Executive Summary:
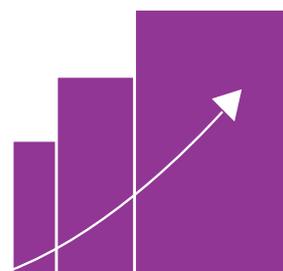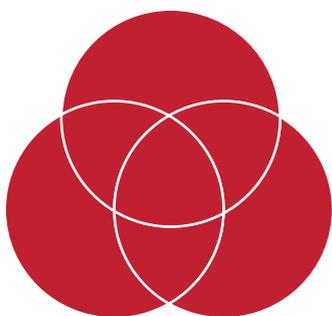# Progress Report on the Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience

July 2020

Ackowledgements

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UNDRR
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Executive Summary

Disaster risk does not appear overnight – it accumulates in systems, institutions and communities due to lack of knowledge on hazards and risk, increasing exposure as a result of risk-blind decision-making, investment and construction, and vulnerabilities entrenched by structural inequality and discrimination. The vulnerabilities of the social, economic and environmental systems driving development continue to entrench and expand over time until a crisis erupts due to a shock or accumulated stress, which overwhelms capacities and the effects ripple through the system.

As societies struggle to manage risks and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as concurrent disasters including desert locust swarming, heat waves and tropical storms among others, disaster risk reduction (DRR) provides a potent entry point for re-focusing attention on the need to reduce existing risks, build back better and equip states and communities with the tools they need to prevent the creation of new risks.

The UN system has long partnered with countries to reduce risks and implement the global frameworks on DRR. The UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards a Risk-informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development (hereafter referred to as the UN Plan of Action) presents the three commitments of the UN System to support countries in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and promote risk-informed development.

A Results-based Analytical Framework (hereafter referred to as the Results Framework) that determines concrete actions under each of the three commitments accompanies the UN Plan of Action. Following feedback on challenges related to the 2018 annual reporting exercise, the UN Senior Leadership Group on DRR for Resilience (UN SLG) requested the UN Disaster Risk Reduction Focal Points Group (DRR FPG) to simplify and streamline the Results Framework. The revised Results Framework has 8 results and 11 related indicators and it puts a greater emphasis on joint actions and gender considerations.

In April 2020, the UN Partners were requested to report on the progress made in 2019 towards the implementation of the UN Plan of Action. Out of the 50 UN partners, the following 26 (more than 50%) submitted their 2019 progress report, an increase from 14 reporting UN Partners in 2018:

CTBTO	ITU	UNDRR	UNESCO	UNICEF	UNU	WHO
FAO	UNAIDS	UNECE	UNFCCC	UN OCHA	UN Women	WMO
ILO	UNDCO	UNEP	UNFPA	UNOHRLLS	UPU	
IOM	UNDP	UN-ESCAP	UN-Habitat	UNOOSA	WFP	

In the course of data processing and analysis of these reports, needs and opportunities for final adjustments to the reporting tools were identified. These are mainly related to facilitating gender-sensitive reporting and clarifying definitions. Particular attention is needed to improve reporting under indicator 3.1 (number of UN system staff that support disaster risk reduction activities).

On the basis of the findings and observations from the progress reporting, and given the urgent necessity to support management of systemic risk, the following conclusions and recommendations have been made to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework:

Commitment

1

Commitment 1: Strengthen system-wide coherence in support of the Sendai Framework and other agreements, through a risk-informed and integrated approach

Reporting on UN Partners' support to developing and implementing system-wide policies, guidelines and initiatives for DRR shows that the existing global policy frameworks and initiatives provide a broad range of entry points for mainstreaming multi-hazard DRR within and across sectors – yet the majority of the country-level work reported focuses only on natural hazards. Policy entry points for building risk management capacities to the full range of Sendai Framework hazards – which UN organizations can support – may not be known to the UN Country Teams (UNCTs). For example, UNCTs in industrializing Asian or South-American middle-income countries may not be aware of the expertise of the UN Commission for Europe (UNECE) on managing technological and transboundary hazards; nor may all UNCTs be aware of the work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on addressing work-related hazards and risks and nurturing safe workplaces.

Helping UNCTs identify opportunities and access system expertise to support capacity development for comprehensive risk management is a critical priority in the context of biological, technological and environmental hazards and the climate emergency. This includes capacities for recording and reporting on disaster loss and damage and the indicators common to both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sendai Framework.

The increase from 2018 to 2019 in the number of countries reporting on the common SDG and Sendai Framework indicators from 60 to 90 is a positive sign, particularly in light of the need to record loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. *Recommendation*: Request the Issue-Based Coalitions of the Regional Collaboration Platforms to act as proactive knowledge brokers between the global and national level and different regions, in order to support UNCT capacity development work on management of emerging, neglected, and transboundary disaster risks.

2. *Recommendation*: Accelerate support to countries for the integration of disaster and climate risk considerations into governance, policy and actions related to the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement with the aim to build resilience and reduce systemic risk, especially in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

3. *Recommendation*: Scale up and enhance UN support to countries on gathering and using disaggregated disaster loss data for the full range of hazards covered by the Sendai Framework and SDGs, taking a coherent approach by fully leveraging the Sendai Framework Monitor and other reporting mechanisms.

Commitment 2: Build UN system capacity to deliver coordinated, high-quality support to countries on disaster risk reduction

There is a need to expand on UN programmes that apply a gender-sensitive, all-hazards risk management approach in support of countries, with increased levels of human and financial resources to support implementation.

Based on the data reported, UN support to national and local planning instruments mainly addresses risks generated by natural hazards and climate change. Notable exceptions include (a) support for technological hazard-related disaster risk management in Eastern, South-Eastern and Western Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and (b) substantial support provided for biological hazard-related risk reduction. It is not possible to tell from the data reported whether biological, environmental and technological risk management is integrated with natural hazard-related disaster risk management in those supported countries. As evidenced by the severe impacts of biological hazards such as COVID-19 and desert locusts in 2020, there is a critical need to invest in expanding the range of hazards considered in national and sub-national planning documents and DRR strategies.

The body of work reported by the different UN Partners under Commitment 2 also indicates that small island developing states and least developed countries receive a large portion of DRR support provided by the UN system. While the development situation and risk scenarios for these countries entirely justify this prioritization, middle-income and other countries facing particular vulnerability conditions and/or experiencing conflict could also benefit from more and targeted support from the UN system.

While UN Partners have reported examples of gender-sensitive DRR activities, gender does not appear to be systematically integrated across the UN system's DRR work. Considerable scope remains to further enhance UN support to implement the Sendai Framework for the benefit of all, including women, men, boys and girls.

4. *Recommendation*: Apply a joint UN approach to ensure that national and local DRR strategies well reflect the guidance provided by the Sendai Framework. This includes covering the full range of hazards; taking a whole-of-society approach; ensure multi-hazard risk-sensitive development and DRR planning at all levels and in all countries, including those affected by conflict and complex emergencies.

5. *Recommendation*: Socialize and apply within UN entities, the new UN guidances that foster risk-informed UN planning and programming in support of government development priorities to reduce systemic risk and vulnerabilities for building resilience.

6. *Recommendation*: Encourage the DRR Focal Point Group to undertake a joint study, led by UNFPA and UN Women, on the status of gender equality and women's leadership in DRR. Additionally, take stock of gender-sensitive DRR activities by UN entities actions as well as the gender sensitivity of their corporate results frameworks.

Commitment

3

Commitment 3: Disaster Risk Reduction remains a Strategic Priority for UN organizations

The commitment to disaster risk reduction as a strategic priority for UN partners was expressed through a number of communications and knowledge products, which can be utilized to support UN work at country level.

UN Partners' reporting under Commitment 3 shows that there was laudable collaboration on social media campaigning related to high-level events and international observance days in 2019, including the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Tsunami Day. However, there appears to be a largely untapped potential for strategic communication about DRR in relation to ongoing crises. Reporting on flagship publications (see next page) showed that the system has collectively produced more than 100 flagship knowledge products on DRR, with relevance to all except one of the SDGs. Approximately one third of these flagship publications were jointly produced by several UN agencies or in collaboration with other organizations. The majority of UN Partners monitor their efforts on DRR as part of their corporate results frameworks, but there is scope to further gender-sensitize the DRR monitoring in these results frameworks.

Recommendations 1 to 6 (above) and 7 to 9 (below) suggest pathways for capitalizing on this demonstrated spirit of collaboration and broad expertise to augment UNCT support to countries.

Reflections on disaster risk reduction in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the international and national development landscapes, highlighted the critical necessity of investment in prevention and disaster risk reduction, and will require enhanced risk management practices in all UN member states in the coming years.

COVID-19 has showcased the systemic nature of risks and how one risk can trigger others, exacerbate vulnerabilities, and threaten economic, social and environmental development gains and progress. Feedback from the UN Partners on DRR in the context of COVID-19 shows that while the COVID-19 pandemic has required substantial adjustment of UN programmes and operations to the changed circumstances, agencies have also identified ways of leveraging different entities' expertise to support COVID-19 response.

The Sendai Framework, DRR best practices and the pre-existing DRR programming of the UN system are potent tools that can be used to support better risk management of COVID-19 and transformative recovery from its impacts, if informed by the lessons learned from the pandemic response.

7. *Recommendation*: Encourage the DRR FPG to jointly identify key lessons from UN coordination mechanisms for COVID-19 to ensure a UN systems approach to reducing risks and building resilience to a broad scope of hazards, including biological hazards, including pandemics.

8. *Recommendation*: Strengthen knowledge exchange and leverage UN system disaster risk management expertise in order to systematically integrate DRR and systemic risk considerations in UN advocacy and support to national pandemic/epidemic risk management and risk-informed recovery.

9. *Recommendation*: Strengthen the role of national multi-sectoral disaster risk management bodies, including national disaster risk reduction platforms, in the governance and management of risks related to COVID-19. This will help ensure that the actions related to the COVID-19 pandemic are fully reflecting multi-hazard risk management, resilience building approaches and the participation of communities and people with higher vulnerabilities.

"2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction"

"Forecast-based financing (FbF) - Anticipatory actions for food security."

"Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Framework"

"The UNESCO Guidelines for Assessing Learning Facilities in the Context of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation"

"Gender and Age Inequality of Disaster Risk: Research Paper"

"Water security and Sustainable Development Goals"

"Safety and Health at the heart of the Future of Work: Building on 100 years of experience"

"Innovations Linking Disaster Risk Reduction with Sustainable Development Goals"

"Managing climate risk through social protection"

"The State of Arab Cities' Report"
"Geospatial Tools and Natural Solutions for Urban Risk Analysis"
"Needs and Capacity Assessment of Fourteen Rural and Urban Municipalities on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Nepal"

"Words into Action Guidelines – Implementation guide for addressing water-related disasters and transboundary cooperation"

"2019 State of Climate Service"

"Managing disaster risk and water security: Strategies for Small Island Developing States"

"Sourcebook on Disasters and ecosystems: Resilience in a changing climate"

"Governance challenges for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation convergence in agriculture. Guidance for analysis"

"Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters"

"Flood Disaster Risk Reduction Manual for Tajikistan"

"Taking a multi-sectoral, one health approach: a tripartite guide to addressing zoonotic diseases in countries"

"Implementation Guide for Central Asia on the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents"

"Ready for the Dry Years: Building Resilience to Drought in South-East Asia" (first edition)

Selection of reported 2019 disaster risk reduction-related flagship publications
(see the full-length report for complete list)