

### Conclusion: short-term decisions should not lose sight of long-term implications

The assessment of the long-term impacts of the post-disaster reconstruction in Marathwada has shown how reconstruction policies, with all their good intentions have not only reinforced some pre-disaster vulnerabilities and risks, but also created new ones. Clearly this case highlights how short-term decisions, based on immediate perceptions of risks, can overshadow considerations of risks that may accrue in the long term.

This case study also demonstrates how risk perception and communication affects decisions that can have far-reaching consequences. The predominant opinion against the use of stone has led engineers to advocate modern materials and technology. As a result, people have abandoned the use of traditional construction methods, which has led to the disappearance of local building traditions and skills, which have been replaced by very poor quality new constructions.

Therefore decision-making during an emergency situation should not be seen as an end in itself. Rather, short-term decisions should have a long-term vision, which emphasise the importance of preparedness beforehand. Moreover, these experiences highlight the need for that vision to be based on an awareness of cultural heritage as a valuable resource, which sustains communities, traditional knowledge and livelihoods, and is vitally relevant to larger sustainable development goals.

### Notes

1. The villages to be relocated were those where more than 70 percent of the houses were damaged, where a certain number of deaths were reported and where the ground had black cotton soil (a soil type with a high content of expansive clay minerals), up to a depth of 2 metres. Where the damage was more than 70 percent but the ground strata was good, i.e. the black cotton soil was less than 2 metres in depth, it was decided to reconstruct these villages *in situ*. The designation of category C villages was decided on the basis of a detailed technical survey by a team of government engineers.
2. Category A houses had a floor space of 250 sq. ft (about 23.25m<sup>2</sup>). These were to be provided to farmers who were landless or owned up to one hectare of land. Category B housing of 400 sq. ft. (about 37 m<sup>2</sup>) floor space was provided to those owning land between one and seven hectares, while landowners with more than seven hectares received category C house of 750 sq. ft (about 69.5m<sup>2</sup>) floor space. The building plot allocated for each of these houses was about ten percent greater than its footprint to allow for future expansion.
3. Ten Building Centres were established in Latur and Osmanabad supported by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and also assisted by the government. These centres were supposed to promote construction activity and generate employment through training programmes for construction artisans, unskilled labour and unemployed youth. They supplied building materials to construction sites