***MODULE 1 ASSIGNMENT***

1.With relevant examples define the following

a) Disaster management. As defined by the IFRC, disaster management is the organization and management of resources that are available and at disposal of a disaster during an emergency. An example is the DRM cycle, or it can be a DRM Policy.

b) Hazard. Is generally a potentially devastating event. For example a drought, an epidemic or a volcano eruption.

c) Emergency. Is defined as a situation that requires immediate action to try to contain its potential damage. For example a fire that risks massive spreading.

d) Disaster. It is generally defined as a catastrophe. The IFRC defines it as a disruption of the functioning of a community/ population/ country that causes serious damages and losses. It can be caused by nature together with social conditions, or it can be man-made. Examples are a food crisis, a famine, extensive loss of crops or livestock, massive destruction to infrastructures, schools or hospitals.

e) Vulnerability. It represents weaknesses for example of communities or institutions that define how vulnerable is a population. For example lack of knowledge, lack of relevant laws and regulations, proximity to a river, a volcano or a mountain.

f) Risk. Hazard x vulnerability / capacities = risk. Risk depends on the frequency and the intensity of emergency events. Risk is generally measures as high, medium or low.

2. Explain the **challenges** facing disaster management in **developing countries**.

One main challenge identified when facing DRM in developing countries is that, because they are **disproportionately affected**, most countries will probably keep having low socio-economical standards. This represents a **vicious circle** from which it is difficult to get out, affecting the general growth and progress of a region or a whole country.

**Weak governments and institutions** are also a major challenge, as they often lack skills and resources for DRM.

Additionally **lack of information, training and knowledge** of populations-at-risk can be challenging, because they may live in rural difficult to reach areas, they may not have access to information channels or populations may speak different languages.

Additionally, the **geographical location** is a burden, particularly if the country lies between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, where most disasters occur. Governments and populations need to prepare and mitigate against the effects as much as possible, as a relocation/resettlement of this entire region is obviously impossible.

3. Identify **three types of disasters** and explain the **counter measures** to be taken for each of

them.

Although **earthquakes** prone areas are usually well identified, this kind of disaster has no warning. It can have extreme devastating effects on live, economic means, habitability, mental health, assets and access to basic products and services. Some effective countermeasures can be warning system, a well prepared institutionality and civil society to face emergency, appropriate regulations for buildings and infrastructures.

Some important counter measures in case of **flood** prone areas are the use of Early Warning Systems like drones, pluviometers, measurements higher up the hill, evacuation plans, relocation of affected communities, major or even small infrastructures (dams, dikes, walls)

In case of **landslides**, very common in Colombia, where I live, counter measures include monitoring systems, land use regulations and identification of at-risk areas to avoid constructions or human settlements.

For the three disasters identified, common counter measures include risk assessments, contingency plans, building regulations, preparation of institutions and civil society, equipment and materials as well as education and simulations/drills.

4. Using your own examples, explain the importance of having **trained personnel** in effective

disaster management.

It is essential to have trained personnel in all different components of the disaster management cycle. Training can happen in **theoretical education, as well as in practical contexts**. **Coachers and professors** need to be professionals with acquired experience in the relevant sector and area. As DRM greatly depends on the context, its application need to be **case by case**. Personnel needs to receive contextualized training and practice in order to provide the **best solutions** to the different disaster management cycle elements.

Personnel which is not well prepared **may even cause more damage** than support. Several examples exist where lives and risks were put at stake by untrained personnel.

Although it is also important to have experienced professionals, especially coordinators, people who have no or **little DRM experience can also be assets** especially if accompanied by good coaching, clear instructions and effective leadership.

**In my personal case**, before starting this certificate course, I was lacking formal training on DRM. This resulted in weak confidence and knowledge when assessing technical elements of a DRM project. During monitoring missions, especially at the beginning of my current job, I lacked elements that I could share with implementing partners on the field to improve the effectiveness of disaster preparedness strategies. However I consider that **field practice** has also provided me with some very good elements of knowledge that help me contribute with some detailed advice as well as a more strategic big picture of an action. Now, after training received in practice in the field of DRM, especially with vulnerable communities in Colombia and Bolivia, the **academic training** I am currently receiving is supporting further the foundations on which I can better assess, monitor, accompany and evaluate DRM projects.

5. Outline the steps/processes in the **disaster management cycle** with the help of a **diagram**

**The disaster management cycle can be represented with this circle diagram:**

6. What are the **impacts** of disaster management on **National Development**?

The impacts of the lack of proper Disaster Management are generally **worse** that they would have otherwise been. A proper and realistic disaster risk management policy at national or local level can have a huge impact on National Development. If well implemented, the Policy can save lives, spare livelihood loss, minimize the risks. For this purpose, and in order to be the most effective possible, the Policy needs to identify areas of **mutual interest** and relationship with other national policies. This particularly apply to National Development.

It is important for a country to understand **how programs and projects of the National Development can affect disaster risks and vice versa.**

Some of the specific impacts of disaster management on National Development are that if disaster risks are not sufficiently taken into consideration they can have very **negative effects** for a population or an entire country. Concrete examples include loss of subsistence goods like crops or livestocks which have a direct **impact on food security**; damage to infrastructure for **access to basic necessities**, for example lack of potable water will have a direct impact on the health of affected populations. More long term impacts relate with communication and **transportation means**, access to **school** and education, access to **health** services.

On the other hand, disaster management needs to work hand in hand with National Development and cannot be a loose end. By cooperating and articulating, disasters may even be considered an “opportunity” for a better, more inclusive and more effective development.