

Mumbai Disaster Risk Management – Scientific Knowledge for Public Policy

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Mumbai is one of the megacities of the world, and is India's commercial capital. The city has a population of around 13 million within its municipal limits and the total population of the urban agglomeration exceeds 25 million. Like most other megacities of the world, Mumbai faces very high disaster risk with limited ability to fully respond or control. The city has a very complex administrative structure that requires extensive coordination for effective disaster management.

Mumbai became the first major Indian city to develop and implement a comprehensive disaster management plan in 1998. The plan was based on the experiences of the city in dealing with various natural and man-made disasters. However, effective disaster management requires understanding the emerging risks and the consequences of low-probability high-impact events and can not rely only on past experiences. The disaster management system of a megacity also needs to consider the secondary and tertiary consequences of disasters in the regional, national and international context.

An important challenge in developing a disaster risk management plan is to ensure that the plan is mainstreamed. This requires high-level understanding of the risk among various stakeholders, understanding of the legal, institutional and financial framework under which the plan is to be implemented and poses tremendous challenges in working together of various stakeholders, each with their own mandate and priorities.

Mumbai is currently developing its comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Master Plan (DRMMP) for the city. The DRMMP uses state-of-the-art flood and earthquake risk assessment. The talk discusses the characteristics of Mumbai and the importance of its disaster management system. The presentation will highlight salient details of the DRMMP and the importance of scientific knowledge for mainstreaming disaster risk management.

