Implementing the Sendai Framework: lessons from India

More than a billion of the world's poorest people rely on animals for their food and incomes; 752 million livestock keepers live on less than $2 a day.[1] The poor are most vulnerable to disasters – they are often highly exposed to hazards and have less capacity to cope, adapt and recover.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 represents a major shift in how Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is conceptualised. It focuses on disaster risk management rather than disaster management, emphasising the protection of livelihoods as well as saving people and property. The Sendai Framework in particular includes a clear commitment to the protection of livelihoods and productive assets.

Countries now need to incorporate animal protection into DRR policies, plans and activities to reduce economic losses and safeguard livelihoods.

▶ worldanimalprotection.org/disasters

INT0086/0116

Animals are more to their owners than simple commodities. They are productive assets requiring protection and care to preserve their productive quality. Animals also represent more than food. They provide livelihoods, cultural identity and companionship.

India's government recognised animals' importance in the National Livestock Policy[2] and the National Policy on Disaster Management 2009[3]. Both include provisions for animals within both preparedness and response measures. The government has developed a draft implementation of that latter which will be released in 2016.[4]

Context

Every year India suffers an average of US$1 billion in disaster losses. Direct natural losses amount to almost 2% of India's GDP and up to 12% of the central government's revenue.[5] On average 95,000 cattle are lost every year from floods alone.[6] India is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, cyclones and droughts.

Developing state policy

The Sendai Framework recognises that to be successful DRR needs to be implemented at both a national and local level. Due to the size of India and the diversity of climates, state governments play a key role with the national government, in reducing risks and preventing losses. The National Disaster Management

Authority (NDMA) issued a directive to all state governments to include animals in their disaster management plans in 2013.[7] Following this directive, two states – Bihar in 2013 and Sikkim in 2015 – integrated animal protection into their state DRR and mitigation plans, as well as their Disaster Response Plans.

Reducing vulnerability

Bihar implemented a range of disaster management activities addressing the needs of animals and people. The State Disaster Management Authority, for example, delivered an awareness programme directly targeting farmers and livestock owners. It included measures to manage animal welfare needs before, during and after disasters such as drought, earthquake, flash floods, landslides and heavy snowfall.

Other states have also taken steps to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. Early warning systems prompted Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to evacuate one million people, relocate more than 30,000 animals and take measures to protect remaining cattle before Cyclone Phailin made landfall in 2013.[8]

Building capacity

To ensure that states have the capacity to manage animals in disasters, we ran simulation exercises and training in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. These were to ensure that those involved in emergency response were trained to protect animals and themselves. Those we worked with included the National and State Disaster Management Authorities, National Disaster Response Force personnel and the Department of Animal Husbandry.

But implementing Sendai doesn't stop with policy. This is why we are working with local governments, veterinarian colleagues and communities to foster a culture of preparedness among animal owners.

We undertake public awareness campaigns, before during and after disasters, in English, Hindi and local languages. We highlight what animal owners can do to reduce risk and prepare themselves and their animals.

In six states, in cooperation with NDMA, we have supported the establishment of veterinary emergency response units located in key veterinary colleges. These units work with government partners and humanitarian NGOs during disasters. For example, during the December 2015 floods in Chennai the units treated more than 10,000 animals.

1   Otte, J. et al. (2012) 'Livestock Sector Development for Poverty Reduction: An Economic and Policy Perspective – Livestock's Many Virtues'. FAO:Rome.

2   Government of India (2013) 'National Livestock Policy'.

3   NDMA (October 2009) 'National DPolicy on Disaster Management 2009'. Government of India.

4   NDMA released the Draft National Disaster Management Plan in 2015 and is expected to launch the final plan in 2016.

5   World Bank (August 2003) 'India Financing Rapid Onset Natural Disaster Losses in India: A Risk Management Approach' Report No. 26844-IN.

6   NDMA (January 2008) 'National Disaster Management Guidelines: Management of Floods.

7   27th August 2013, the NDMA requested the State Governments to incorporate the provisions from the National Disaster Management Guidelines – Management of Biological Disaster within their State and District level Disaster Management Plans.

8   Harriman, Lindsey (November 2013) 'Cyclone Phailin in India: Early warning and timely actions saved lives' in UNEP Global Environmental Alert Services.

World Animal Protection has more than 50 years' experience of helping people help animals in disasters. We work with governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and local partners, to empower communities in disaster-prone areas to prepare for the future.

▶ worldanimalprotection.org/disasters