



Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA)

Contact:

Christine Bergado Morrice (Public Affairs Officer), Tel: +1 808 433 1433, E-mail: morricec@coe-dmha.org

News Release

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Workshop unveils Resiliency Model to improve foreign assistance

SAN DIEGO, California (August 7, 2009) – A workshop on a resiliency framework that could improve the conduct of foreign assistance was held by the Defense Department’s Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE) and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) 28-30 July.

Foreign assistance and relief actors have respective short- or long-term roles in the field. The workshop attempted to make connections among these efforts towards a more comprehensive framework that builds a community’s resiliency, or ability to withstand natural or man-made disruption. Such a framework would also encompass all other efforts of U.S. military and state government, as well as foreign governments and international organizations, including the United Nations.

“The Resiliency framework includes ‘resist,’ ‘respond,’ ‘recover,’ and ‘revitalize’ phases. Foreign assistance efforts support one or the other of these phases,” explained LtGen (ret) John Goodman, COE Director. “It is broader than just response, mitigation measures or sustainability, although the goal is to work together to achieve long-term resiliency. Response, mitigation, and sustainability do not occur in isolation.”

Resiliency is determined by how well a community ‘resists,’ ‘responds,’ and ‘recovers’ from a disaster. In the final phase of ‘revitalization,’ the community uses the rebuilding opportunity for improvement.

“In addition, the framework helps to identify policy, technology and other conceptual methods that can be used to improve on the creation of resilient communities,” Goodman added.

“Essentially, this approach could lead to the development of metrics of success for our overseas aid programs, rather than simply metrics of activity,” said Rear Admiral (ret) Steven G. Smith of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), a workshop participant. “Besides simply doing

good work in aiding disaster victims, the COE program can foster the societal and economic stability that reduce international turmoil and risk.”

Many major foreign assistance entities, such as the U.S. military, have a large amount of funding available for foreign assistance programs. As a result, questions arise on how and what types of projects should receive this funding.

“The framework aims to provide a clearer way forward for all participants towards a bigger picture of building resiliency,” said Dr. Ame Stormer, COE lead for the workshop. “That way all entities can see how their efforts, whether short- or long-term, civilian- or military-based, are working together for more comprehensive solutions. This, in turn, could assist in planning, funding, and assessment.”

Forty-eight experts from the U.S. government and military, academia, and private sector were in attendance. Participants were divided into groups according to five main areas of resiliency, which covered sub-topics such as public health, education, and sustainable livelihoods.

“Over the two days of the workshop, there was a lot of very meaningful discussion and energy in the break-out groups. Each group had their own unique personality and particular approach towards the work, and all were tremendously productive,” said Stormer. “Material garnered from a wide range of participant experiences will be used for further development of the framework. Participants also helped to affirm progress in the framework development, highlight areas of improvement, as well as give a measure of credibility. Overall, it was an incredibly positive experience.”

Over the next few months, COE plans to further expand the framework and develop a national-level one. A follow-up workshop for DARPA on technological solutions to improve resiliency is also tentatively planned.

Tom Barnett of Enterra Solutions LLC, a workshop participant, also wrote about his experience in his weekly column in the *World Politics Review* journal: “The New Rules: Putting Resilience at the Heart of Nation-Building,” <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=4151>

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COE is a direct reporting unit to the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) and principal organization to promote disaster preparedness and resiliency in the Asia-Pacific region. COE was established by the US Congress in 1994 to facilitate civil-military management in international disaster management and humanitarian assistance. It partners with a wide variety of national and international governmental, non-governmental and international organizations to provide relevant education, training, interagency coordination and research. <http://www.coe-dmha.org>