

Workshop on National Platforms 23 - 29 August 2008, Davos Switzerland

Disaster Risk Reduction
National Coordinating Mechanisms

in

France

Presentation by AFPCN

Context of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in France

- ✚ **France has a national platform**, with two components :
 - ✚ The “COPRNM” (Advisory Committee for Major Natural Hazards), under the authority of Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (« MEEDDAT »), in charge of disaster prevention
 - ✚ AFPCN
 - successor to the French Committee for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
 - an Advisory Board and think tank for prevention of major natural hazards
 - an active member of the European network of platforms
- ✚ **The focal point is the DPPR (Pollution and Risk Prevention Directorate) at the MEEDDAT**

Legal Framework for DRR and DRR National Plan

- ⊕ An old, although regularly streamlined, framework
- ⊕ The legal framework :
 - ⊞ **Preventive mechanism** : Prevention policy is under the responsibility of MEEDDAT. A plan for the prevention of foreseeable natural risks has to be designed under the responsibility of the prefect.
 - ⊞ **Crisis Management** : Crisis management policy is under the responsibility of the ministry of interior. However the legal framework gives the mayors the charge of disaster response, but under supervision of the central government representative (the prefect), who can launch a special intervention plan (ORSEC). A specific insurance system set up by the 1982 law (CAT NAT).

DRR in Sectoral Policies : natural resources and water management, ecosystem services

- The main players are public organisms under supervision of the state:
 - National meteorological service
 - Flood forecasting by a new body ("SCHAPI", Service Central d'Hydrométéorologie et d'Appui à la Prévision des Inondations), closely linked to the meteorological service.
 - Flood monitoring by the local services of the ministry of environment and sustainable development
 - 6 Water agencies, who raise funds for water management and collect data on water quality.
- But there are also a number of regional environment agencies, flood plain management authorities, as well as NGOs.
- Risk knowledge education since the 2004 law, through the French education system.

Some consequences and Urban planning

As the major remains in charge of the land and city planning, this framework could lead to discrepancies in the responsibilities levels, with :

- ❖ **Poor social acceptance** of natural risk prevention plans
- ❖ Inflation of **indemnification claims** on natural disaster basis
- ❖ And **many questionable urbanism decisions are still taken**, increasing the value of the risk-exposed assets and thus the global risk level.

DRR in Sectoral Policies : Climate change adaptation

- ✚ On the climate scene, attenuation issues still prevail
- ✚ Adaptation to climate change draws (growing!) attention from the political authorities,
 - ✚ *but specific measures are rather difficult to single out from prevention ones, including flooding and forest fires*
- ✚ Health issues are mainly tackled through a “heat wave” plan

DRR Institutional Relation to Climate Change

- ✚ Two certainties : the increase of the mean world temperature and the rise of sea level, but...
- ✚ Despite the number of research carried out on this issue, few or no evidence of a noticeable change in the hazard level has been found:
 - ✚ no noticeable change has yet been found in the flood pattern of French streams;
 - ✚ the consequences of the global warming on the intensity and frequency of hurricanes are still unclear;
- ✚ There is a general agreement that the risk of forest fires is increasing and extending further north.
- ✚ Despite the scientific uncertainties still remaining on CC, improvement of DRR prevention in France is of major importance
 - ✚ following the 2003 heat wave (20 000 estimated casualties in France), a heat wave emergency plan has been set up

Activities and Results of the National Platform and Focal Point

- ✿ Contribution to the ongoing reform of the national disaster insurance system
- ✿ Contribution to the preparation of the white paper on climate change adaptation by European Commission (with DKKV acting as presidency of the European Network)
- ✿ Contribution to the case study by European commission on disaster prevention
- ✿ Numerous conferences about climate change adaptation, prevention-disaster response- coordination (Divonne 2007 conference)...

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- *France has a well established organisational set up, with major actors, and procedures, defined by law*
- *A good synergy between ministries*
- *And a NP stimulating coordination between actors, at the national and local levels*
- *Increased participation of the civil society*

• **Weaknesses, and improvements**

- *The « Grenelle » conference about (environment) overlooked this issue*
- *Insufficient knowledge of vulnerability*
- *Progress is still to be done in linking prevention and disaster response*
- *Discrepancies in the responsibilities at the local level (very small communities, role of the Prefect/city planning...), with fateful consequences as :*
 - *poor social acceptance of natural risk prevention plans*
 - *many questionable urban decisions are still taken, increasing the value of the risk-exposed assets and thus the global risk level.*
 - *Inflation of indemnification claims on natural disaster basis*

Annex

- ⊕ National **Crisis Management** Mechanisms
- ⊕ Financial assistance and insurance system
- ⊕ National **Preventive** Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanisms
- ⊕ Institutional Actors and Stakeholders
 - ⊕ in **Normal Times**
 - ⊕ in **Crisis Situations**
 - ⊕ Network in **Normal Times**
 - ⊕ Network in **Crisis Situations**

National Crisis Management Mechanisms

- ✦ In case of disaster, the mayor is the first to step in. He can engage the communal rescue means, take the decisions to safeguard lives (eg evacuation), assesses the first damages, find shelter for the displaced people, inform the government representatives (the prefect)
- ✦ When more than one city is involved, the prefect takes control of the rescue operations.
- ✦ The Prefect backs up the mayor by mobilizing and coordinating departmental rescue and disaster response means (fire brigade, constabulary, road management and public transport, transmissions...) when necessary, and by assessing the disaster (assisted by engineer public corps).
- ✦ The Prefects can trigger the "ORSEC" plans, which can mobilize the army.
- ✦ At the upper level, France is organised in 7 civil defence zones each under the authority of a regional prefect and a deputy prefect for defence. The relevant coordination decisions are taken by the defence zone prefect in case of large scale disaster.
- ✦ The ultimate level is the government, through the Ministry of Interior (civil protection directorate). The government dispatches the public rescue means at the national level and keeps contact with the European commission.

National **Crisis Management** Financial assistance and insurance system

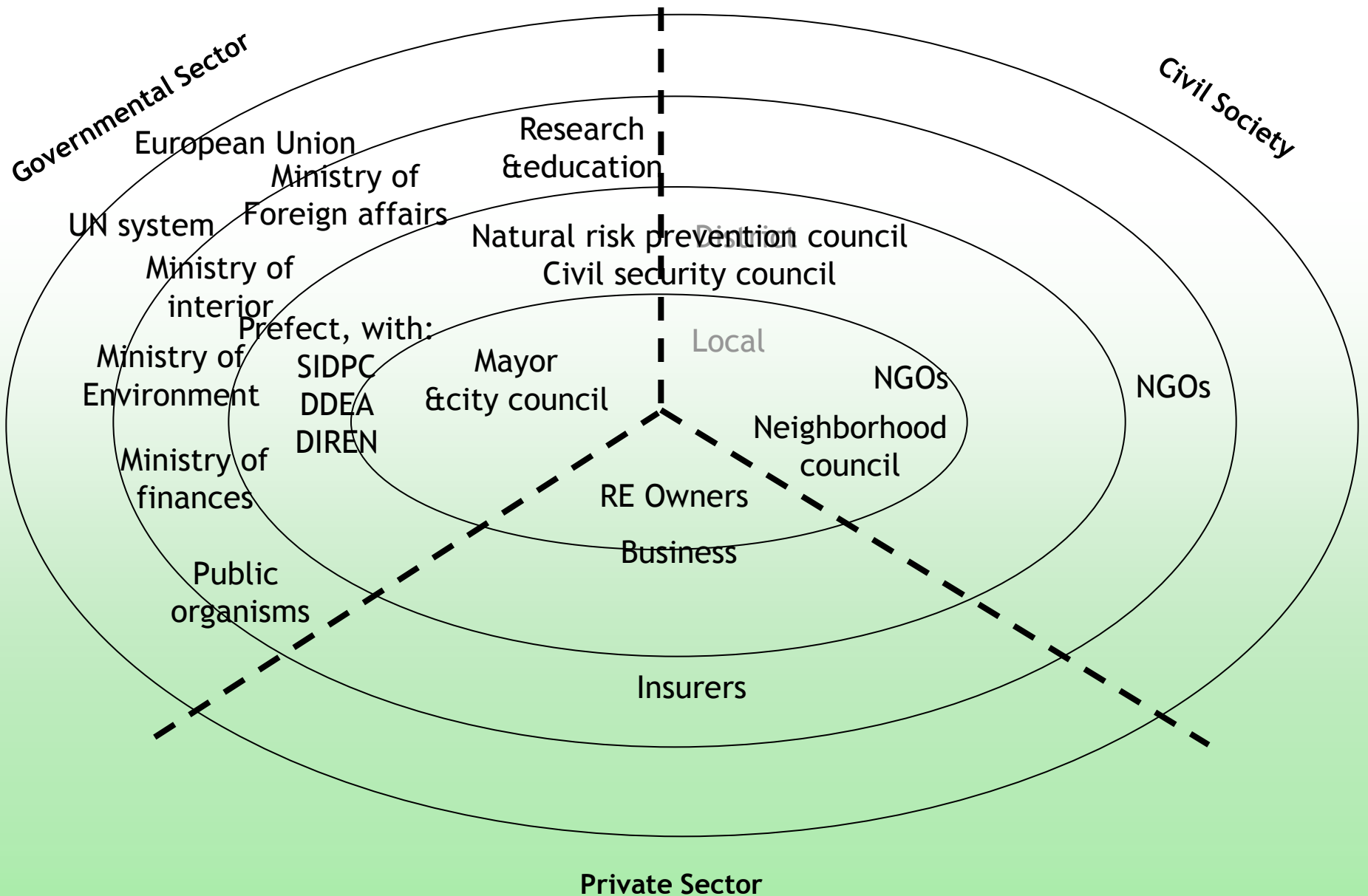
- ⊕ All administrative levels can mobilize funds for assistance and recovery. The national level is the ultimate level, as well as the final reinsurer.
- ⊕ The European union can mobilize a solidarity fund in case of disasters of national or European magnitude.
- ⊕ The French natural disaster system is based on a mandatory coverage bundled on property insurance contracts, at the rate of 12% on the insurance premium. The financial base of the system is thus broadened to all insured home owners, introducing some solidarity in the system.
 - ⊗ In case of disaster a national committee (involving the Ministries of Interior, Finance, and Environment) appraises the disaster and can declare the “natural disaster condition” for the commune. This decision allows the insurers to indemnify the damage.
 - ⊗ A public organism, the “CCR” acts as reinsurer for this specific system, the state being the last resort reinsurer.

But his system has led to an inflation of claims and is being reformed

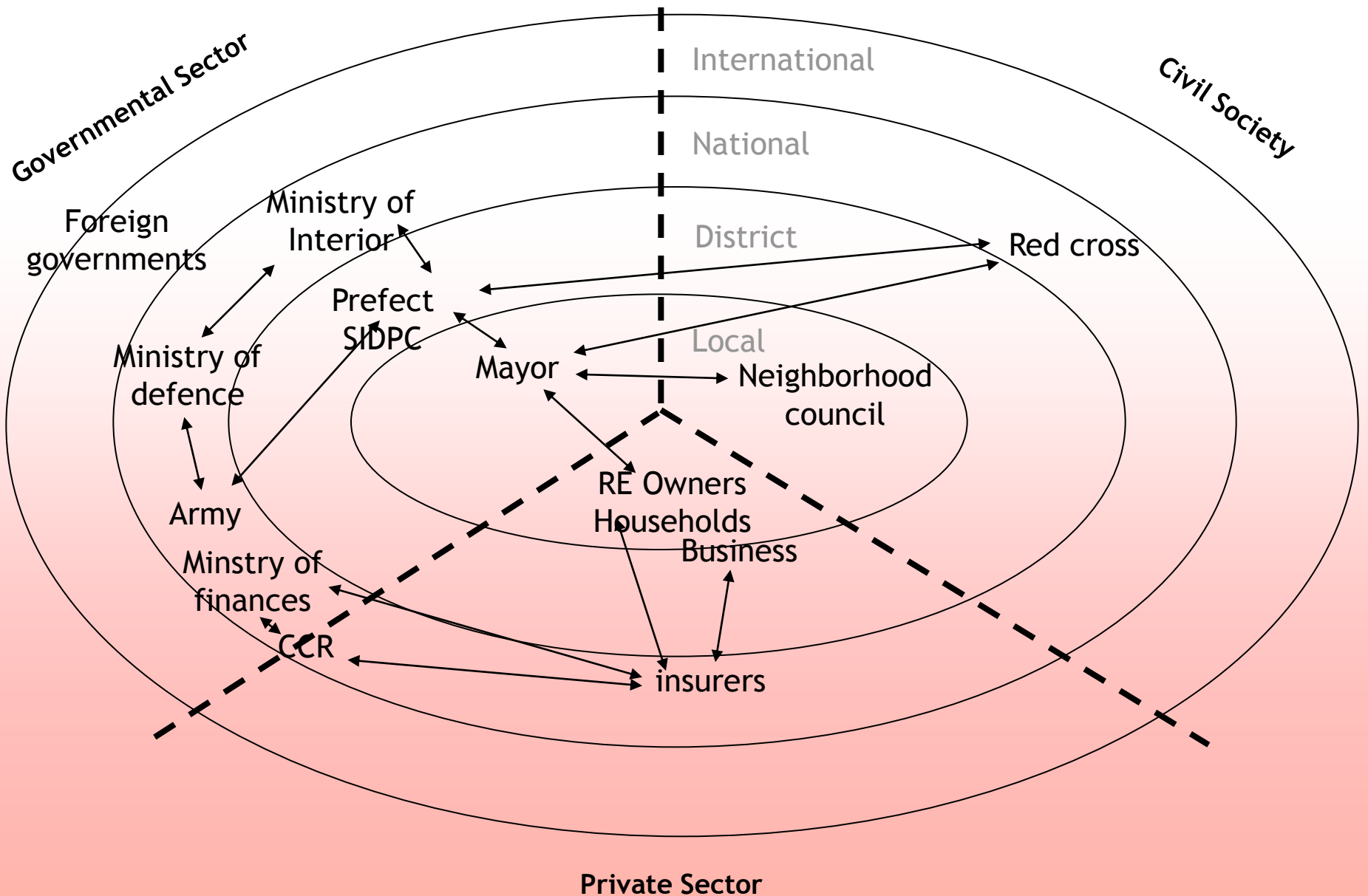
National **Preventive** Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanisms

- ❖ **Informative risk mapping** (particularly flood atlases). Designed by the local services of the government or specialized agencies (eg BRGM for geologic risks). Funded by the government with possibility of financial back up from local authorities (“régions”, cities...) or public organisms (“agences de l’eau”).
- ❖ **Regulatory risk mapping** : designed by the State services at the local level (on governmental funding).
- ❖ **Information/Education**, particularly in hurricane and earthquakes exposed overseas territories. The information is broadcasted through radio and TV, education is dispensed in schools.
- ❖ **Risks forecasting** : Meteorology and flood risks. Governmental funding (The national meteorological also raises funds through business activities).

Institutional Actors and Stakeholders in Normal Times



Institutional Actors and Stakeholders in Crisis Situations



Institutional Actors and Stakeholders (Network in Crisis Situations)

