

2009 Pan Asia Forest Fire Symposium
1-7 February 2009, Busan, South Korea

Regional South Asia Wildfire Incident Management System (WIMS): Need for Intervention

Sundar P. Sharma

Coordinator

UNISDR- Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network

UNISDR- Global Wildland Fire Network

3 February 2009

Email: sharmasp1966@yahoo.com



http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/South_Asia/Front_RSAWFN.html

Wildfire in South Asia

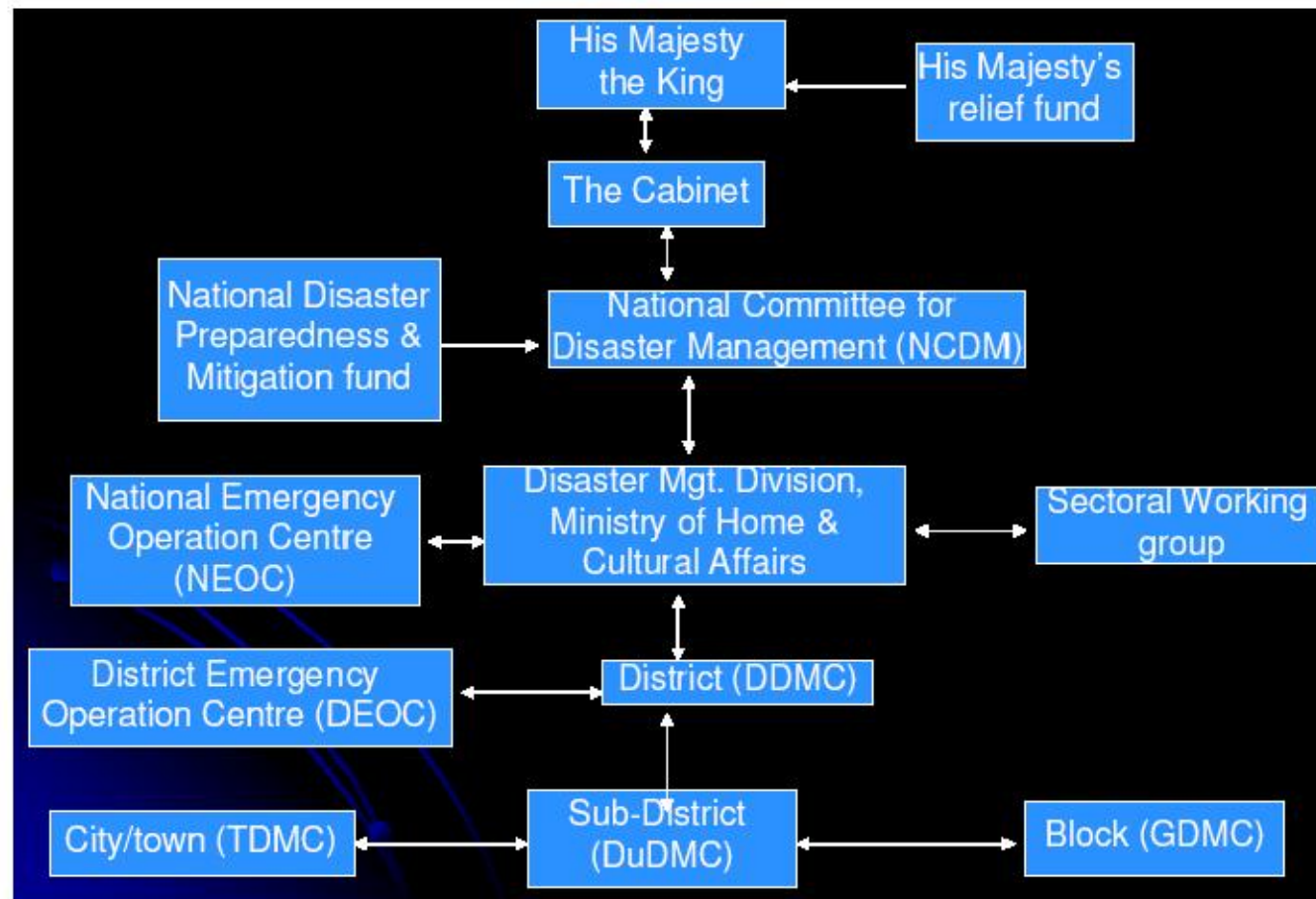
- ☐ Wildfires have been emerging as the most common disaster since last decade, adversely impacting socio-economy and environment of the countries in the South Asian region
- ☐ Hindu Kush-Himalayas are more frequently vulnerable to wildfire due to increasing human intervention in the fragile mountain ecosystems
- ☐ fire fighting operations are extremely difficult due to steep mountain landscapes, scarce water sources, poor communication, lack of infrastructure and human resources
- ☐ Almost all fires are human-induced

WIMS in South Asia

Almost all countries have institutional arrangement to response disasters.

However, specific Wildfire Incident Management Systems (WIMS) in the countries in the region are either not existing or in a premature stage.

Disaster Management in Bhutan



Source: Dema 2006

Disaster Management in India

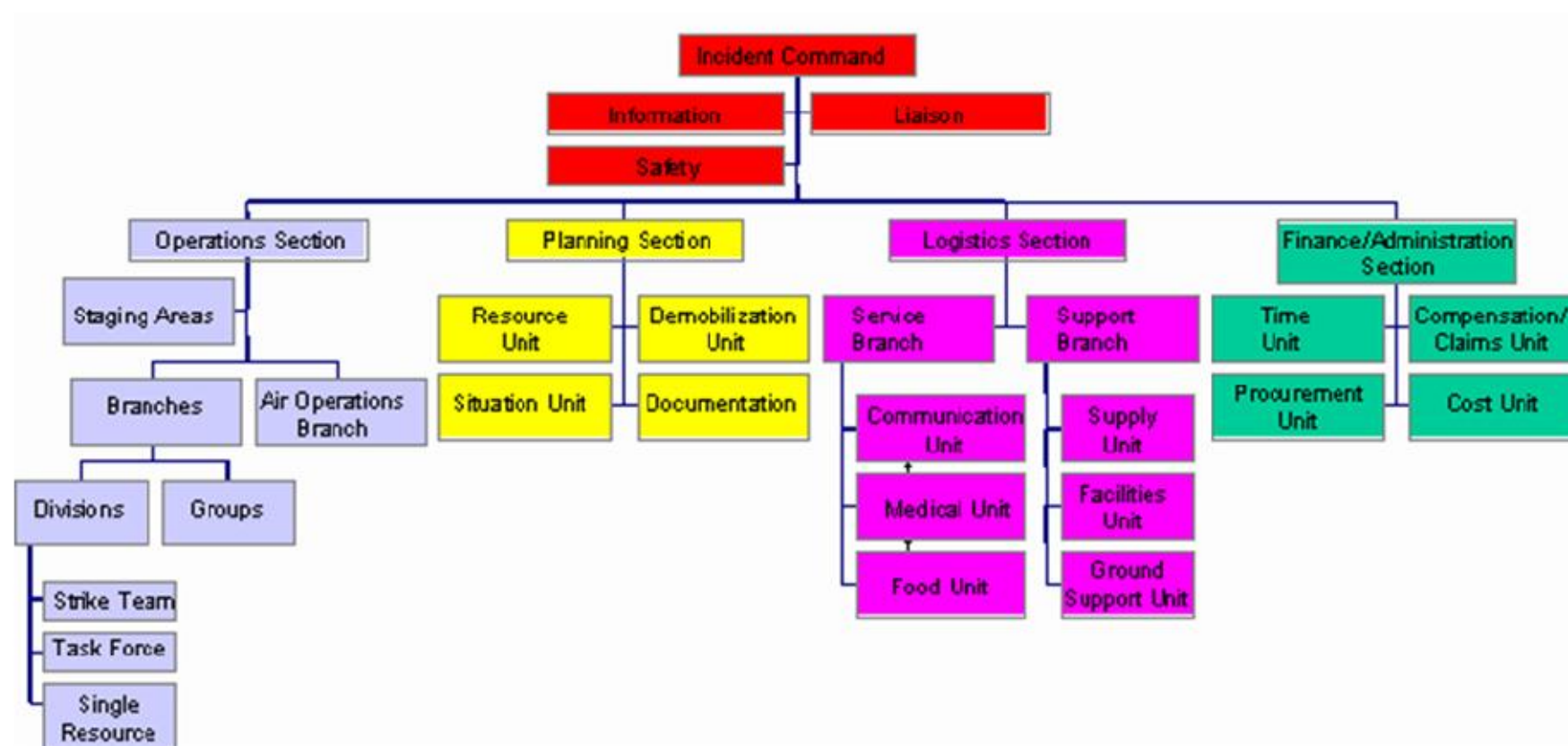
State Governments

- responsibility for undertaking rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures

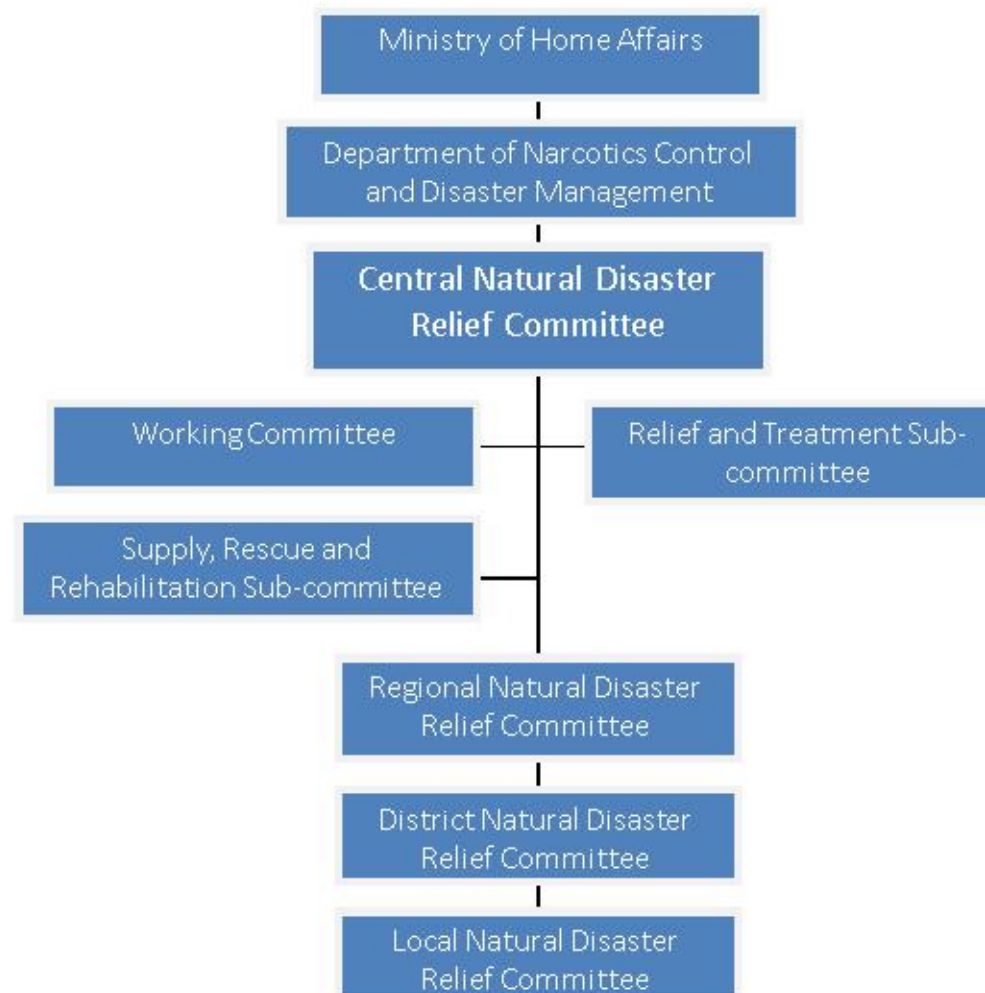
Central Government

- Supportive (physical and financial resources)
- Complementary (warning, transport and inter-state movement of food grains)

ICS in India



Disaster Management in Nepal



Salient Features and the Challenge for Wildfire Disaster Management in Nepal: Socio-economic and environment

- Persistent poverty
- Degradation of resources and ecosystem services
- Climate change
- Low adaptive capacity

Summary

	India	Bhutan	Nepal
Focal agency	Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Division	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Department of Local Governance	Ministry of Home Affairs, Dept of Narcotics and Control and Disaster Management
Approach	Mainstreaming mitigation into development process, multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach		
Legal provision	The Disaster Management Act 2005	None	Natural Disaster Relief Act 1982
Emphasis	Mitigation, prevention and preparedness and response, relief and rehabilitation		
Financial windows	Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF).	None	Central, Regional, District and Local level Natural Calamity Aid Funds to operate rescue, relief and rehabilitation activities

Roles of UNISDR-Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network

Wildfire management requires a comprehensive national database and enhanced regional coordination. RSAWFN, as a regional knowledge center is therefore well placed to play such a coordinative role.

Conclusions

- Disaster preparedness (DP) has to be approached holistically because it is difficult to isolate preparedness from other components of disaster management (DM) such as mitigation, response, and recovery.
- There is a paradigm shift in DM from a relief-driven approach to a more preparedness driven approach.

... Conclusions

Local communities should be at the centre of DM plans. They are the first victims of natural hazards and the first respondents.

Insufficient coordination prevails among key actor in the field of DM.

A multi-hazard approach is crucial as most communities are exposed to hazards that have interacting and cascading effects.

Despite the existing efforts

- shortage of resources,
- capability and
- institutionalization of WIMS

Ways forwards...

Considering the trend of climate change, increasing risk from wildfires and human pressure on the ecosystems of South Asia, governments of the region should come forward to develop national and regional strategies for fire management incorporating all stakeholders concerned.

Strategic approaches should be targeted to stabilize the livelihood of the local communities and conservation of the ecosystems.

Functional and efficient communication among key actors at local, national, and international levels needs to be improved.

Data and information sharing at a regional transboundary level needs to be strengthened and requires appropriate capacity and technology.

Ways forwards...

Wildfire DM should be integrated into national development plans for improved sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction.

Vulnerable groups and marginalized people should be sufficiently addressed in DM plans.

Roles and responsibilities for DM of all stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels need to be clarified. DM should be a priority on the national political agenda.

Learning from past disaster events through research and documentation is important in order to anticipate and respond to future disasters more effectively.

Education and training in WIMS is necessary for awareness and capacity building of all stakeholders.

Thank You

UNISDR-Global Wildland Fire Network web page:

<http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/globalNet.html>

UNISDR-Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network web page:

http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/South_Asia/Front_RSAWFN.html