KEY MESSAGE 1: It is important to build the resilience of local communities to disasters and promote their participation in DRM planning and implementation.

In line with upholding the people's constitutional right to live in peace and property, the government is fully bound to build the resilience of local communities to disasters by recognizing and strengthening the capacity of local governments and communities in mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the impact of disasters. The importance given to local communities and the need for their active participation in DRM planning and implementation is clear in the fact that the Government of Ghana has adopted a DRM approach that promotes the involvement and participation of the local community, and the development and implementation of national policies that will strengthen the capacity of the national and local governments to build the resilience of communities to disasters.

KEY MESSAGE 2: Climate change adaptation measures should be integrated into local DRM planning and implementation.

It is State policy to maintain disaster risk reduction but also climate change in development processes (i.e. policy formulation, programming, development planning, budgeting, governance and multi-party sectors). The National Climate Change Commission (NCC) has the duty to continue with such other in formulating and implementing a framework for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management. The National DRM Plan is also identified as necessary not only to reduce disaster risk but also to prepare climate change.

At the local level, the Ghana DRM Plan mandates the Local Government Council to integrate the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in local development plans, programs and budgets as a strategy towards sustainable development and poverty reduction. The Local Government Councils of all boroughs, municipalities and districts are also responsible for consolidating local disaster risk information, including climate change risks.

KEY MESSAGE 3: Local risk assessments and local risk patterns should guide DRM measures.

Local resilience is important. The Ghana DRM Plan recognizes that there are different local risk patterns across the country and the need to strengthen the capacity of local governments for disaster risk reduction and management through decentralized powers, responsibilities, and resources at the regional and local levels. The Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (LDRMRO) is responsible for coordinating local disaster risk information and maintaining a local risk map for each local government unit, in order to give DRM plans and implementation at the community level.

KEY MESSAGE 4: DRM measures must be respectful of human rights of all people, including the rights of vulnerable groups that are crucial for their protection from disasters.

The Ghana DRM Plan acknowledges the importance of meeting respect for human rights. The implementation of the main DRM measures must be sensitive and responsive to the different needs of vulnerable groups, including but not limited to women, children, persons with disabilities, and indigenous people, in order to protect them from disaster risk.

KEY MESSAGE 5: Gender responsiveness is central to DRM measures at the local and national level.

It is State policy to ensure that DRM and climate change measures are gender-responsive, including at the community level. For example, the policy mandates that the Office of Gender Affairs be involved in gender aspect in the same manner as other components. The expectation is that the Office of Gender Affairs will work with the Land and Natural Resources Ministry and the Local Government Councils to ensure an effective mechanism for immediate delivery of food, shelter and medical supplies for women and girls, and create a special place where international/national mothers can find help with breastfeeding, food and care for their babies and give support to each other during the response phase.

KEY MESSAGE 6: The differentiated needs of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups must have formal representation at the local level.

The Ghana DRM Plan goes beyond recognizing that different kinds of people, particularly those who are vulnerable and marginalized, have their differentiated needs and capacities that require representation and participation in local DRM planning and implementation to ensure that the voices of the vulnerable and marginalized are heard. The policy mandates that local government councils take responsibility to facilitate and ensure the participation in the planning and implementation of the DRM Plan at all levels (local and national). Representatives of organizations that defend the interests of vulnerable and marginalized groups are appointed as a matter of course on boards of authorities at the local government level. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) now are represented at the LDRMRO by locally accredited PWD organizations. It is supported by the Inga Carter for Disabled Persons (INCAP) which provides that local government councils shall promote the establishment of organizations of disabled persons in their respective territorial jurisdictions.

KEY MESSAGE 7: The government encourages volunteerism for DRM through community disaster volunteers.

The Office of Civil Defence is responsible for creating an enduring legacy for substantial and sustainable participation of volunteers and communities, and recognising their contributions in the government’s disaster risk reduction efforts. It is tasked to prepare the criteria and procedures for the enlistment of accredited community disaster volunteers (ACDV).

Under the law, local government units may mobilize individuals or organizational volunteers to augment their respective personal efforts. In this context, local government units are encouraged to note that the local government unit or any other entity that mobilizes community disaster volunteers is responsible for their enforcement, welfare and protection, including compensatory benefits and accident insurance.

KEY MESSAGE 8: There are mechanisms for both proactive and reactive local DRM funding other the benefit of the community.

Community members are encouraged to participate in DRM planning to influence the use of these local DRM funds.

Adapting funding is key to ensure that DRM is implemented at the local level for the benefit of the community. The Ghana DRM Plan provides that each local government unit should allocate at least five percent (5%) of its estimated revenue from regular sources for the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRMF). In line with the national policy of prioritizing disaster risk reduction (i.e. disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and building back better), a higher portion of the LDRMF (7%) is allocated for disaster preparedness programs including training, purchase of emergency equipment, suppliers and medicines, search and rescue activities, and/or the payment of pensions on casualty insurance.

Of the amount appropriated for LDRMF, thirty percent (30%) shall be allocated as Quick Response Fund (QRF) or stand-by fund for relief and recovery programs in order that situations and forcible conditions of people in communities or areas struck by disasters, calamities, accidents, or other emergencies, may be normalized as quickly as possible. Community members are therefore encouraged to participate in DRM planning and funding to ensure the effective utilization of the LDRMF. This can be achieved through their active participation in the LDRMF.

KEY MESSAGE 9: The local government is responsible for ensuring the safety of its community from risk through preceptive evacuation, and in the event there is the right to be consulted on plans for preceptive evacuation.

The LDRMF has been recommended to improve the formulation of preceptive or preemptive evacuation of local residents when necessary. This is based on the fact that local government are responsible for ensuring the safety of the community, including from disaster risk. Community members, however, have the right to be consulted on plans to implement preceptive evacuation. DRM measures must be respectful of human rights.

KEY MESSAGE 10: The local government is the community’s “first responder.” It has the primary responsibility for dealing with the suffering of its constituents due to disasters, making sure that the differentiated needs of women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are immediately addressed.

As first responder, the local government has the primary duty to prevent and alleviate its constituents’ suffering as a result of disasters. The effective implementation of the Ghana Disaster Risk Reduction Plan in local government units ensures an efficient mechanism for immediate delivery of food, shelter and medical supplies for women and children and affected individuals. Further, a community disaster vaccine can then be distributed free of charge for their babies and give support to each other. In recognition of the high level of risk that they face during and after disasters, the local government should also be sensitive and immediately respond to the differentiated needs of other vulnerable groups, such as older persons and persons with disabilities within their community, as those people face the highest exposure to disaster risk.