2.4 Strategy for Disaster Risk Management

The fundamental components of the TDRM approach are described in the following five keywords of the strategy for disaster reduction described in Figure 2.7.

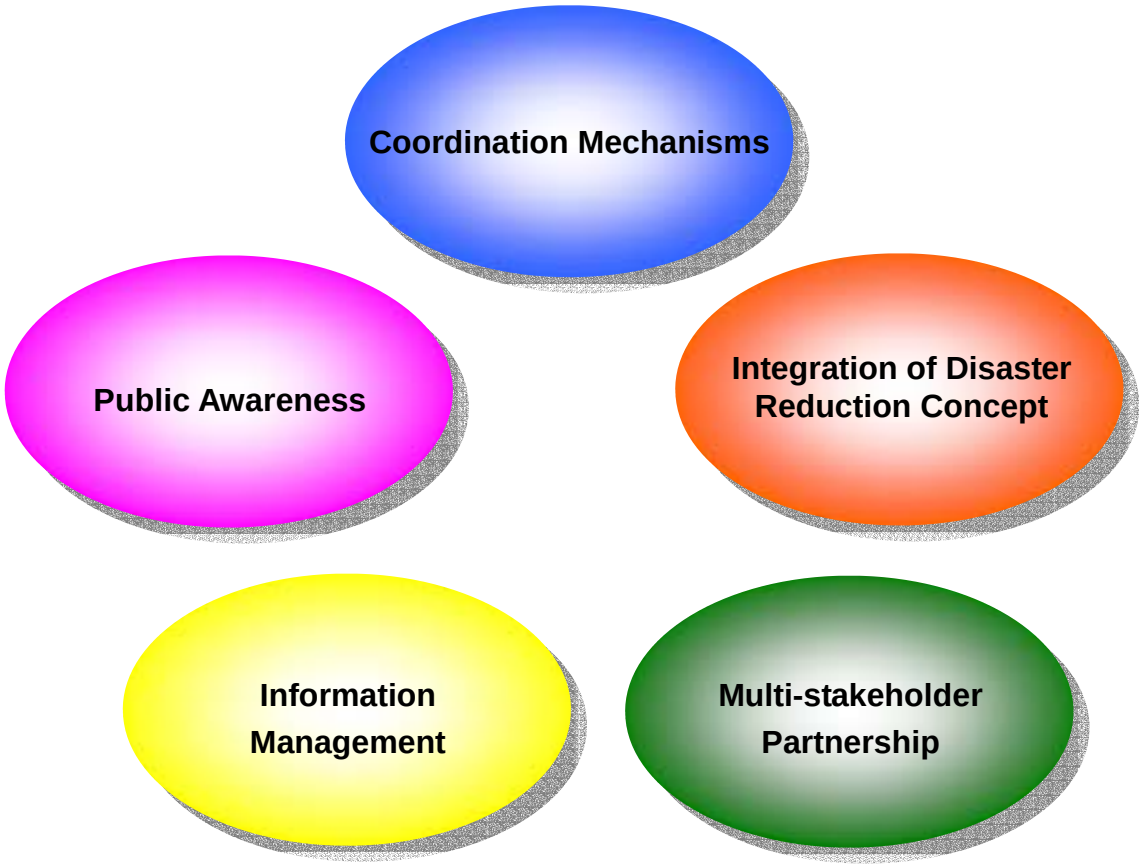

Figure 2.7 Keywords of strategy for disaster reduction

(1) Establishment of coordination mechanisms and a legal framework for disaster risk management

Some countries have not established departments or agencies in their national or local governments for dealing with disaster reduction activities. Thus, when a disaster strikes, all activities are left to the leadership of the national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society. The first challenge in these countries is to establish a system and legal framework for national disaster management.

It is important that national governments create the foundations for a disaster risk management system by, for example, developing basic legislation for natural disasters and establishing a central disaster management committee.

(2) Integration of disaster reduction concepts into development planning

Disaster reduction is often seen as a defensive measure against negative impacts. In most countries, it is handled separately from national development planning and given a low level of priority in national policies, therefore. As a result, only limited financial resources are allocated to it. Those countries therefore sustain a great deal of disaster damage, spend large amounts of money on disaster response, and fall into a vicious circle that impedes sustainable development. Governments should view investments in disaster reduction as investments that contribute to national development in a cost-effective manner.

To build disaster-resilient countries, governments need to incorporate disaster reduction perspectives into their development plans. To do this, they must identify, analyze, and assess risks, develop a common recognition of the importance of disaster reduction as an investment target at the national level, identify high-priority, effective policies, and incorporate those policies into national development plans.

(3) Improvement of information sharing and management

Advance distribution of forecasts, warnings, and other information before typhoons, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters can prevent human and economic losses. Hazard maps related to floods, potential landslide areas, and earthquake have been created by experts, but have not been utilized at the community level. This has resulted in a large risk perception gap between experts and local communities.

It is extremely important that early warning systems and hazard maps be used to develop a framework for distributing disaster-related information so that communities have an accurate understanding of the risks and can take appropriate actions.

(4) Promotion of education and public awareness

The keys to reducing the impact of natural disasters are disseminating accurate disaster reduction knowledge to the communities that are threatened and that also serve as the first responders when a disaster strikes, and improving the capacity of communities to help themselves and one another. It is also important that disaster reduction be integrated into the compulsory education curriculum. School education in disaster reduction can be effectively introduced in developing countries.

(5) Development of multi-stakeholder partnerships and citizen participation

Disaster risk management activities require the coordinated efforts of people in various fields. Early warnings by meteorological bureaus contribute to reducing the impacts of natural disasters only when the information is transferred to local communities through the media and other channels. To create disaster-resilient countries, it is vital to improve civil engineering facilities such as embankments, dams, and erosion control facilities through the cooperative efforts of people involved in various activities including soil and farmland management, land use planning, and building design codes.