COMMISSION ON SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

REPORT

“COOPERATION AMONG TURKPA MEMBER COUNTRIES IN DISASTER AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT ISSUES”
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The word “disaster” is used to describe occurrences causing widespread destructions or losses that hamper community’s life. Crisis means a time of intense difficulty or danger that cannot be solved easily. Crises and disasters occur in different parts of the world at any moment. In the global world, crises and disasters often go beyond the borders. Disasters which do not exceed the borders of a country are so massive that one country cannot respond to them on its own.

There are 2 types of disasters: natural disasters and manmade disasters. Occurrences such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, landslides are identified as “natural disasters”. War, nuclear explosions/radiation, environmental pollution are identified as “manmade disaster”. Since some special disasters, such as fire, occur as a result of both human-instigated and natural (such as lightning) reasons, they can be evaluated in two different disaster types. Disaster Management includes operations conducted before a disaster (pre-disaster), during a disaster (disaster occurrence) and after a disaster (post-disaster) to decrease the effect of disasters.

The term (concept) of crisis include crises caused by disasters, as well as, economic, social and other crises. Crisis Management includes operations conducted before a danger (pre-danger), during a danger (danger occurrence) and after a danger (post-danger) in order to decrease the effect of dangers that hamper and threaten society with the least harm.

Disasters and crises are not always limited with one country and can affect other countries. There may be a need for the cooperation and support of other countries to prevent expansion of disasters or crises, further damages to the country in which they occurred and their spread to other countries. Occasionally,
support of other countries may be needed even when disasters and crises do not exceed the borders of a country.

TURKPA member countries feel the need to give importance to Crisis Management in terms of different crises types that each country faced and will face (experience). Crisis Management and Disaster Management are spheres that are able to establish comprehensive cooperation among TURKPA member countries.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION IN DISASTER AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Disasters and crises can disrupt economic and social order of a country according to their magnitude. However, finding an immediate solution to disasters and crises reduces experienced damage. Restoration of the daily life after disasters and crises require great support. Producing an immediate solution to disasters and crises, as well as, providing social and economic stability can exceed the possibilities of a single/standalone country.

Carring out cooperation operations among TURKPA member countries and their institutionalization will increase the Crisis Management possibilities of each country. Furthermore, it will help to overcome disasters with the least harm. It will provide the ability to respond more quickly and effectively to crises that may arise. However, since the concept of crisis has a very broad scope, a comprehensive cooperation requires a great work and important political measures against all types of crisis. Therefore, it is impossible to implement in a short time.

In the process of cooperation developed in Crisis Management issue the priority can be given to Disaster Management. Cooperation in Disaster Management field can be institutionalized by easier implementation. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan,
Kyrgyzstan and Turkey have a risk of many natural disasters especially an earthquake. This risk brings Disaster Management into prominence.

No country in the world is able to produce a standalone solution against a large-scale cyclone or a similar disaster which may take place in a densely populated area. During massive earthquakes, search and rescue teams from different countries also participate in relief efforts in disaster zone. Other countries provide support for emergency humanitarian assistance delivery to disaster zones.

At the time of a large-scale earthquake or other devastating natural disaster that can happen in one of the TURKPA member countries receiving an aid from other countries will definitely come into question. In such a case, it is natural that sister countries extend hands to one another. Of course, in order to ensure effective cooperation among TURKPA member countries an institutionalized cooperation should be developed by making the necessary preparations before a crisis or a disaster occurs. Because of this, joint operations should be conducted on Disaster Management issue.

**Disaster Management**

In terms of disaster risks that TURKPA member countries face Disaster Management is a leading issue among Crisis Management operations. Disaster Management Cycle has a series of stages. These stages respectively include activities which should be taken up before, and after a disaster. These stages are:

- Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery
Mitigation; involves actions to minimize effects of disasters. It includes activities such as construction of earthquake resistant houses, special evacuation channels against floods and high-rise buildings.

Preparedness; involves comprehensive institutionalized preparedness and household preparedness of citizens. These can be considered under two headings as human and material resource preparedness. Activities such as educating and training of disaster response teams, raising community awareness, training of volunteers by professional search and rescue teams are examples of people’s preparedness to disasters. Material preparedness includes, providing search and rescue equipment and keeping them ready for use, evacuation plans that will be applied during a disaster, determination of the meeting places and supply route, establishment of structures(buildings) that will ensure the coordination of the post-disaster activities and emergency relief supplies stores.

Response; begins from the moment that a disaster occurs. It involves activities such as warning people to go to shelters and to move away from dangerous areas, mobilization of search and rescue teams, and evacuation of the wounded and trapped, prevention of looting, damage assessment, and delivery of essential needs to disaster zones.

Rehabilitation; is a phase in which damages caused by a disaster are restored. It includes recovery of damaged living conditions and restoration of social and economic orders in disaster-affected areas.

NATURAL DISASTER RISKS IN TURKPA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Earthquake: All regions of Azerbaijan except the northeast region, the southeast region of Kazakhstan from the south end to the east end, all regions of Kyrgyzstan except the southeast and the west end, all regions of Turkey except the middle part of the south are at the risk of devastating earthquakes. Especially, earthquakes to occur in metropolitans pose a high risk to four
countries. Even though earthquakes do not happen as often as other natural disasters, damage caused by a destructive earthquake hitting cities is enormous.

**Other Disasters:** Floods, landslides and storms are types of the most frequently occurring natural disasters in TURKPA member countries. Furthermore, extreme heats are one of the natural disasters that affect these four countries. Since TURKPA member countries spread over a large geographic area, they accommodate a suitable climate in which a plenty of disaster types can happen. Together with earthquakes, floods, landslides and storms constitute the most common cause of death from natural disasters.

Massive earthquakes in industrial centers and metropolitans lead to serious loss of life and property. Statistically, disasters that resulted in extensive loss of life and property in those years when a devastating earthquake did not occur are floods, landslides and storms.

**STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN FOR COOPERATION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

A legal basis and a route map can be ensured for the cooperation that will be developed by preparing cooperation agreements among relevant ministries to which Crisis and Disaster Management Centers established by TURKPA member countries within the structure of their states are bound (affiliated). Holding regular meetings and establishment of communication channels among Crisis and Disaster Management Centers will form a joint response basis to a possible disaster. In addition, joint trainings and exercises among units on the lower level, such as search and rescue teams, will improve collaboration experiences of teams from different countries. Additionally, these activities will enable sharing technical knowledge and experience among Crisis and Disaster Management Centers and search and rescue teams. Certainly, the repetition of exercises that will be hosted by each country will strengthen the cooperation being developed.