RESILIENCE IN ACTION
TECHNICAL BRIEF

GENDER EQUITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

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Why Explore the Intersection of Gender Equity, Social Inclusion, and Resilience?

In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami that devastated communities across Southeast Asia, a stark difference in vulnerability emerged: in disaster-affected regions of India and Indonesia, four women died for every man. While the suggested causes varied widely, they often pointed to gendered tasks or norms that made women and girls more vulnerable to the shock. For instance, the tsunami hit India as many women, who often play large roles in the country's fishing industry, were waiting near the water for boats to come ashore. Indonesian girls, who do not grow up swimming or climbing trees as boys do, were left with fewer strategies for escaping the wall of water that inundated their villages.[1]

As humanitarian and development practitioners, we have become more sophisticated in the ways we conceptually understand and measure resilience to shocks and stresses—from natural disasters like the 2004 tsunami to drought and conflict. For example, we have examined how vulnerability varies by age, sex, gender identity, caste, ethnicity, and physical ability, among other factors. But creating tangible shifts in the way we design, implement, and measure programs and interventions has been slower. Ultimately, we are falling short where changes on the ground could balance the vulnerability equation tangibly and immediately. Inclusively building resilience among the most marginalized populations is vital in drastic scenarios like the 2004 tsunami, as well as more protracted situations like drought, where inequality and exclusion have slowly eroded resilience.

UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Gender: Gender encompasses differences in needs, access, and abilities due to a person's sex, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Social inclusion: Social inclusion considers different needs and abilities due to other social factors such as ethnicity and caste, socioeconomic status, or disability status.

Fair Treatment versus Equal Treatment: Fair treatment (equity) does not always mean equal treatment. For example, a 13-year-old girl from an ethnic minority group may have very different needs and abilities than a 40-year-old disabled man. Recognizing and responding to these differences through a rights-based approach enables the delivery of inclusive and thus more effective programming.

Funded through the generous support of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Resilience Evaluation, Assessment and Learning (REAL) Associate Award, the *Resilience in Action Series* aims to bring the practitioner community one step closer to bridging this gap between theory and practice. Here, we draw on an emerging, common set of resilience capacities—from increased access to diverse financial services to ecosystems-based disaster risk and recovery strategies—with clear overlap in the sectoral

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[1] MacDonald (2005)

work development and humanitarian practitioners are already doing. Ultimately, we aim to answer a set of critical questions: How does a resilience lens change the design of interventions in key sectors or crosscutting themes? How should we shift the design and implementation of sectoral interventions to promote resilience building within programs? While it is imperative that we continue to plan for and strategize around resilience in an integrated way, we believe examining how resilience requires shifts in sectors critical to practical action.

In this brief, we focus on programmatic shifts at the intersection of resilience, gender equity, and social inclusion, which are essential in situations like the 2004 tsunami or extreme drought conditions. Sourced from existing literature and the growing evidence base of what works, this brief provides technical specialists and implementers, who are designing a new program or reviewing existing programs, recommendations for how applying a resilience lens might require them to approach gender equity and social inclusion differently.

The brief's focus represents a slight departure from the other cases in the *Resilience in Action Series* in that gender equity and social inclusion are not discrete sectors, but crosscutting themes, much like resilience itself. Their crosscutting nature requires us to consider how a gender equity and social inclusion approach might augment a resilience approach overall, or vice versa. To move recommendations from the realm of theory to practice, we highlight incremental opportunities for layering the two approaches or "lenses" during three phases of programming: assessment; design; and implementation, monitoring, and learning.

Before moving into these recommendations, we want to highlight two important considerations in approaching programming at this intersection of resilience and gender equity and/or social inclusion:

1. Gender equity and social inclusion impact resilience at multiple levels of society, not just the individual. Resilience varies between and within societal levels— where a resilient community may include a vulnerable household or a resilient community might reside in an otherwise vulnerable region. Gender and societal norms, much like resilience, also exist at multiple levels— individual, household, community, and system— meaning they often influence or impact resilience building at each level. For example, inequitable banking policies requiring a male relative to co-sign a woman's financial contract can compound household gender disparities that dictate male control over external financial transactions and accounts. When the male co-signer is not present (e.g., due to migration) a woman may be unable to access household funds to protect the household from a shock.

2. Gender and identity can be determinants of both vulnerability and an increased capacity to support resilience within larger systems (e.g., households, communities). While discussions at the intersection of gender equity/social inclusion and resilience often focus on the vulnerabilities of women, girls, and disadvantaged persons during acute or protracted disasters, these same individuals can also be powerful agents of resilience. Extensive research supports the important role of women's empowerment in strengthening resilience.[2] For example, research in Kenya showed women were critical to the

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[2] TANGO International (2016)

adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices that promote long-term community resilience to climate and ecological shocks and stresses. Evidence from the 2010-11 famine in southern Somalia revealed a strong correlation between women's household decision-making power and their households' resilience to food security shocks.[3] In certain cases, gender norms can leave men and boys more vulnerable to shocks: for example, they are often the last to evacuate, as reported during the 2014 Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.[4] And harmful norms around masculinity can pressure boys to join violent extremist groups and suffer as the primary casualties of war.[5]

Photo Credit: Emilie Rex for Mercy Corps

[3] Mburu (2014)

[4] OCHA and Oxfam (2014)
[5] Treadwell and Garland (2011), Guha-Sapir et al. (2017)

Implications for Programming

What changes when we adopt layered program approaches?
Considering both Resilience and Gender Equity/Social Inclusion

With growing recognition of the important intersection of gender equity/social inclusion and resilience, numerous organizations have put forth evidence-based recommendations to guide programming that are both focused on resilience and sensitive to gender equity and social inclusion. Research and guidance notes published by USAID,[6] Mercy Corps,[7] and CARE International[8] informed the recommendations presented below. These recommendations follow the program cycle stages of assessment; design; and implementation, monitoring, and learning. They are divided into two categories: 1) best practices in gender equity and social inclusion sensitivity, particularly for resilience-focused programs;[9] and 2) specific recommendations and examples that consider the integration of gender equity, social inclusion, and resilience.

Changes to Program Assessment

Risk and resilience assessments conducted at the program or regional level serve to deepen practitioners' understanding of risk and the systems on which communities rely to help maintain progress toward well-being outcomes in the face of increasing instability. To inform program design, practitioners should conduct a risk and resilience assessment that incorporates gender and social inclusion to understand how different individuals experience shocks and stresses. Recalling the dual-lens approach of gender equity/social inclusion and resilience, if Lens 1 (resilience) calls for conducting a risk and resilience assessment, then Lens 2 (gender equity/social inclusion) calls for ensuring that this assessment is sensitive to issues of inclusion.

Best Practices

Consulting a diverse pool of respondents and recording data disaggregated by sex, age and other common exclusion factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, disability status, marital status) are critical to conducting risk and resilience assessments sensitive to gender equity and social inclusion.[10] Even seemingly neutral information gathered during a risk and resilience assessment can vary based on the sex, age and social status of the informant. For example, when considering shocks and stresses, a man might report the death of a cow to be a great shock to a household, whereas a woman might report the death of her chickens to be more significant because she uses this income to pay for her children's school fees. In many contexts, women can only access important assets or wealth through marriage and therefore are more likely to cite household shocks rooted in inequity (e.g., divorce, early marriage) than men.[11] Thus, it is important to consult diverse stakeholders and report findings according to a respondent's sex, age, and other social factors that may influence exclusion.[12]

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[6] USAID (2017), Tabaj and Spangler (2017)
[7] Mercy Corps (2014)
[8] CARE International (2016)
[9] For more information, see: The Gender Practitioners Collaborative (2017)

[10] The Gender Practitioners Collaborative (2017), Tabaj and Spangler (2017), CARE International (2016)
[11] CARE International (2016)
[12] USAID (2011)

Analysis of the Gendered Drivers of Resilience

A risk and resilience assessment that integrates gender equity and social inclusion should collect specific information regarding the social norms and dynamics that underpin risk at household, community, and even national levels. It is important first to understand the dynamics of gender and social inclusion within target areas, and second to analyze how these domains impact each aspect of resilience. Through its operational policy on integrating gender equality and empowerment into the program cycle,[13] USAID defines five domains of gender[14] (which may be applied to other aspects of social inclusion as well):

1. Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices

2. Access to and control over assets and resources

3. Roles, responsibilities, and time use

4. Cultural norms and beliefs

5. Patterns of power and decision-making

These gender domains must be considered across all aspects of resilience during the assessment, including how they impact perceptions of shocks and stresses, vulnerability (i.e., exposure and sensitivity to those shocks and stresses), access to resilience capacities, and the ability or decision to use those capacities to respond in the face of shocks and stresses. Consider the impact of domain five (patterns of power and decision-making) on individuals' ability to employ capacities in response to a shock or stress. Despite having

access to certain resources, people may not necessarily use them to cope during disasters. For example, a woman may have access to information from a community early warning system for flooding but choose not to evacuate out of fear of violence if she leaves her house without her husband's permission. Practitioners must identify these critical gendered findings and design appropriate program responses to deliver programming that is effective and realistic, and avoids unintended negative consequences. For further guidance on the intersection of gender and resilience at the analysis stage, see the concept note "Integrating Gender into Resilience Analysis: A Conceptual Overview," also produced through the USAID REAL Award.[15]

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[13] USAID (2017)
[14] Note: Numerous definitions and approaches to understanding gender and power dynamics exist. See, for example: CARE (2014), Save the Children (2014), VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), Delgado and Stefancic (2017).

[15] Tabaj and Spangler (2017, p.6)

Changes to Program Design

Practitioners should design programs to address differential vulnerabilities and build resilience capacities in an equitable manner, taking into account the needs and abilities of diverse individuals. The recommendations presented below for program design fall into two categories: 1) ensuring that often-excluded persons are included meaningfully in all program activities, especially those that aim to build resilience capacities; and 2) as illustrated in the table below, designing activities that specifically aim to address gender and power dynamics or build inclusive resilience capacities (i.e., resilience capacities that may be drastically influenced by gender and social norms).

GENDER EQUITY / SOCIAL INCLUSION DOMAIN	EXAMPLE	RESILIENCE CAPACITY	HOW MIGHT THIS CAPACITY SUPPORT RESILIENCE WITHIN A PROGRAM THAT SEEKS TO BUILD FINANCIAL WELL-BEING?
Domain 3: **Roles, responsibilities, and time use**	Women's burden of household chores (e.g., cooking, cleaning, childcare) decreases.	Diversified sources of household income	When men contribute to sharing the burden of household chores, women have more time to contribute to economic activities. With an alternative source of income, households can better absorb shocks or stresses that threaten the main income source.
Domain 4: **Cultural norms and beliefs**	A community culture shifts away from the belief that members of different castes should not associate with one another.	Improved social capital	Within a mixed-caste community, when members of lower castes improve their social capital, they are better able to absorb a financial shock through, for example, informally borrowing money or receiving support from neighbors.
Domain 5: **Patterns of power and decision-making**	Women have more participation in household financial decision-making.	Improved household financial management	When both men and women participate in household financial planning, the resultant decisions are informed by multiple perspectives that reflect the reality of the entire household. Households become more financially stable and can better absorb shocks. If the husband is not present, the wife is empowered to take action to protect the household in the face of a shock.

Below are best practices in inclusive programming that detail strategies for ensuring that often-excluded groups of people are meaningfully engaged in program strategies to address vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities. However, it is important to note the necessity of bundled interventions to achieve sustained resilience to shocks and stresses.[16] The layering of gender, inclusion, and resilience approaches multiplies complexity, and the

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[16] Mercy Corps (2018)

addition of a single activity to a program will not achieve significant change. This speaks to the importance of complex solutions for complex challenges, as evidenced by the Boma Project.[17] The project achieved sustained escapes from poverty for women living in Kenya's arid lands, even in the face of climate-related shocks and stresses. Additionally, a 2018 randomized controlled trial found that a multi-faceted program approach was successful in achieving sustainable income, whereas single-intervention approaches (i.e., either direct asset transfer or access to savings) did not.[18]

Best Practices

Conduct inclusive and intentional beneficiary targeting:[19] Identify target beneficiary groups with consideration for intersectionality and multiple layers of exclusion.[20] Because the resilience of households varies even within vulnerable communities, targeting the *most vulnerable* households or persons is critical to building the resilience of the whole community. This may result in tradeoffs in the short term. For example, program target numbers and cost-per-beneficiary figures initially might not be quite as impressive as a program neutral to gender equity and social inclusion. However, the investment in meaningful inclusion of the most vulnerable groups will result in long-term resilience gains and savings over time.[21]

Include appropriate budget and resources for gender-equity/social-inclusion-specific assessment and

program activities:[22] The fundamentals of any program are found in its work plan and budget; integration of gender equity and social inclusion must start here as well.

Incorporate the perspectives of often-excluded persons in program design, governance, and decision-making:[23] Including often-excluded persons in program design helps to ensure all program aspects benefit the diverse target population equitably. Design workshops, community steering committees, key community groups engaged in program implementation, and program staff should be representative of the population served. Youth, who are often excluded from governance, are critical for long-term transformation and should be represented in decision-making processes.[24]

Inclusive Interventions that Strengthen Absorptive, Adaptive, and Transformative Capacities

In addition to ensuring program interventions reach all members of the target population, it is important to invest in specific approaches that benefit often-excluded persons with the intention of transforming the unequal power relations that perpetuate fragility and vulnerability. While no standardized intervention guide for gender-sensitive resilience programming currently exists (as noted in the recent USAID gender and resilience conceptual overview[25]), recent research and guidance notes outline a variety of

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[17] For more information, see The Boma Project at: www.bomaproject.org

[18] Banerjee et al. (2018)

[19] Mercy Corps (2014)

[20] For further study on intersectionality theory, see: Cho et al. (2013), Grunenfelder (2015)

[21] Cabot Venton et al. (2013)

[22] Gender Practitioners Collaborative (2017), CARE International (2016)

[23] Mercy Corps (2014), CARE International (2016)

[24] See, for example, Plan International USA's Youth Advisory Board, a network of young people who liaise with the organization's Board of Directors and engage in program interventions to "reinforce Plan's mission of empowering children across the world." (https://www.planusa.org/youth-advisory-board)

[25] Tabaj and Spangler (2017, p.5)

potential interventions to reduce exposure and sensitivity to shocks and stresses and build resilience capacities for often-excluded individuals:

- Strengthen the social capital (i.e., bonding, bridging and linking) of women, men, girls, and boys to connect with groups and networks within and across their communities.[26] *Sample activities include:* a) creating safe spaces for adolescent girls to build bonding social capital from an early age, or b) establishing linkages between a marginalized ethnic group and government decision-makers to facilitate representation of the group's needs in policymaking.

- Support all persons as agents of resilience within their households and communities.[27] *Sample activities include:* a) introducing a youth-led waste management initiative to reduce urban flooding, or b) supporting community disaster risk management committees to provide special early warning system training for women.

- Improve access to and control over productive resources (e.g., land, water, financial services) for often-excluded persons.[28] *Sample activities include:* a) installing local water access points and supporting an inclusive community governance and management structure, or b) facilitating sustainable market linkages for women farmers.

- Invest directly in the empowerment of often-excluded individuals.[29] *Sample activities include*: a) establishing a forum for women to strategically plan and advocate for their

rights, or b) facilitating group activities tailored for disabled refugees to build confidence and self-efficacy.

- Engage gatekeepers to shift inequitable socio-cultural norms and facilitate sustainable social change.[30] *Sample activities include:* a) Husband Schools (Example 1), or b) demonstration farms for marginalized farmers (Example 2)

EXAMPLE 1: HOW A GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH STRENGTHENS RESILIENCE TO FOOD SECURITY SHOCKS

Niger's Sawki Development Food Assistance Program (DFAP), funded by the USAID Office of Food for Peace, incorporates an activity called "Husband Schools," designed to transform gender and power relations between men and women through facilitated group discussions with men on issues of gender equity, women's workload, and family planning, among other topics. Sawki's Husband Schools achieved the following results related to the program goal of strengthening households' absorptive and adaptive capacities in the face of shocks and stresses that threaten food security:

- Men share the burden of household work with their wives, allowing women more time to participate in productive tasks and diversify household income sources.
- Households have fewer children, thus reducing the number of people to feed.
- Men support the overall agency of wives and daughters, enabling them to participate actively in the program's other resilience-building activities, such as growing nutritious moringa trees to diversify household diets.[31]

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[26] Tabaj and Spangler (2017), Mercy Corps (2014)
[27] Ibid.
[28] USAID (2017), Mercy Corps (2014), CARE (2016)
[29] TANGO International (2016), Ahmed (2017)

[30] Mercy Corps (2014)
[31] For more information, see Mercy Corps (2015c)

Photo Credit: M. Samper/Mercy Corps

EXAMPLE 2: APPLYING A DUAL GENDER EQUITY/SOCIAL INCLUSION AND RESILIENCE LENS TO A DAIRY MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN NEPAL

Mercy Corps' Managing Risk through Economic Development Program (M-RED) in Nepal, funded by the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, incorporated a dual gender equity/social inclusion and resilience lens to achieve its aim of building resilience of vulnerable communities by reducing the human and economic toll of natural disasters while simultaneously reducing poverty:

- **Lens 1 (resilience):** M-RED piloted an innovative "nexus" model of integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) and market systems development (MSD) to incentivize the sustainability of DRR activities while giving vulnerable communities the opportunity to increase their incomes. One such nexus intervention strategy involved planting fodder species in marginal lands of hilly areas to mitigate the impact of erosion on soil and slopes (DRR) while also contributing as an input for the growing dairy sub-sector (MSD).[32]

- **Lens 2 (gender equity and social inclusion):** A gender equity and social inclusion assessment conducted for M-RED identified that Dalit (lowest caste) dairy farmers struggled to sell milk in broader markets due to discrimination. To address this issue, M-RED implemented a gender equity and social inclusion-sensitive strategy to address: 1) the root causes of discrimination by illustrating that Dalit cows were healthy and thriving, and 2) immediate economic needs by training Dalit farmers in ghee (clarified butter) processing, a milk product that was less subject to discrimination than liquid milk.[33]

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[32] Mercy Corps (2016)
[33] Mercy Corps (2017)

Changes to Program Implementation, Monitoring, and Learning

Robust learning processes within and across programs and organizations help implement programs that build resilience more inclusively, even in complex environments. Below we present recommendations for implementing and monitoring inclusive and resilient programming and incorporating iterative learning processes for continued improvement:

Best Practices

- **Integrate adaptive management strategies into programming:**[34] A commitment to adaptive management—a program implementation strategy valuing agility, adaptability, experimentation, and learning—is central to resilience-focused programming, particularly when gender equity and social inclusion are integrated into program strategy and implementation. Staff newly trained in gender and inclusion must have the opportunity to apply and practice these tactics in an environment that encourages learning, innovation around locally-sourced solutions, and incremental change.

- **Monitor specific gender equity and social inclusion indicators, and regular program indicators disaggregated by sex and other relevant social factors:**[35] The first step in understanding differences in individuals' vulnerabilities and capacities due to gender and identity is to collect and monitor data disaggregated by sex and other relevant social factors such as age, ethnicity, or disability status. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation frameworks should include specific indicators around gender equity and social inclusion (e.g., percent of service providers who hold equitable attitudes towards socially-excluded individuals; average hours per day that women and men of all ages spend working on both productive and reproductive tasks[36]).

- **Partner with local organizations that focus on often-excluded groups:**[37] Where possible and appropriate, conduct a landscape analysis of local organizations serving often-excluded persons (e.g., women, persons with disabilities) to identify those best suited for partnerships or referrals.

- **Provide gender equity and social inclusion training for program and partner staff:**[38] To integrate gender equity and social inclusion meaningfully into program implementation, field staff need appropriate and relevant training that addresses attitudes, beliefs, norms, and practices, as well as tools for implementation. Because implementing partners may lack access to ongoing training typically available to national or headquarters staff, gender equity and social inclusion training should be standardized across all staff groups.

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[34] Tabaj and Spangler (2017)
[35] Gender Practitioners Collaborative (2017), Tabaj and Spangler (2017), Mercy Corps (2014), CARE (2016)
[36] Mercy Corps (2015a)
[37] Mercy Corps (2014)
[38] Tabaj and Spangler (2017), Mercy Corps (2014)

Specific Implementation, Monitoring, and Learning Strategies for Inclusive and Resilient Programs

Adaptive management and other iterative learning processes facilitate a nimble response to the complex environments in which development programs operate, ensuring that best practices are not applied blindly, but rather tailored for ever-changing contexts. Below we highlight two strategies rooted in principles of adaptive management that enable increased resilience through the integration of gender equity and social inclusion.

- **Collect, review, and respond to qualitative data on gender equity and social inclusion:** In addition to pre-designed indicators, practitioners should collect and review qualitative data throughout the life of a program (and beyond, if possible). The data should reveal how people are coping differently in the face of shocks or stresses, as well as how certain gendered drivers of resilience (e.g., women's participation in household decision-making, minority groups' participation in community governance) are shifting. One specific strategy to consider is "Gender Outcome Mapping," a qualitative approach that aims to assess attitude and behavior changes around gender and power dynamics within a particular target group.[39] It is important to incorporate these data collection events at multiple points during programming and accompany them with review and revision processes to increase the resilience and inclusiveness of strategies incrementally.

- **Consider staff potential (not just experience) during hiring:** When recruiting new staff, consider personal qualities and values—such as curiosity, creativity, and collaboration—that help individuals manage adaptively. Balancing traditional recruitment strategies, which often emphasize experience, with screening for these adaptive management attributes helps programs both: 1) target individuals with qualities that enable iterative learning and flexibility; and 2) widen the applicant pool to potentially provide opportunities to candidates who are often excluded due to systemic inequalities.

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[39] Care (2015)

Conclusion

Sustainably achieving well-being outcomes requires practitioners to layer resilience with gender equity and social inclusion, two approaches that aim to ensure our programs are more sophisticated and impactful in both the short and long term. Applying this dual lens and embracing complexity and diversity at all levels increases our ability to be responsive to context, address differential vulnerabilities, tap the power of all resilience agents, and ultimately achieve long-term, sustainable change even in the face of recurrent crises.

This brief outlines several key considerations for applying this dual lens to the program cycle with the aim of shifting the way practitioners assess, intervene, and measure programming progress. These recommendations are not exhaustive, and fully integrating gender equity and social inclusion into our resilience approaches will require further research and piloting of specific interventions and measurement and learning strategies. We hope the best practices presented here are just the beginning of a longer conversation about how to integrate these two essential approaches.

To continue the dialogue, we present a sample list of additional resources below, including best practices, conceptual frameworks, research, and programming strategies that integrate gender equity, social inclusion, and resilience.

Photo Credit: Talitha Brauer / Save the Children

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RESILIENCE IN ACTION SERIES

The *Resilience in Action Series* aims to bring development and humanitarian practitioners one step closer to bridging the gap between theory and practice for integrating a resilience lens in programming, answering questions such as: How does a resilience lens change the design of interventions in key sectors or crosscutting themes? How should we shift the design and implementation of sectoral interventions to promote resilience-building within programs? Focal areas covered in this series include Gender Equity and Social Inclusion, Financial Services, and Ecosystems-Based Disaster Risk Reduction, among others.

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