Executive summary

The Sahel sub-region is particularly exposed and vulnerable to natural hazards such as floods, drought and locust invasion due to its geographical situation and its social, demographic and economic characteristics. Between 2012 and 2015, the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), a UN interagency initiative, supported 7 at-risk countries in the Sahel assess and reinforce their capacities in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness for response (EPR). These countries included Burkina-Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and The Gambia).

The purpose of this report is to draw an analysis of trends, strengths, gaps and needs for capacity development for DRR and EPR in the countries in the Sahel countries that the CADRI initiative supported. The report is structured according to the priories of action of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the international framework for disaster risk reduction spanning from 2005 to 2015. In 2015, the HFA was replaced by the Sendai Framework for DRR running until 2030.

The key lessons learned from the CADRI engagement in the 7 countries in the Sahel are as follow:

- **Priority 1 of the HFA:** *Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.*
  In many countries in the Sahel, dedicated legislative and policy frameworks for disaster risk reduction need to be substantially and consistently strengthened and enforced. Institutional arrangements and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms across sectors require reinforcement. Technical, human and financial capacities exist; however, they need better coordination, prioritization and systematization across all relevant sectors and governance levels. Therefore, national leadership for the DRR agenda needs to be backed up by dedicated capacities, enabling legislation and necessary resources aimed at reducing existing risks, avoiding creating new risks, and improving preparedness for efficient response to disasters.

- **Priority 2 of the HFA:** *Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.*
  National, local and sectorial development planning is not consistently informed by multi-hazard risk assessments in many of the Sahel countries. While local-level risk mapping and assessment is carried out through various projects, national disaster risk profiles based on nation-wide risk identification and assessment do not exist in all of these countries. Unified methodologies for risk assessment, along with technical, financial and human resources require investment and institutionalization.

- **Priority 3 of the HFA:** *Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.*
  Although countries in the Sahel are constantly faced with crises, the concept of disaster risk reduction as first and foremost a development issue is not fully embraced by national and local authorities. There is limited awareness of the potential consequences of the lack of risk-informed investment and planning on the economic and human development of these countries. For this reason, policy and decision makers, as well as technical staff working in various sectors at various levels need systematic and consistent awareness raising and training on risk reduction concepts and practices. Community awareness and engagement in local-level risk reduction and preparedness is equally essential.

- **Priority 4 of the HFA:** *Reduce the underlying risk factors.*
  Many sectorial policies, programmes and projects indirectly contribute to reducing underlying risk factors and building community resilience. This is most evident in the areas of agriculture, natural resources and water management contributing to food security, one of the key development challenges in the region. Mainstreaming DRR in all of these sectors remains one of the main issue these countries are facing.

- **Priority 5 of the HFA:** *Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.*
  Emergency response preparedness systems are well established in many countries in the Sahel. However, capacities for coordination and operational capabilities for preparedness and response require improvement. Particularly, effective inter-departmental coordination, as well as coordination among line ministries and need to be strengthened and established as a regular practice.