virgin Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States of America, Uruguay.

#### **Levels of Progress**

The levels of progress noted throughout this analysis reflect the self-assessment of countries in terms of the extent to which the policies, programmes and initiatives are sustainable in achieving the indicated risk reduction objectives, as follows:

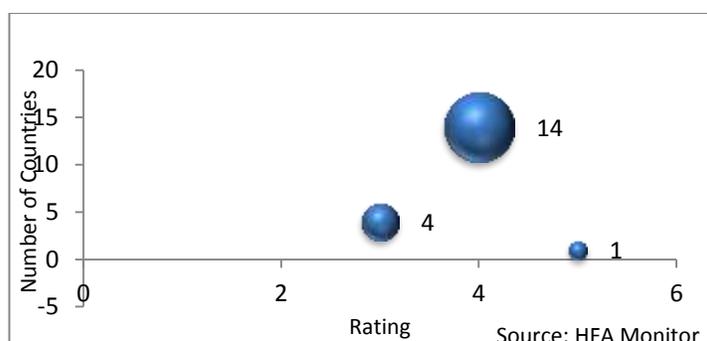
- 1 – Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy
- 2 – Some progress, but without systematic policy and/or institutional commitment
- 3 – Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial
- 4 – Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in capacities and resources
- 5 – Comprehensive achievement with sustained commitment and capacities at all levels

**Priority of Action 1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation**

**Core Indicator 1.1: National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralized responsibilities and capacities at all levels**

**Main trends and progress**

All of the countries analyzed here have in place some form of regulatory framework (legal framework, national plan or a national policy) addressing emergency response, preparation or a more ample approach to disaster risk reduction. From the review of the reports, at least 20% of reporting countries have reviewed their legal framework in the last two years expanding the concept from the emergency and response towards a more comprehensive approach of DRR, while over 30% of countries indicate having a policy or strategy addressing DRR and more than 40% to having an existing law.



Several countries currently developing or drafting new legal frameworks note the scaling up of institutional governance structures for DRR in order to be able to exert influence upon sectors; such as Costa Rica and Mexico, along with Chile and Guatemala which are currently in the process of seeking approval by parliament. In addition, while not explicitly mentioned in the country reports per se, the regional office of UNISDR for the Americas has also identified that Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru have also revised their legal frameworks to incorporate a broader DRR approach.

	Is disaster risk taken into account in public investment and planning decisions?	Have legislative and/or regulatory provisions been made for managing disaster risk?
Yes	95%	81%
No	5%	19%

	National development plan	Sector strategies and plans	Climate change policy and strategy	Poverty reduction strategy papers	CCA/ UNDAF*	Civil defence policy, strategy and contingency planning
Yes	76%	90%	95%	62%	57%	76%
No	24%	10%	5%	38%	43%	24%

\* Common Country Assessment/ UN Development Assistance Framework

**Main constraints & challenges**

A common trend reported in the national self-assessments shows an uneven advance in implementation of the mandates / ordinances established within the regulatory frameworks at the

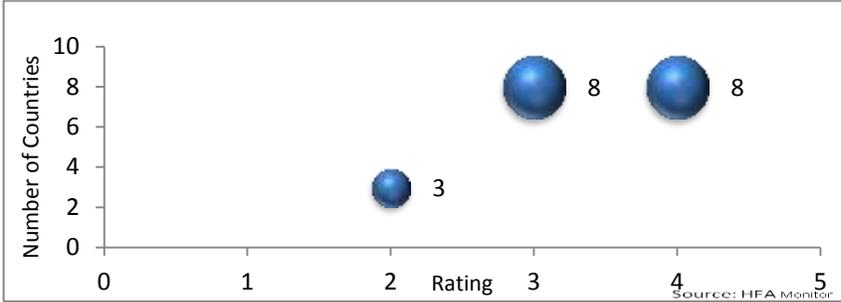
subnational level. Although national agencies with responsibility for DRR report important advances in establishing a governance structures along with allocation of resources and technical capacities at the central level (mostly within National Disaster Organizations); most of the countries report difficulties in the process of implementation at the subnational and local levels. The most common constraints reported as impeding progress at a decentralized level are the lack of resources, access to knowledge or scientific information and inadequate coordination among levels of government (national/subnational/local). In addition, with the exception of the most recent regulatory frameworks, previous frameworks or mechanisms do not appear to adequately address mainstreaming of DRR within sector planning.

An important observation of the reports analyzed demonstrate that at least 30% of countries face constraints in terms of national plans or policies to mainstream DRR when not accompanied by specific laws that establish clear identification of responsibilities and resources at sectoral levels to address DRR.

**Core Indicator 1.2: Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels**

**Main trends and progress**

The evaluation of indicator 2 shows that all countries analyzed here allocate resources to different aspects of DRR, from emergency response and budget allocations for the National Disaster Organizations in 57% of countries and explicit sector allocations reported in the health, education, agriculture, tourism in 42% of countries. It is important to point out the progress made in investment tracking methodologies being implemented or developed in 3 countries and the creation of funds either from contingency loans to grants from government resources for prevention measures or to recovery plans in 5 countries.



In reference to the question on the ratio of the budget allocation to risk reduction versus disaster relief and reconstruction, 100% of countries analyzed either did not indicate or respond to this question.

**Main constraints & challenges**

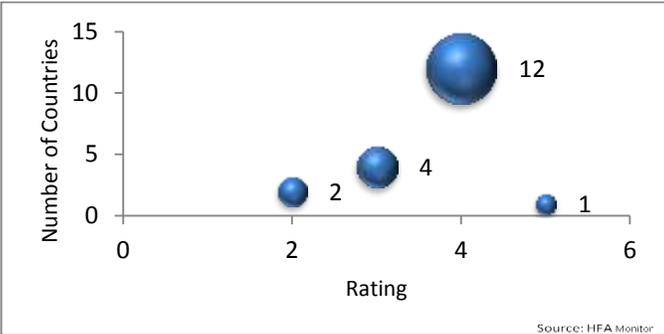
All of the countries indicate that despite an existing allocation of resources for different aspects of DRR, mostly identified for emergency or response and in some cases for sectoral investments, there is difficulty in terms of identifying the total investment carried out by the different sectors. Investment tracking and common standards or mechanisms for identifying allocations to DRR in public investment is perceived as one of the main challenges among 84% of the countries analyzed,

as well as not being able to report on all the investment channeled by the countries in DRR or investment tracking at other administrative or federal levels.

**Core Indicator 1.3: Community participation and decentralization is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources at the local level**

**Main trends and progress**

All of the reporting countries (19) indicate involvement of communities in related activities of DRR. Most activities at the community level were related to preparedness and response (establishment of district response committees in 8 countries (42%). It is important to highlight that in 9 of the reporting countries (47%) existing decentralization policies have contributed to delegate DRR to municipalities or states. Important experiences in promoting community networks for DRR have been described in at least 6 countries (31%) and in the participation and promotion of Global Campaign “Resilient Cities: My City is Getting ready” as vehicle to promote community participation in 5 countries (26%). Two countries presented interesting examples of decentralized responsibilities for the generation of knowledge on DRR (consensus based technology for the development of safe housing techniques) and community networks for resilience.



	Do local governments have legal responsibility and regular / systematic budget allocations for DRR?
Yes	43%
No	57%

	Legislation (Is there a specific legislation for local governments with a mandate for DRR?)	Regular budget allocations for DRR to local government	Estimated % of local budget allocation assigned to DRR
Yes	62%	48%	19%
No response	38%	52%	81%

**Main constraints & challenges**

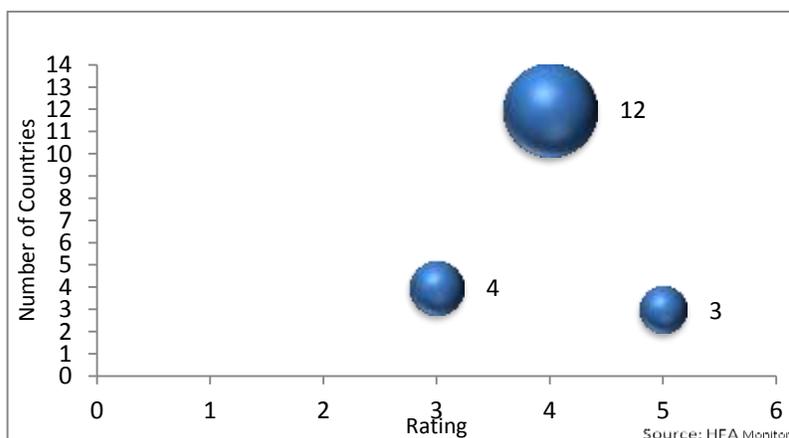
Countries report difficulties in ensuring implementation of DRR at the local level even when there is delegation of authority through local legal frameworks. In many cases decentralization processes have been accompanied with budget allocations from central governments although not explicit for DRR, thus leaving local governments with the responsibility for assigning or prioritizing funds received for DRR. Demands for training from local governments are not met in many cases due to the lack of resources (human and financial) from National Disaster Organizations to ensure adequate

coverage. In addition, reporting countries point out limitations in terms of being able to meet the specific needs of local governments in issues such as safe land, safe building and land tenure. Reporting countries indicate the need to continue addressing the development of local awareness-raising, training and capacity development, as well as the need for evidence-based information in order to increase the political commitment at the local level to prioritize resource allocation within local budgets.

**Core Indicator 1.4: A national multisectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning**

**Main trends and progress**

Ninety-five percent of the countries being looked at here indicate having in place multisectoral mechanisms for DRR but only 26% report having formal multisectoral platforms established. Although most of the countries do not report the existence of National Platforms for DRR *per se*, existing mechanisms are noted that integrate the participation of national organizations from a diversity of sectors and influencing the substantive and/or comprehensive level of achievement self-assessed by most reporting countries (74%). The Caribbean countries describe articulated mechanisms led by the National Disaster Organizations with regular consultation processes. Two reporting countries also mention the key role of the National Platform in the design of national policies for integral risk management.



	Are civil society organizations, national finance and planning institutions, key economic and development sector organizations represented in the national platform?
Yes	86%
No	14%

**Main constraints & challenges**

Countries’ descriptions of Platforms indicate different degrees of activity and participation of the multisectoral mechanisms currently in place. Factors that are noted as limitations in terms of the impact of Platforms include the high level of rotation among members thus affecting the continuity of policy initiatives and proposals, lack of participation and engagement of civil society and private sector representatives and the limited level of appropriation of DRR as a shared responsibility rather than regarding DRR as the sole responsibility of the National Disaster Organizations (NDOs) / HFA Focal Point agencies. Another important aspect mentioned as a constraint was the effective role of

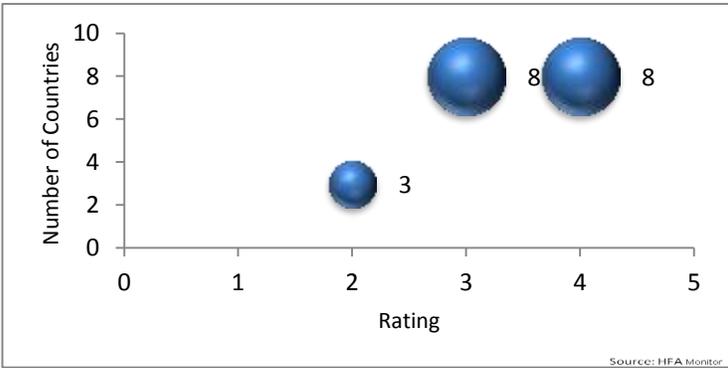
the Platforms and/or mechanisms to influence national policies, legislation or allocation of resources for DRR.

**Priority 2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning**

**Core Indicator 2.1: National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors**

**Main trends and progress**

The analysis reveals some signs of progress with 43% of the countries indicating substantial progress regarding the availability of information derived from risk assessments at the national and local level, including data for key sectors. However, an equal proportion of countries indicate that although there is institutional commitment, there is no substantial achievement in the generation of the information on risk required. It’s worth noting that based on the answer to the key question 2.1, 86% of the countries report the availability of multi-hazard risk information at the national level, and more importantly, report having produced a common methodology to carry out these studies. It seems that only 14% of the countries consider themselves to lack both the multi-hazard risk information and the methodology to perform such studies.



	Is there a national multi-hazard risk assessment with a common methodology available to inform planning and development decisions?
Yes	86%
No	14%

	Are disaster losses and hazards systematically reported, monitored and analyzed?
Yes	90%
No	10%

**Main constraints & challenges**

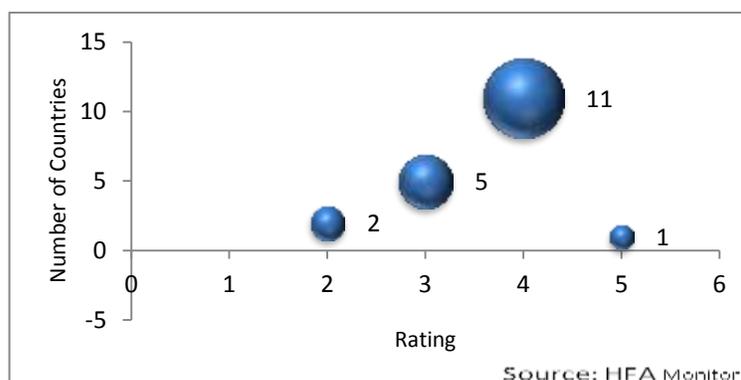
The need to improve governance and coordination mechanisms aligned with subnational entities, with clearly defined responsibilities and means of ensuring accountability is regarded as one of the main challenges to improve information sharing, discussions and collaboration in order to generate multi-hazard risk information and its use to support risk management decision-making.

Technical limitations mentioned refer to the need for improving risk assessment methodologies, particularly in regard to multi-hazard risk, for example on issues concerning the integration of socio-economic data analysis to inform decision-making. At the same time, some countries call for greater efforts aimed at capacity development at the local level. On the other hand, several countries mention the need improve the mechanisms to disseminate available information on risk. Particular emphasis should be placed on bringing the information to the local / community / individual level.

**Core Indicator 2.2: Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities**

**Main trends and progress**

The analysis reveals clear signs of progress, with 52% of the countries indicating a substantial level of progress (level 4) in terms of having systems in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities.



Additionally, 90% of the countries indicate having systems to monitor, report and analyze disaster losses. However, it is worth noting that only 66 % of the countries indicate that: a) the disaster loss databases are regularly updated, b) reports are generated and used in planning by the various ministries and c) hazards are consistently monitored across localities and territorial boundaries.

	Disaster loss databases exist and are regularly updated	Reports generated and used in planning by finance, planning and sectoral line ministries (from disaster databases/ information systems)	Hazards are consistently monitored across localities and territorial boundaries
Yes	67%	67%	67%
N/R	33%	33%	33%

**Main constraints & challenges**

Most countries indicate the need to strengthen efforts and investments towards building a more effective and efficient mechanism for information sharing and for overcoming obstacles in terms of legislative and regulatory frameworks.

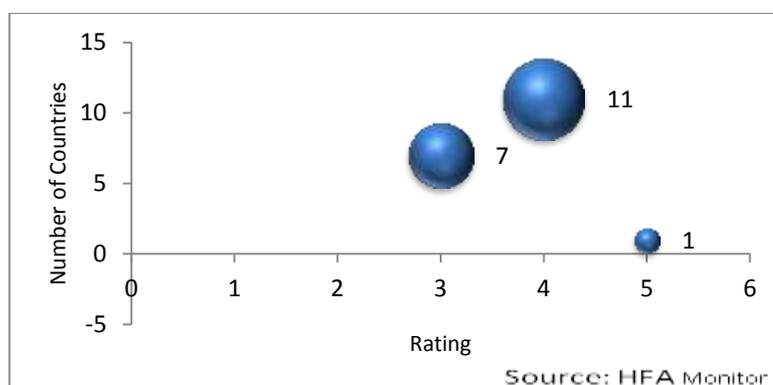
Among the main constraints are issues concerning limited capacity of key stakeholders to effectively use the data, in turn hampering optimal use for decision-making. The use of disaster loss data is not yet mainstreamed into disaster risk reduction planning at all levels. Capacities should be strengthened in order to ensure that all users of the risk data and information are fully aware of how

to incorporate it into decision-making processes, in particular to further understanding of the impact of disasters on economic and social well-being.

### Core Indicator 2.3: Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities

#### Main trends and progress

The analysis reveals clear signs of progress, with 57% of the countries indicating a substantial level of progress (level 4) in the implementation of early warning systems for all major hazards, along with outreach to communities. This, in fact, is the indicator within HFA priority 2 for which self-assessment is rated highest. Supporting this statement is the fact that all reporting countries (100%) indicate that risk-prone communities receive timely and understandable warnings of impending hazard events.



With regards to early warning systems, most countries report: a) acting effectively on early warnings (80%); b) that preparedness measures are in place at the local level (95%); c) the use and application of communication systems and protocols (90%) and d) the media are actively involved in disseminating warnings (80%).

#### Main constraints & challenges

Advances in technology and social media create opportunities to revise the mechanisms for extracting and disseminating information. Responding to these expectations requires considerable investment of time, energy and resources.

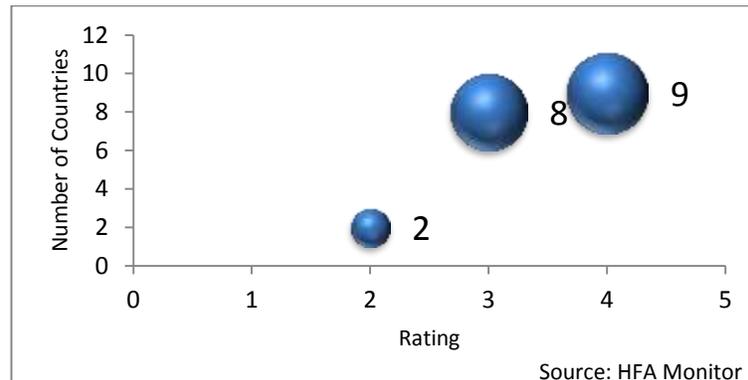
Other issues mentioned include:

- Limited financial resources available to maintain and upgrade early warning systems;
- Difficulties in terms of system maintenance and training across the entire spectrum of early warning;
- In some countries the general public is unaware of key hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

### Core Indicator 2.4: National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans-boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction

#### Main trends and progress

Progress is noted, with 52% of the countries indicating a substantial level of progress (level 4) for national and local risk assessments that take into account regional / trans-boundary risks.



All countries (100%) report participation in regional or sub-regional actions to reduce disaster risk.

Most countries report having established and providing maintenance to regional hazard monitoring systems (85%), having carried out regional or sub-regional risk assessments (90%), having in place regional or sub-regional early warning systems (85%), having established protocols for trans-boundary information sharing (71%) and having established and provided resources for regional and sub-regional strategies and frameworks for cooperation on risk reduction (71%)

#### **Main constraints & challenges**

Capacities within the National Disaster Organizations are regarded to have improved significantly, although much remains to be done with respect to managing trans-boundary risk. Regional and international organizations are called upon to improve coordination among programmes, projects and initiatives in common areas in order to avoid duplication and maximize benefits to all concerned countries.

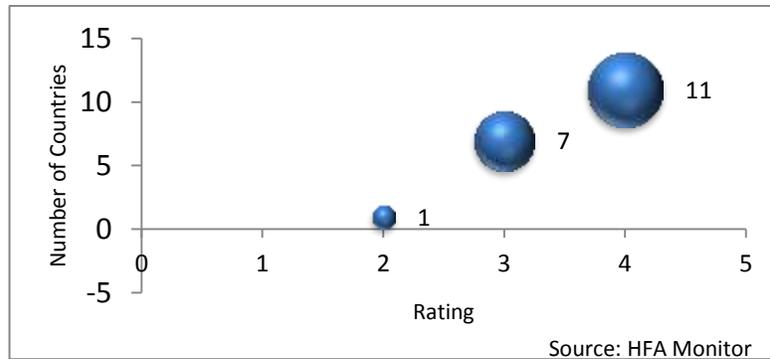
Some countries highlight the need to actively promote and support, both financially and technically, programmes and initiatives aimed at exchanges and collaboration surrounding DRR as a mechanism for strengthening trans-boundary cooperation.

#### **Priority for Action 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels**

**Core indicator 3.1: Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems, etc.)**

#### **Main trends and progress**

Most of the countries report having a disaster information management system in place along with a wide spectrum of media for disseminating information, such as mass media, social media, public lectures, fairs, exhibitions and others. Countries seek to reach stakeholders at the various levels by using a wide range of communication strategies and approaches focusing attention on specific subgroups of the population as specific target groups. Children, the elderly, persons with special needs and tourists are the most commonly noted.



Is there a national disaster information system publicly available?	
Yes	71%
No	29%

	Information is proactively disseminated	Established mechanisms for access / dissemination (internet, public information broadcasts - radio, TV, )	Information is provided with proactive guidance to manage disaster risk
Yes	62%	71%	62%
No	38%	29%	38%

### Main constraints & challenges

Although countries report progress in making data available to the public, the key challenge is noted with regards to disseminating the information among stakeholders at all levels, particularly in more remote communities. Limited or absent connectivity reflects the need to expand the coverage of information and communication technologies.

It is further mentioned that a standardized method for collecting, archiving and disseminating information would increase effectiveness at national and subnational levels. There is a need for greater integration of information systems to ensure access and sharing among public and private or government and non-governmental institutions that would ideally feed information into a consolidated information management system.

Noted limitations in terms of ensuring effective flow and availability of up-to-date data and information include aspects such as limited financing, in some countries often directly linked to specific projects, a short term vision in contrast to a more forward-looking vision of DRR as a long term investment and a lack of adequate human resources or frequent changes in personnel.

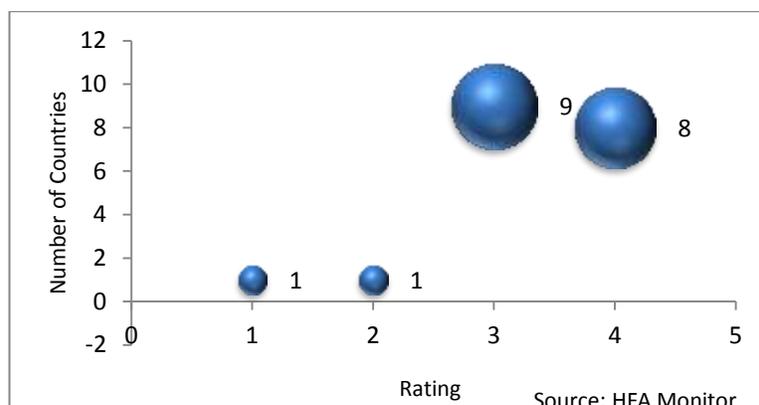
### Core indicator 3.2: School curricula, education material and relevant training include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices

#### Main trends and progress

Almost all countries (90%) indicate that disaster risk reduction is integrated into the school and university curricula. Furthermore, efforts are made to address issues relating to disaster management and disaster risk reduction by, for example:

- developing national campaigns for school children and other stakeholders;

- including DRR in different subject matters within the academic curriculum at all levels, such as within both social and physical science disciplines;
- providing free educational or didactic material.



Is DRR included in the national educational curriculum?	
Yes	90%
No	10%

### Main constraints & challenges

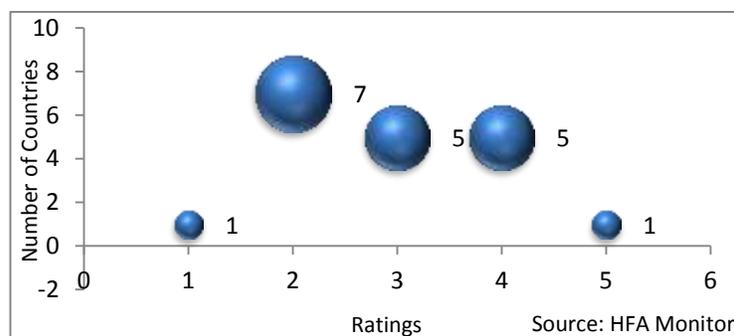
It is recommended that information on disaster risk be integrated into the entire education sector and supplemented with other activities for students at all levels. Many countries report having graduate and/or post-graduate level academic programmes or courses with a focus on disaster risk reduction. The sustainability of some of these training courses does, however, often depend on the availability of funds.

Although countries do report on the integration of DRR in school curricula, as previously mentioned, challenges do remain due, for example, to a lack of adequate policies or regulations to support full integration at all levels. Integration within the curriculum should be pursued, accompanied by training and capacity development among teachers and educators.

### Core indicator 3.3 Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost-benefit analysis are developed and strengthened

#### Main trends and progress

More than 60% of countries indicate that DRR is included in the national scientific applied-research agenda/budget in order to support evidence-based decision-making and the development of tools for risk assessment and disaster risk reduction.



Many countries also mention working with universities on DRR research programmes and projects (71%), some mention that research outputs, products or studies are applied / used by public and private institutions (48%), and several even mention having established foundations or special funds to support research in the field of multi-hazard assessments and cost-benefit analyses.

### Main constraints & challenges

Key challenges noted by participating countries include:

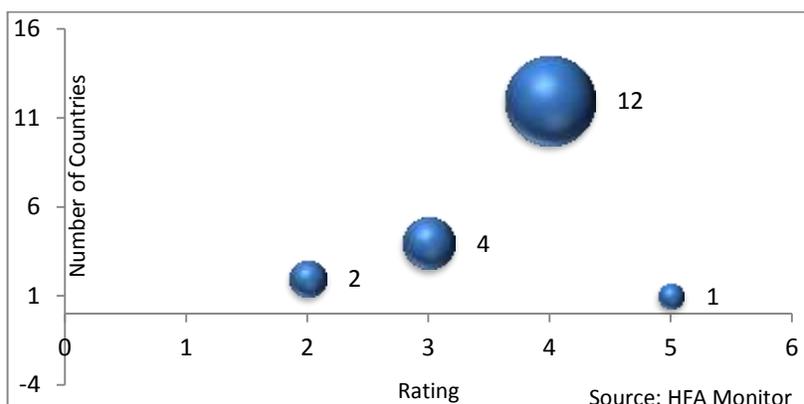
- meaningful dialogue surrounding research findings between scientists and decision-makers in order to support development decisions planning and policy;
- making the results available in an comprehensible and appropriate way;
- inadequate capacity and resource constraints.

In general, the research methods and tools for multi-hazard assessments and cost-benefit analyses need to be strengthened in most of the countries. Only 33% of the reporting countries indicate that studies on the economic costs and benefits of DRR were undertaken.

### Core indicator 3.4: Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities

#### Main trends and progress

Public awareness is considered an important component of disaster risk reduction for all countries. Most countries (90%) report having developed comprehensive public education and awareness-raising campaigns at the national and community levels, while almost all countries report that public education campaigns for risk-prone communities (95%) and local authorities include disaster risk and that training is provided for local governments (90%).



Such programmes are often accompanied by newspapers articles on specific hazards, by radio and television talk shows, as well as by the use of print and online media. Furthermore, simulation exercises and emergency drills aimed at recreating different possible disaster scenarios are used to educate, raise public awareness, expose vulnerabilities and test response capabilities.

It is noted that volunteer programmes are very effective in some countries in order to provide continuous training to community members in order to provide a greater level of support for disaster management activities, including first response to emergencies and disaster situations.

	Public education campaigns for enhanced awareness of risk	Training of local government	Disaster management (preparedness and emergency response)	Preventative risk management (risk and vulnerability)	Guidance for risk reduction	Availability of information on DRR practices at the community level
Responded	90%	90%	86%	81%	67%	67%
No response	10%	10%	14%	19%	33%	33%

### Main constraints & challenges

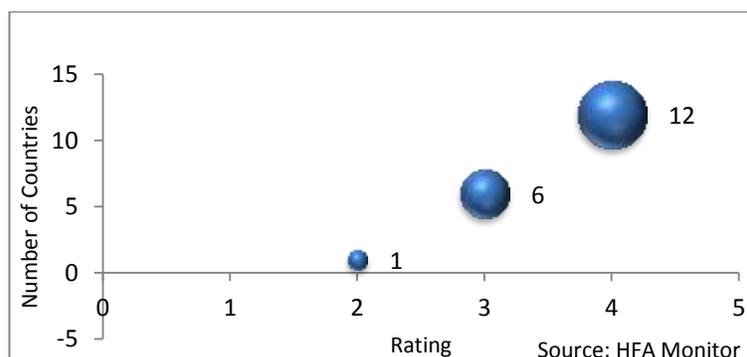
In some cases the most common challenges referred to are that of limited availability of adequate financial and human resources and the lack of appropriate equipment that would permit more extensive public education programmes.

### Priority of Action 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors

**Core Indicator 4.1: Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environmental related policies and plans, including for land use natural resources management and adaptation to climate change**

### Main trends and progress

The analysis reveals clear signs of progress, with 63% of the countries indicating a substantial level of progress (level 4) in terms of disaster risk reduction as an integral objective of environmental related policies and plans, including for land use natural resources management and adaptation to climate change. Most countries (86%) also note having a mechanism in place to protect and restore regulatory ecosystem services (associated with wet lands, mangroves, forests etc.).



Although to varying degrees, countries reveal having environmental regulations, legislative frameworks and policies in place to tackle environmental issues, mainly in relation to climate change (CC) and climate change adaptation (CCA). Almost all countries analyzed report some level of integration of DRR within these policies.

It is, however, important to note that the significant level of advance indicated by over 60 percent of the countries included in this analysis is largely related to environmental management as an ecosystems approach but does not necessarily imply that DRR is well embedded or is an integral objective of environmental policies and plans, despite recognition of the need to link DRR within environmental management and sustainable development policies and plans.

	Protected areas legislation	Payment for ecosystem services (PES)	Integrated planning (for example coastal zone management)	Environmental impacts assessments (EIAs)	Climate change adaptation projects and programmes
Yes	95%	48%	76%	95%	81%
No response	5%	52%	24%	5%	19%

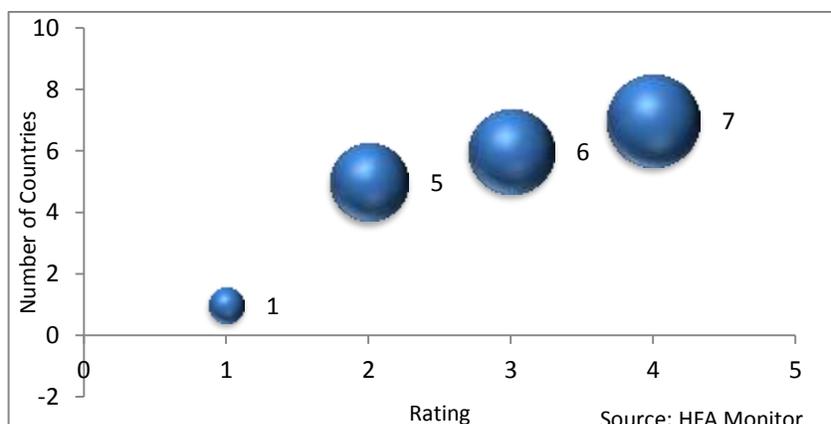
### **Main constraints & challenges**

The need for financial support, budgetary allocation, strengthening of capacities and human resources, public awareness and enforcement of laws and regulations are a common trend reported by the countries; along with the need for greater political and institutional commitment at both the national and local levels.

### **Core Indicator 4.2 – Social development policies and plans implemented to reduce vulnerability of those most at risk**

#### **Main trends and progress**

Progress is still somewhat limited for this indicator, with the most advance reported by middle or high income countries. Most countries (86%) do, however, consider social safety nets exist to increase the resilience of risk prone households and communities. Areas of progress or initiatives in development refer largely to employment, housing, crops and property in terms of insurance schemes and in a few cases to risk transfer mechanisms; while focus is largely on agriculture, crop production, housing and infrastructure, as well as on persons with special needs, elderly, women and informal settlements, to varying degrees. Among Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), emphasis is on environment and natural resources. Main focus is on social development in terms of poverty alleviation, with explicit links among several countries to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Only in several instances are direct links made between efforts in this area to most vulnerable populations as directly integrated with risk management and disaster risk reduction. Several countries mention articulation among national and local levels of government, public and private sectors but the need for greater cohesion among stakeholders and across levels of intervention is noted, whether explicitly or implicitly.



	Crop and property insurance	Temporary employment guarantee schemes	Conditional and unconditional cash transfers	Micro finance (savings, loans, etc.)	Micro insurance
Responded	76%	33%	52%	62%	38%
No response	24%	67%	48%	38%	62%

### Main constraints & challenges

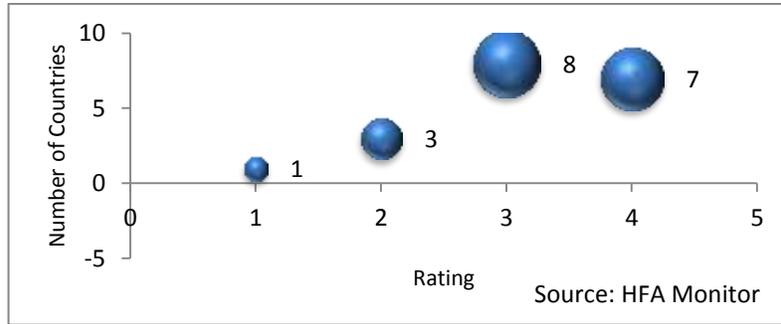
While insurance policies and schemes are available to most populations in many countries, due to limited resources the issue persists that many people do not avail themselves of this as a means of reducing vulnerability. Land tenure is also an aspect that impedes progress. Particularly among lower income countries, the issue of need for greater stakeholder involvement to facilitate subsidies as well as a more proactive involvement of populations most at need rather than maintaining dependence on assistance and aid, whether through government or foreign aid.

### Core Indicator 4.3: Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce vulnerability of economic activities

#### Main trends and progress

Almost all countries indicate conducting efforts towards the inclusion of DRR within sectorial policies and plans as in poverty reduction schemes; particularly in relation to economy and finance, agriculture, housing, public works, health, education, tourism and infrastructure. Most countries report that the costs and benefits of disaster risk reduction are incorporated into the planning of public investment (67%), that both national and sectoral public investment systems incorporating DRR (62%) as well as investments in retrofitting infrastructures including schools and hospitals (71%).

More than 60% of countries consider that they are advancing in or at least recognize the need to factor in DRR within land use planning, national planning and investment systems, albeit with different degrees of progress among countries.



**Main constraints & challenges**

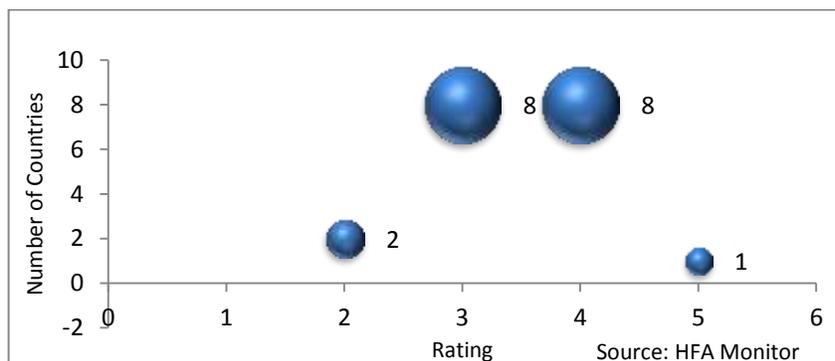
Among the main concerns raised by countries are the lack of reliable data and information, economic incentives for DRR, public awareness, capacity development and financial resources. Furthermore, there is a noted need for greater articulation and coherence among sectors and levels of governance, for greater involvement and participation, for linking DRR and CCA with approaches aimed at integrated watershed management, land-use planning and ecosystems and ensuring enforcement.

**Core Indicator 4.4: Planning and Management of human settlements incorporate DRR, including enforcing of building codes**

**Main trends and progress**

Progress is being made in terms of policies and plans for land-use regulation and for building and construction codes, particularly in terms of seismic risk and often as a result of lessons learned due to damages and losses resulting from previous events. Most countries note progress in terms of vulnerability reduction in new developments and infrastructure, mostly in urban areas, in compliance with standards and regulations, particularly with regards to seismic risk, flooding (drainage and coastal) and landslides; as well as small-scale, low cost measures targeting drainage in particular as well as capacity development for safer construction and building practices.

In some instances countries are progressing with legislature and policies to enforce more stringent building codes and zoning, although enforcement is still an issue for many countries. Capacity development, particularly in construction practices, as well as earmarked budget allocations, land-use regulations and zoning bylaws and specific projects are helping to advance in this area but progress is not always systematic or nation-wide. Drivers of progress include foreign investment through projects by the international community, climate change and environmental concerns as well as post-event reconstruction, relocation and recovery.



	Is there investment to reduce the risk of vulnerable urban settlements?
Yes	86%
No	14%

In response to whether or not there is investment in place to reduce the risk of vulnerable urban settlements, 85% of reporting countries responded yes, 10% responded no and 5% did not respond.

	Investment in drainage infrastructure in flood prone areas	Slope stabilisation in landslide prone areas	Training of masons on safe construction technology	Provision of safe land and housing for low income households and communities	Risk sensitive regulation in land zoning and private real estate development	Regulated provision of land titling
Yes	90%	67%	62%	48%	57%	48%
No	10%	33%	38%	52%	43%	52%

### Main constraints & challenges

Challenges are largely noted with reference to pre-existing housing stock, communities and particularly informal settlements, buildings and infrastructure that predate more recent technological advances and resulting reliable information and more advanced safety standards and therefore do not comply with more recent norms and regulations. Housing and communities dating back to before the current legislation, risk evaluations, policies, definition of standards and norms, national-level risk mapping therefore present a challenge in terms of enforcement, retrofitting and improvement to existing buildings and infrastructure. Retrofitting and improvements are sought but require major investment.

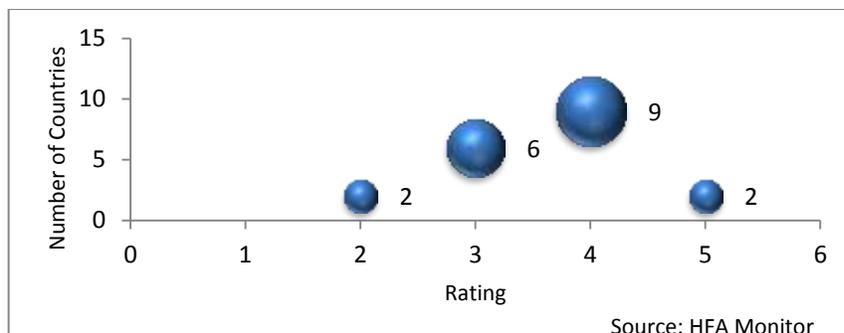
Land tenure is also a contributing factor that deters compliance with norms, regulations and codes. Some countries also mention lack of transparency and political will for enforcing of regulations, particularly among private investment endeavors. Policies exist but are often not systematically enforced. Many notable advances are due to specific projects at the local or municipal level and often as a result of foreign assistance rather than nation-wide systematic practices. Instances of how to ensure cohesion and articulation among local governments is another issue that reinforces the need for greater articulation and country-wide multi-hazard risk mapping and GIS in order to facilitate adequate risk maps and informed decision-making. Another issue that is noted is that of adequate financial and human resources among local governments to ensure compliance and adherence to acceptable practices and standards. Safer schools and hospitals were not widely mentioned, nor was soil erosion and land degradation.

### Core Indicator 4.5: Disaster Risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes

#### Main trends and progress

While all of the reports analyzed indicate some measure of advance in terms of post-disaster recovery, with 90% of countries reporting a level of progress of either having obtained institutional commitment and/or substantial or comprehensive achievement and most countries (86%) claiming post-disaster programmes that explicitly incorporate and budget for DRR for resilient recovery; a

textual review of the reports in fact reveals that DRR is not necessarily adequately incorporated into these processes. The availability of contingency funds or financial resources at the national and/or local level to cope with disaster impacts and recovery efforts are an important driver of progress in this regard.



Almost half of the countries analyzed report that DRR is included in recovery actions, while just under 40% mention the availability of funds for recovery of disaster impacts. In some instances, recovery is being carried out directly by individual sectors, particularly those sectors most impacted by disasters such as transportation, housing, energy and agriculture.

Relocation of affected populations, housing policies and building codes as well as gender issues during recovery and involvement of local governments and populations were issues of noted interest. Mexico, for example, is a member of GFDRR’s Consultative Council and is keen to share their experience, provide advice and disseminate their good practices surrounding contingency funds and recovery.

**Main constraints & challenges**

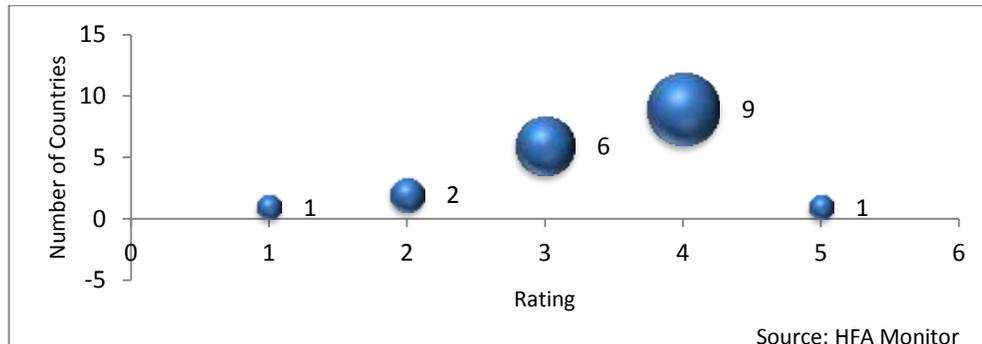
The main constraints noted by countries relate to the lack of public awareness and a culture of prevention, not taking into account the negative effects and impacts of previous events, the lack of clearly defined responsibilities and overall national recovery guidelines and limited availability of information regarding lessons learned from relevant experiences and about recovery processes to facilitate and orient these processes. Other issues raised include a lack of adequate financial resources and insufficient budgetary allocation, limited human resources, poor integration of local needs and gender concerns, as well as a lack of planning and coordination among sectors.

**Core Indicator 4.6: Procedures in place to assess impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure**

**Main trends and progress**

Most progress is noted in higher income countries with availability of multi-hazard data and adequate environmental and risk assessments; largely through policies and legislation at the national level. Progress is also noted among projects financed by the international community. Instances of progress are also noted in relation to reconstruction projects post-disaster. While over 75% of countries report that the impacts of disaster risk that are created by major development projects are assessed and that the impacts of disaster risk are taken into account in Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), less than half the countries note that cost/benefits of disaster risk are taken into account in the design and operation of major development projects. Furthermore, while just over

half of the reporting countries note this to be a consideration among development projects carried out by national and sub-national authorities and institutions, in the case of projects by the international community, less than 40% of countries noted such procedures to assess impacts.



### Main constraints & challenges

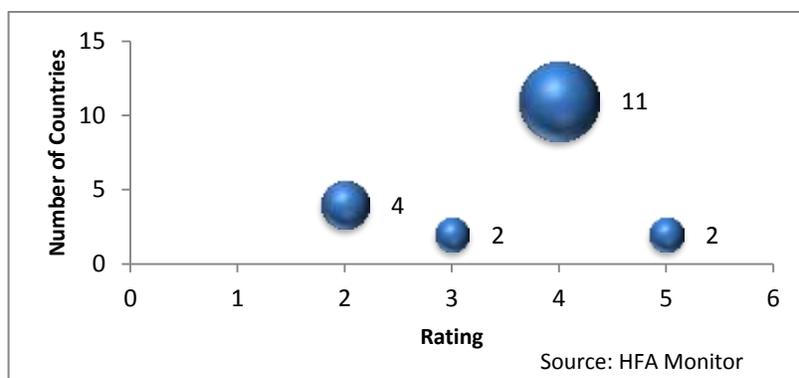
Challenges lay largely with availability of up-to-date and adequate data and information as well as enforcement issues and adequate financial and human resources. Another factor impeding progress is that of DRR criteria in private investments, in contrast to environmental criteria which shows to be somewhat more advanced but do not always account for vulnerability reduction or disaster risk reduction. Improved access to reliable information surrounding multi-hazard projections or risk scenarios is deemed important in order to facilitate forward-looking decision-making cognizant of the true costs and benefits of investment decisions; not only in economic terms but also in terms of the social and environmental costs as well as the benefits incurred by avoidance of potential loss and damages. Improvements to existing infrastructure are not as advanced as efforts targeting new developments. Although the reporting countries provided several mentions of safer schools and hospitals based on the application of indices, these efforts are found to be seldom systematic. While all countries report progress in terms of the inclusion of environmental assessments for new development projects, it is not always clear that the recommendations are adhered to or that there is a system in place to ensure consistency, monitoring and accountability over time; particularly with regards to private investment. Several countries involve their Ministries of Economy and Finance in this regard.

### Priority for action 5: Strengthened disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

#### **Core Indicator 5.1: Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place**

### Main trends and progress

In general, the majority of countries in the Americas have been successful at incorporating disaster risk reduction into national programmes and policies for disaster preparedness, contingency planning and response (90%); some of them through the development of national policies (for example Costa Rica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, USA).



Significant progress has been achieved to ensure the right level of preparedness and safety in most countries, with over 65% of countries indicating either a substantial or comprehensive level of progress (levels 4 and 5). Emergency management plans are being developed at national as well as at subnational levels to ensure that all jurisdictions have arrangements in place to manage emergencies and to ensure that there are no major gaps (Barbados, Canada, Cuba, USA). Risk scenarios have been developed for various types of hazards and in some cases community-based plans are also being formulated, reviewed and updated on a yearly basis (Costa Rica, Mexico, USA). In various countries, emergency centres for assisting emergency response officials with handling hazardous materials are available on a 24/7 basis.

Progress is being made in the education and health sectors through the implementation of school safety plans, policies on school safety and strengthening of the health sector for emergencies, disasters and epidemics (Chile, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Saint Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago, USA). Most countries report that future disaster risks are anticipated through scenario development and aligned preparedness planning (76%) and on national programmes or policies to make schools and health facilities safe in emergencies (81%). In Bolivia, for example, a contingency plan for each school has been developed by the Ministry of Education. The implementation of these plans, however, is seen as a challenge.

Only a few countries report on the availability of a comprehensive package of financial mechanisms for disaster prevention and response as well as insurance and contingency funds (Costa Rica, Mexico, USA).

### **Main constraints & challenges**

Main constraints identified relate to the difficulties in keeping disaster management plans up to date, well tested and applied; as well as in securing dedicated, ongoing funding for disaster risk reduction. Some preparedness and response efforts are still being done in on *ad hoc* basis and require additional staff with the adequate skills to enhance them.

A few countries report uneven levels of progress with attention being concentrated in urban and coastal areas with less attention being given to rural areas. Integrating disaster risk reduction into sectoral ministries governing the main economic and productive sectors is also reported as a challenge. Furthermore several countries consider that there is limited integration of disaster risk management in social development policies catering to the needs of the elderly, persons living with HIV and persons with special needs or disabilities, among others.

In the case of Argentina, for example, the low frequency of disaster events makes it harder to raise the level of awareness of the population; whereas in Haiti, difficulties are being reported in achieving a behavioral change of decision-makers surrounding vulnerability reduction in schools and hospitals. In Cuba, the high number of deteriorated buildings (including some schools and hospitals) with structural damages pose an important threat that extends into the future.

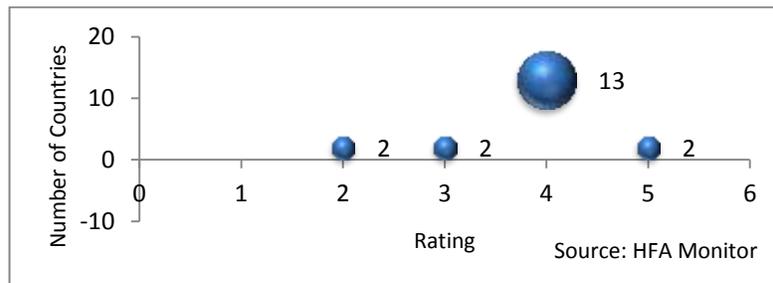
Although political will exists, several countries indicate that existing disaster risk management mechanisms are still fragile and need to be decentralized to the subnational level along with the development of a common perspective for enhancing comprehensive disaster risk reduction actions.

Several countries report that an increase in intensity of meteorological phenomena due to climate change poses a difficult challenge when formulating forecasts and scenarios.

**Core Indicator 5.2: Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place in all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes**

**Main trends and progress**

The development of preparedness and emergency plans is already a common practice within most countries of the region. Gender aspects and the needs of children, persons with special needs / physical disabilities and senior citizens are taken into consideration although not in all countries. A complete set of national and sectoral disaster management plans are available and a wide range of simulation exercises and drills are carried out on a regular basis (Anguilla, Barbados, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Grenada, Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Uruguay). Some countries supplement these efforts with business continuity planning (BCP).



Plans are also available and tested at subnational and territorial levels. Several countries report on the support being provided to national efforts by private enterprises as part of their social corporate responsibility programmes (Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, USA). The private sector is being encouraged to develop strategic emergency management plans and BCP. In the case of Grenada, the tourism sector is mentioned as an example of private sector participation in the development of sector-specific disaster preparedness plans. Households are also being involved through a campaign called “Get Prepared”.

Search and rescue and first response teams have been established in most countries but with differing capacities and levels of technical know-how. The concept and practice of Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) has been formally established. Most countries have fully functional EOCs at the national level and some at the subnational and municipal level, particularly in major cities

although in some cases with limited capacities. Standard operating procedures are being developed to ensure proper inter-institutional coordination and action protocols.

	Are the contingency plans, procedures and resources in place to deal with a major disaster?
Yes	95%
No	5%

	Plans and programmes are developed with gender sensitivities	Risk management/contingency plans for continued basic service delivery	Operations and communications centre	Search and rescue teams	Stockpiles of relief supplies	Shelters	Secure medical facilities	Dedicated provision for disabled and elderly in relief, shelter and emergency medical facilities	Businesses are a proactive partner in planning and delivery of response
Yes	33%	71%	90%	90%	86%	76%	52%	48%	71%
No response	67%	29%	10%	10%	14%	24%	48%	52%	29%

### Main constraints & challenges

Comprehensive disaster preparedness planning is hindered by a number of factors; inter alia, financing (Grenada, Haiti, Saint Kitts & Nevis), insufficient human resources, high staff rotation and a reactive approach to disaster preparedness among public and private sector officials. Lack of coordination and specialized equipment were also viewed as constraints as well as the need to make information available about gender-sensitive emergency planning.

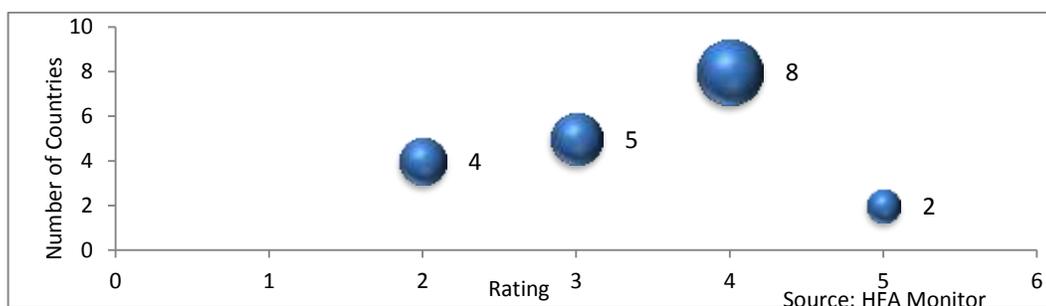
Training needs to be scaled-up and be sustained to ensure implementation and testing of plans at the national level (Anguilla, Chile). In the case of Cuba, reaching a higher level of awareness at the community level and updating and improving training and preparedness plans were underlined as key elements to be improved.

Some countries report that plans are outdated and are neither being regularly revised nor being systematically tested (Dominican Republic, Panama). The level of progress is viewed by several countries as highly uneven and with incipient private sector involvement (Costa Rica, Grenada). Trinidad and Tobago reports that plans are not following a unified format, thus hindering interoperability and generating gaps. Mexico highlights the need to strengthen the legislative framework and disaster risk reduction instruments to improve risk monitoring and control with emphasis on prevention and early recovery.

### Core Indicator 5.3: Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required

#### Main trends and progress

Most governments have established National Emergency Funds or Financial Disaster Assistance Programmes and some countries have established dedicated budget allocations for preventative and reactive purposes. The majority of funds, however, are mainly for disaster relief activities and in some cases are considered insufficient to cover actual demand as determined based on historic experiences. In a few cases, if the yearly financial reserve is not utilized it can be used for shelter improvement and other preparedness activities.



One out of every 4 countries analyzed here reports having signed on for contingency credits with multilateral banks (Costa Rica, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama and Peru). In addition, risk-sensitive public investment practices are being promoted through guidelines and training in a constantly growing number of countries. Other financial mechanisms have been developed for the agriculture sector and at the subnational and territorial levels.

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) based on a pooled approach remains as a good practice for transferring earthquake and hurricane risk at lower-than-market rates for events that surpass pre-defined parameters in participating countries. Furthermore, crop insurance for small farmers is being developed to transfer risk from wind and excess rain through the implementation of the innovative Climate Risk Adaptation and Insurance in the Caribbean Programme.

A few countries report the availability of complementary funds nurtured by private donation programmes (Haiti, Saint Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago). In the USA, the private sector has made substantial investments through insurance, reinsurance, catastrophe bonds and other market mechanisms. Mexico's Natural Disaster Fund (FONDEN) is developing additional risk transfer mechanisms through insurance coverage for high-magnitude events and/or for increased frequency. This mechanism would provide a comprehensive coverage of all public assets insured by FONDEN including infrastructure (health, education, roads, ports, communications, energy, tourism) forests, conservation areas, historic sites, rivers and lakes.

Although in modest amounts, disaster relief funds are also available through inter-governmental organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) for their respective member states or participating governments.

	Are financial arrangements in place to deal with major disaster?
Yes	95%
No	5%

	National contingency and calamity funds	The reduction of future risk is considered in the use of calamity funds	Insurance and reinsurance facilities	Catastrophe bonds and other capital market mechanisms
Yes	76%	38%	57%	29%
N/R	24%	62%	43%	71%

### Main constraints & challenges

Existing emergency funds are frequently insufficient to cover actual needs, which can cause the slowing down of response efforts (Barbados) and cash-flow problems. Bureaucratic procedures are also reported by several countries as a factor that slows down access to financial resources in times of crisis. In Bolivia, for example, although mandated by law, emergency fund reserves have not been implemented. In Haiti, the difficult financial situation is seen as the major constraint.

Some countries are reporting that due to the rising costs of disasters, the identification of alternative measures such as pre-disaster mitigation to complement current arrangements is required. The need for a unified approach to rationalize the use of all the emergency funds available has also been noted.

The limited funding made available for disaster risk reduction and preparedness is seen as an important constraint (Chile, Cuba, Saint Kitts and Nevis). Inadequate understanding of the importance of establishing contingency funds or financial reserves as a proactive disaster risk management tool is a major constraint for effective response and recovery. Investment in disaster risk management is only now beginning to be viewed as an investment rather than a liability (Grenada).

While some countries report difficulties in finding a solution to provide crop insurance coverage to climate change-related vulnerabilities, others are anticipating that climate change and other environmental degradation concerns will contribute to accelerating increased funding for and investments in disaster risk management.

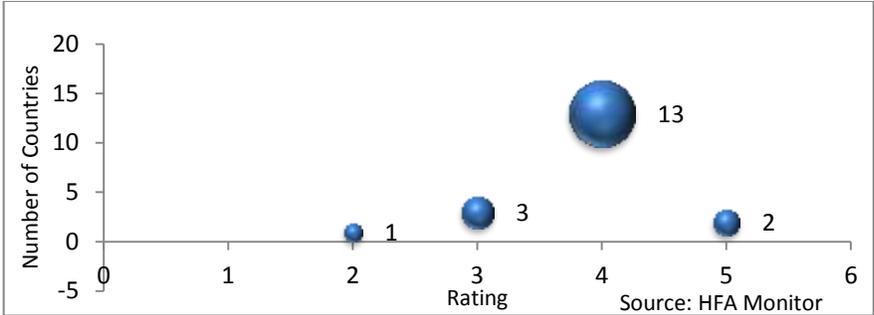
Mexico, the country with probably the most diversified portfolio of disaster and risk reduction funds, highlights the need to promote a financial insurance culture among civil society, particularly among the population that has limited resources to buy insurance. The few countries that still do not have emergency funds (Argentina, Grenada, and Panama) regard this situation as an important constraint that requires urgent action.

### Core Indicator 5.4: Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters and to undertake post-event reviews

#### Main trends and progress

Many countries report that standardized formats are being used for carrying-out post-disaster damage and needs assessments (DANA). These formats are being used as the basis for the release of

emergency resources (Anguilla, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, USA). Although these formats are being used systematically, in some countries, however, there is still a need to adjust them so that they can be used by all sectors, particularly economic development and disaster relief.



In most countries, Emergency Operations Centres have been established at the different territorial levels to ensure that response and recovery activities are well coordinated and effective. Emergency Telecommunications and Broadcast Systems have also been developed in most countries.

Many countries report that post-event reviews are carried out systematically and serve to update and review response and recovery plans and standard operating procedures. A few countries have established on-going tracking mechanisms of corrective actions and improvement initiatives (Canada, USA). In the USA, a Disaster and Failure Studies repository for disasters has been established to identify common vulnerabilities to which hazard mitigation strategies can be developed to reduce risk. Some countries underline the need to improve capacities for conducting post-event reports, standardize the process and train the main stakeholders in order to facilitate formulation.

Has an agreed method and procedure been adopted to assess damage, loss and needs when disasters occur? All countries responded affirmatively.

	Damage and loss assessment methodologies and capacities available	Post-disaster need assessment methodologies	Post-disaster needs assessment methodologies include guidance on gender aspects	Identified and trained human resources
Yes	95%	95%	95%	95%
N/R	5%	5%	5%	5%

**Main constraints & challenges**

Some countries report that no standardized damage and needs assessment methodology is employed by sectoral agencies and point out that outdated baseline data negatively impact the credibility of the costs of damages reported, particularly in the case of the agriculture sector. In some cases, damage and needs assessment forms being used do not include financial components and the estimation of financial losses has still to be developed.

A few countries report that existing legislative instruments limit the sharing of agency-specific information during non-disaster periods. In other cases, the lack of instruments to overcome unwillingness to share information by some agencies was noted (Grenada, Argentina). Only a few

countries report the absence of a standard damage and needs assessment format and although some information exists it is not made available to all the stakeholders (Argentina, Panama). The unavailability of web-based damage and needs assessment formats to upload damage and loss data and the need to harmonize existing formats with those used by international humanitarian organizations in case of major disasters were also underlined.

Training programmes should be put in place for personnel in charge of filling out the standard forms so as to meet the required quality standards as well as to ensure that the evaluation of damages and replacement costs are more precise and reliable (Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Haiti). Furthermore, training of technical staff in charge of gathering and analysing the information and interpreting data to support the decision-making process is identified as a key issue in Guatemala.

Other constraints mentioned by several countries highlight the need to incorporate the findings of damage and needs assessment in future emergency response plans and the fact that these forms are complicated for users at the local level (Dominican Republic).

Regarding emergency communication systems, the need to strengthen these systems, particularly in communities in remote areas is highlighted by Cuba.