

**TAKING THE STEPS FORWARD**  
**INDONESIA SOCIETY FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT**  
**A 2009 New Year Perspective**  
**January 2009**

**NEW YEAR PERSPECTIVE OF MPBI**

[1] This paper is a resolution of MPBI in entering the year 2009. It lays out the situational analysis of disaster management in Indonesia, review and reflection of MPBI, organisational direction and resolution for the coming years; and ultimately, an open appeal to all principal stakeholders to help MPBI realise the resolution. MPBI invites its members, officers and staff, partners, and colleagues to make use of this resolution as one of facilities and references to exchange ideas for towards promoting a better disaster management in Indonesia and bringing its excellence to the Southeast Asian region and the world.

**HORIZON SPREAD OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT (DM) IN INDONESIA**

[2] Indonesia has been classified to be one of the most disaster prone countries. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) 2006 -2009 declared Indonesia ranked 7<sup>th</sup> among the most disaster prone countries. Realities show that Indonesia continues to be vulnerable to disasters – both those induced by natural hazards and otherwise. The vulnerability is determined by the social and political dynamics such as population, economic factors, poverty, the environment degradation, climate change that overtime brings the spiraling down vulnerability. This is worsened by the fact that many of the disasters are small scale and localised and thus does not appear in national or international radars. Ultimately, response to the impact and their recovery become the burden of the local governments. Overtime, and without adequate support and assistance they become more and more vulnerable to future disasters.

The disaster risk context of Indonesia is on the rise. It is well known that Indonesia is prone to the impacts of several natural hazards including: tsunamigenic earthquakes along its 5000 KM coastal line, hundreds of volcanos, landslides hotspots and coastal floods. Indonesia's disaster losses have totalled approximately US\$ 14 billion, affected more than two million people and caused around 175,000 deaths. These figures only capture the top ten big disasters in Indonesia since 2004. The majority of these losses disproportionately affected the lives of more vulnerable groups such as children and young people, women and elderly.

[3] On 3 March 2003 Masyarakat Penanggulangan Bencana Indonesia/MPBI (Indonesian Society for Disaster Management) was instituted to promote the attainment of the welfare of the Indonesian people and to become a critical partner to various disaster management actors. It aimed to a disaster management practice that is professionalised - the one that harmonise the science with the practice. To that end MPBI launched six programmes as stipulated in its constitution:

1. Developing of DM through education, research and application.
2. Promoting the communication and cooperation amongst its members.
3. Establishing the communication and cooperation with institutions, agencies and or other professional organisations in Indonesia and abroad.
4. Formulating and supervising the observance of DM ethical standards by its members.
5. Disseminating information on DM norms and standards to the society.
6. Helping solve problems associated with DM.

[4] Propelled by the six programmes, MPBI embarked on the conceptualisation, advocacy, and negotiation together with other members of the civil society and, eventually, bringing about the ratification of the Disaster Management Law No. 24 of 2007. The Law derives various policies and the mainstreaming of DM in the financing and planning. This has been quite an accomplishment by Indonesia among the community of nations. MPBI has witnessed various positive improvements as provided by the DM Law, but it has to be acknowledged that there are quite a formidable challenges not only on the part of the bureaucracy but also among the civil society and the academic community. The sacred and ultimate goal that MPBI has pushed in the Law, i.e. safety and protection from disasters to be part of people's basic rights is still far from being achieved. The bureaucratic red tape and collision of various policies with norms of local autonomy have been hindrances to the still long process.

[5] The formation of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) as the driving motor of the DM Law in the context of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has not demonstrated any satisfactory result as it still in transition and suffer from lack of qualified human resources. At local level the DM situations varies where some other places are worse the others. Many of the public efforts are rendered haphazardly and conversely weaken the DM mandate. In the other hand the lack of number and posture of "watchdogs" make these transformation processes even more fragmented and disorganised.

[6] Civil society as a component of the Indonesian nation's DM community is a formidable force. There are emerging entities such as the Dompot Dhuafa, Yakkum Emergency Unit (YEU), Yayasan Tanggul Bencana Indonesia (YTBI) Walhi, Muhammadiyah, Nahdatul Ulama, Perwalian Umat Budha Indonesia (WALUBI), PMI and so on that offer various DM schemes to the public. At provincial and district level and sectoral levels there are even more civil society actors. By far, however, these actors are latent as there has been no adequate discourse exercise? both amongst themselves and for/with the general public. This is discouraging because as democracy is maturing in the country, the role of civil society should be increasing to balance the politics of the state and the bureaucracy.

It is with this in mind that the National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction is being instituted as a multisectoral forum through participatory processes to promote coordination, analysis, and inputs on the DM and its mainstreaming into the development. MPBI as a member of civil society has been a part of the conceptualisation and formation of the Platform.

[7] MPBI managed to include the element of professionalism into the DM Law but to this juncture a professional practice of the DM (conscientious, orderly, and based on an acceptable public standards) has not entered the public discourse. At this time, whoever, whichever

institution, through whichever ways could perform DM tasks even intuitively. There is no adequate public education to spur the momentum for building a critical mass for capacity development and if there is one they are either fragmented without proper accreditation, certification and license systems.

[8] In brief, there have been a number of changes in the DM horizon compared to the early 2000 but the changes fall short from being adequate and not going through adequate processes. In the other hand new challenges continue to emerge and to intensify and demanding responses from the DM actors.

## **MPBI ACHIEVEMENTS**

[9] In its five-year existence MPBI has contributed tremendously to the DM in Indonesia including conceptualising and pushing or the DM Law as well as its various derivative policies both at national and local levels. MPBI's training, guidelines and networking have helped the first steps to formulating local DRM Action Plans in various local governments.

[10] During its formative years MPBI also championed DM advocacy and even trailblazing major events such as the International Day for Disaster Risk Management with public events to disseminate DM (Hyogo Framework for Action, Living With Risk, etc.) to the consciousness of the public and government as well as pushing Indonesia to the international arena of the DRM. Along this line, the efforts managed to promote the launching of a DRM Action Plan both at national level as well as in various localities. The documents have served as key reference to integrating DRM into development planning processes. MPBI also spearheaded the introduction of the SPHERE Project that now serve as common reference in humanitarian response in the country.

[11] MPBI has positioned itself and played the role of legitimate actor at the equal footing with the government and international actors including the donors. In this capacity MPBI engaged and influenced high level policy discourses by providing the critical reference to the realm of thinking of and on behalf of the civil society in disaster management sector.

[12] MPBI also managed to establish itself to be a viable organisation with the medium term organisational plan that is in consonant with its constitution and mandate. It also has a stable secretariat, officer and personnel, financial basis as well as quite widespread network of organisations while maintaining functional working relations with the government. On the other hand, after five years, MPBI has not been able to undertake systematic regeneration and maintain dependence on its 'founding officers'. These individuals continue to climb up their career path and gradually leaving the organisational orbit of MPBI and unable to fully provide leadership and guidance to the MPBI's "Secretariat".

[13] MPBI has also helped pushing the DM agenda into education sector by taking active part in the formation of the DM Education Consortium in 2006 that now has transformed into a 38-agency strong network and serve as a vehicle to influence policies and practice. MPBI also vigorously promoting the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM). A National Symposium on CBDRM has periodically been organised to its fourth year now and

appear to be robust enough to continue in subsequent years.

## **REFLECTION ON MPBI**

[14] MPBI is instituted based on a simple but visionary idea: as a convergence facility of various actors for a better DM practice towards a society that is safer from disaster risks. MPBI was designed NOT to be an implementing organisation, instead it wishes to be an arena for high-level discourse at conceptual and policy levels and their convergence to the practice in the field. The central idea has three premises:

[15] MPBI as a SOCIETY: by definition *it is an extended social grouping of individuals which is united by mutual consent, characterised by common interest and may have distinctive culture and institutions in order to deliberate, determine, and act jointly for some common purpose.* MPBI should serve as "a water spring for those who are thirsty" as such a way that the more people come and drink the water, the more it produces the water as the same people also protect and add inputs to the spring. MPBI was envisioned to be a membership-based organisation where policy makers, practitioners, and academicians take advantage of and at the same time provide for and protect its existence.

[16] For a BETTER DM Practice: MPBI to promote the professionalisation of the DM practice, i.e. a practice that has the harmony between concept - policy and their application/implementation in the field; based on sound philosophy and knowledge, and guided by ethical values.

[17] Towards a SAFER community: ultimately it is a society that, to be part of their basic right, is safer from disaster risks in the context of their welfare and dignity.

As a group aspired to be a driving force of issues, discourse, and implementation of a better DM both as a discipline and practice, MPBI situates itself to be one of principal leaders in regard to DM issues and deals with such issues from upper and lower streams through explorations in various trainings, discussions, reflections and either direct or indirect programme implementation. Outcomes of such exercises have been disseminated to many organisations in the field throughout Indonesia.

## **REVIEW OF MPBI'S POSITIONS**

[18] Where is MPBI in the grander scheme of things today?

[19] Firstly, admittedly, MPBI is no longer known to be a membership-based organisation, nor it is a network of DM practitioners. There is no clear and systematic membership system in the organisation. Existing members do not feel having the privileges of being members of MPBI such as periodical DM information and knowledge, DM support and professional acknowledgment, let alone direct enjoyment of MPBI's projects. Except some hardcore DM practitioners, most of members have disintegrated; and those who represent MPBI are only officers of the governing board, officers and paid staff of the secretariat. This brings about

draught spell of perspectives and the degradation of quality of discourse. Having no broad based membership and without affiliated organisations MPBI has only deprived horizon, unclear constituent clients, and thus losing its legitimacy in the public discourse.

[20] Secondly, MPBI sunk deeper and deeper into downstream implementation projects and increasingly being treated by international organisations and donors to be a project "sub-contractor" rather than a partner of equal footing. It has to be admitted that MPBI reached this stability from such projects but the weak conceptual guidance from its governing board has dragged MPBI into being a "client" that ceased to think independently. In the eyes of other DM organisations in the country MPBI has degraded itself into simply an NGO that seek livelihood from the donors and in competition with the NGOs it seek to serve in the first place. It is time that MPBI reassert its stand and takes only strategic projects, and treating projects as means rather than ends in itself.

[21] Thirdly, MPBI failed to optimally mobilise, on behalf of Indonesian civil society, the relationship and influence with regional and international DM networks. MPBI is only a member of networks without leadership role, as a conduit rather than a traffic regulator, and cease to serve as a meaningful window to the rich and diverse realm of a vibrant civil society of Indonesia.

[22] Fourthly. MPBI's credibility as a professional front runner has faded away. Despite its wide network there is lack of quality and purpose. Those who comes to MPBI looking for knowledge and guidance went away empty handed as they found only a handful of paid staff who cannot answer major questions and prevailing challenges, they appear to be busy managing frontline projects rather than crafting DM knowledge. MPBI stopped publishing public services as offerings to the to a better DM practice.

[23] Fifthly. MPBI has not been able to develop an ideological and strong organisational core. The founding ideas remain with its founders and its "elit class" in the organisation. They are not being properly organised for easier and broader dissemination through systematic passing forward to others.

Aspiring to be an organisation with public trust in the political decision making MPBI should develop a managerial procedures and internal decision making that is robust , structured, flexible, and accountable while maintaining substantive programme soundness.

## **MOVING FORWARD TO 2009 AND BEYOND**

[24] Towards the Congress in March 2009, MPBI should take steps to finalise the existing frontline projects and, for a moment, restrain itself from soliciting new projects, and thus focusing its energy in addressing the following strategies:

[25] Re-opening the access to membership and affiliated organisations

- a. Proactively recruit new members or creating a category of associate member particularly those member of existing networks or those who used to be members of the organisation's network. It is hoped that this would enlarge the constituent large enough to be the basis for

- a more substantive members' congress in March 2009.
- b. Undertake regeneration at all levels. The Members' Congress will elect a new governing board and expecting fresh thoughts. In turn, eventually, the officerships will also be overhauled.
- c. Better management of memberships starting from those existing ones, assigning general registration numbers (based on year of enrollment and membership status) and starting advantage packages for members.
- d. Issuing policy lines and a transparent strategies regarding the status and privileges of affiliated organisations in localities and key sectors in the country.

**[26] Bringing MPBI back to the public arena.**

- a. Disseminating the organisation's medium term programme and the five year programme to the stakeholders through periodical consultative activities. Formal consultation with government agencies, international community and donors have to be undertaken to determine the reposition of MPBI as mandated by its constitution.
- b. Developing strategic functional network with stakeholders. At present there are many parties working in the DM field starting from government agencies, international agencies, NGOs and INGOs, public organisations and even political parties and the private sector. MPBI has to be sensitive to the market share where MPBI could be most effective and determine which stakeholders recruited to be part of network and which ones to be strategic partners. This is critical considering the tremendous new entries of players in DM and their different goals and objectives.
- c. Investing in the internet-based mass communication.

**[27] Making MPBI to be one of principal actors in DM discourses**

- a. Actively participating and contributing in the processes of the establishment of the National Platform particularly in behalf of the civil society.
- b. Become the catalyst and critical partner of the national and local governments in the formation of the Local DDM Agencies and the development of DM Plans.
- c. Encouraging the national and local government to mainstream DM in the development planning processes.
- d. Encourage the formulation of the ethical framework of DM practice and in this context concurrent with the legal framework also facilitating the liability, participation, transparency and accountability in the DM implementation.

**[28] Developing and strengthening centres for resources and promoting members activities at local levels.** Starting with the optimisation of the existing networks, collaboration with relevant departments, civil society organisations and the government, MPBI will become the driving force for the strengthening of capacities at, for and with local governments.

**[29] Develop and strengthen a "learning house"** that is made easily accessible to members to improve their DM capacities. Types of activities would focus on theoretical all the way to pragmatic implementation and making MPBI available to be a space for actual DM works.

**[30] Establishing conceptual definitions regarding DM and how such key concepts are differentiated one from the others,** e.g. DM, DRM, CBDRM, and climate change in Indonesia, humanitarian emergency response, displacement, reconstruction and post disaster recovery.

MPBI will develop mass communication strategies for DM experts on periodicla basis to stimulate specific discourses.

## **REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS**

[31] Ever mindful that the broad DM agenda will continue to be relevant in and for Indonesia, whilst the reform in MPBI cannot be attained simply by its officers and staff, MPBI invites the stakeholders to regard this document also as a request for support for this undertaking.

[32] From members

- a. Giving MPBI another opportunity to improve itself, register oneself as active members.
- b. Actively contributing, responding to, giving support for, and demanding services from MPBI officers and staff.
- c. Register to be volunteers and emissaries for MPBI's works at the local and sectoral level.

[33] From fellow civil society organisations

- a. Treating MPBI as a counterpart - instead of competitor - in the implementation of DM activities particularly those that are at the "upper stream" such as conceptual, policy, and networking.
- b. Registering to be affiliated organisations of MPBI to build a network of organisations and DM advocacy / activities.
- c. Using MPBI as an arena for discourses and bourses of DM activities among and with members of civil society.

[33] From the Government

- a. Utilising services with and among MPBI's network as a supporting factors for the strengthening of the DM Law and the DM practice both at national and local levels.
- b. Positioning MPBI to be a network of civil society to strengthen the component of the governing bodies of DM agencies particularly from civil society and the academic communities.
- c. Affording MPBI to represent the community of DM services' providers and users.

[35] From international organisations and donors

- a. Considering that DM capacity development is a valid agenda for and in Indonesia, and int his context, treating MPBI to be one of strategic partners for developing and delivering such services - instead of as an implementing agencies of a sub-contractor.
- b. Considering and advocating institutional strengthening, capcaity development, and provision of sustained resources for MPBI to be one of strategic investment in and for DM in Indonesia.
- c. Encouraging and facilitating MPBI to be one of representations of the civil society for DM discourses in the region and at global level.

[36] From officers and staff

- a. Regarding MPBI members and affiliated organisations to be the principal constituents of the organistion who deserves the best services from MPBI.
- b. Positioning oneself to be facilitators of the development of members and affiliated

organisation and in this context accept the responsibility to be accountable and /or liable to the undertaking.

- c. Improving the professionalism as a manifestation of respect to the trust and the opportunity extended by members and affiliated organisations and other stakeholders.

[37] MPBI thanks the stakeholders for their trust and confidence for 2009 and beyond. MPBI also invites the stakeholders to use this document to be a vehicle in their interaction with MPBI . Inputs, comments, and suggestions are most appreciated to strengthen MPBI and, ultimately, pave the way towards a dependable DM system, the safety and welfare of the future Indonesian nation and communities.

Best wishes for a new year 2009

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