Human Rights and Disaster Risk Reduction: Strengthening the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Considerations from the Asia-Pacific Region
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disasters have wide-ranging impacts on human rights, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities while also creating new ones. At the same time, violations of human rights contribute to vulnerability and exposure, increasing disaster risk.

There is increasing attention being paid to how States protect and promote human rights as part of disaster response and post-disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. This publication focuses on applying the human rights framework prior to a disaster arising and seeks to deepen an understanding of what it means to take a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to disaster risk reduction and provide guidance to States and other stakeholders on how to do so.

That human rights can – and must – support the prevention and reduction of disaster risk is grounded in States’ international human rights obligations and reflected in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework). One of the guiding principles of the Sendai Framework is to protect people and their assets while promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development.

Generally understood, a HRBA is a practical framework for decision-making and action grounded in international human rights standards and principles, with defined roles and responsibilities to support effective implementation and accountability. A HRBA to disaster risk reduction provides States and non-State actors with a framework through which to anchor, review and guide relevant laws, policies and projects. Disasters always give rise to a range of human rights concerns so, for example, floods and droughts can severely disrupt agricultural systems and food supply, damage housing and infrastructure which can leave people without food (right to food), water (right to water) and displaced from their homes without shelter (right to adequate housing) while exposing them to a range of harms, including gender-based violence (GBV), abuse and neglect. Furthermore, they may lose access to their land or be resettled to a new area involuntarily; they may suffer discrimination and unequal access to assistance because of who they are or where they come from; and, they may be restricted in accessing the justice system or from receiving effective remedy. However, States can take proactive measures to protect against such outcomes by strengthening human rights measures across different sectors, in ways that minimise exposure to hazards, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities for resilience.

This report explores four specific ways in which a human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction can support efforts by States and others to implement the Sendai Framework, including through:

- **Ensuring that people are at the centre of disaster risk reduction.** A HRBA can support an understanding of the groups which face exposure to hazardous events, as well as reveal and address structural inequalities which increase vulnerability to disaster risks. It can also empower the meaningful participation and leadership of people, particularly those in vulnerable or marginalised situations, in the development, implementation and monitoring of disaster risk reduction measures, which can strengthen individual and collective capacity to respond to hazardous events.

- **Mobilising maximum available resources for disaster risk reduction.** A HRBA provides guidance on the relationship between the use of resources and the enjoyment of human rights. In particular, it draws attention to State human rights obligations related to maximising available resources to ensure the enjoyment of human rights,
including through advancing human rights-based economies and participatory processes to facilitate equitable generation and allocation of resources, including in the context of disaster risk reduction investment.

- **Regulating business activities to prevent and reduce disaster risk.** Business and the private sector in general is increasingly seen as having a key role to play in preventing and reducing disaster risk and a HRBA can assist in guiding the effective regulation of business activities through clarification of both State human rights obligations and business human rights responsibilities in the context of disaster risk reduction.

- **Taking longer-term measures to tackle the underlying drivers of disaster risk.** As well as guiding specific laws, policies and projects focused on disaster risk reduction, a HRBA offers a common set of standards and targeted guidance for States and others as they seek to address the structural and systemic challenges that underlie and intensify disaster risk. By focusing on the root causes and contributions to disaster risk, a HRBA can highlight timely measures to minimise exposure to hazardous events, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities for resilience, as well as supporting coherence across topics and synergies between bottom-up and top-down strategies.

A HRBA to disaster risk reduction highlights that States already have considerable experience, guidance and technical assistance available to draw upon to support this process, as existing laws, policies and practices relevant to protecting, respecting and fulfilling civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, will also be, in many cases, relevant to disaster risk reduction.

Finally, recognising that a HRBA to disaster risk reduction can reduce vulnerability and exposure to hazards, and at the same time effective disaster risk reduction promotes human dignity, and can protect and uphold human rights, the publication makes recommendations to strengthen a HRBA to disaster risk reduction which emphasise that States’ existing human right obligations provide the foundation and guiding framework for disaster risk reduction laws, policies and projects.

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**Chart of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**

**Scope and purpose**

The present framework will apply to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or manmade hazards as well as related environmental, technological, and biological hazards and risks. It aims to guide the multi-hazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors.

**Expected outcome**

The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, households, communities and countries.

**Goal**

Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, thereby strengthening resilience.

**Targets**

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per year global disaster mortality between 2015-2030 compared to 2005-2015
- Substantially reduce the number of people per year affected by disasters in absolute number by 2030
- Substantially reduce the economic loss in absolute terms in disaster-affected countries by 2030
- Substantially reduce disaster losses in relative terms in disaster-affected countries by 2030
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national multi-hazard risk reduction strategies by 2030
- Substantially enhance international cooperation in developing countries on sustainable disaster risk management and reducing information and awareness gaps to people by 2030
- Substantially increase the number of countries with comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategies by 2030
1. **INTRODUCTION**

In 2015, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework)\(^1\) was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly – the policy-making body of the United Nations, with universal membership of all 193 Member States.\(^2\) It sets out a comprehensive framework for ‘all-of-society’ and ‘all-of-State institutions’ engagement in preventing and reducing disaster risks and losses posed by both natural and human-made hazards and related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks.

The Sendai Framework was informed by lessons learned, shared dialogue and analysis from diverse stakeholders, as well as current and emerging global circumstances. In this context, the approach to disaster risk reduction is premised on the understanding that:

**Disasters are not natural**

While historically, disasters were often perceived as being beyond human control or influence, the term “disaster” is now understood in multidimensional terms, as:\(^3\)

A serious disruption of the functioning of the community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.

**Box 1. The dimensions of disasters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard: A process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure: The situation of people, infrastructure, housing, production capacities and other tangible human assets located in hazard-prone areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability: The conditions determined by physical, social, cultural economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity: The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organization, community or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This definition highlights the fact that actions taken by States and other stakeholders can impact how people experience disasters, by modifying one or more of the dimensions of “exposure”, “vulnerability” and “capacity”, and even “hazard” where the latter is human-induced or can be avoided by human action [See Box A on the dimensions of disaster]. That is, while hazardous events cannot be fully avoided, disasters can be averted or reduced in impact by minimising exposure, reducing vulnerabilities, and strengthening capacities for resilience.

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\(^2\) The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to earlier global efforts to address disaster risk reduction, primarily the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

\(^3\) UNGA, Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction, A/71/644 (1 December 2016), p.13.
A. Disasters must be taken more seriously to ensure national and global resilience, with an emphasis on disaster risk reduction

The elaboration of the Sendai Framework was influenced by the dynamic interdependence of global systems, the growing complexity of disasters across the world, and continuing efforts to ensure sustainable development and poverty eradication, primarily through the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals [See Box B on the human right to development]. With COVID-19 resulting in the first rise in extreme poverty in two decades, as well as the world facing escalating and interconnected climate, ecological and pollution crises, governments have recognised the importance of not only focusing on disaster management, recovery and reconstruction, but on working towards disaster prevention. This means both reducing the existing sources of risk in the world and avoiding creating new risk, with urgent action and broader transformation required across health, housing and infrastructure, agriculture, technology and all other relevant sectors of society, including human rights.

B. The human rights framework plays a central role in disaster risk reduction.

There is increasing attention being paid to how States protect and promote human rights as part of disaster response and post-disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. Guidance is available, particularly through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, for stakeholders, including national authorities, to take action in this regard. However, in addition to applying a human rights lens during and following the occurrence of hazards, increasing attention is being paid to the ways in which the human rights framework is relevant prior to such events arising. That human rights can – and must – support the prevention and reduction of disaster risk and building of resilience is grounded in States’ international human rights obligations and has been reflected throughout the provisions of the Sendai Framework, including with explicit reference to human rights in one of its guiding principles as follows:

Managing the risk of disasters is aimed at protecting persons and their property, health, livelihoods and productive assets, as well as cultural and environmental assets, while promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development.  

In 2023 States concluded a mid-term review (MTR) of the global implementation of the Sendai Framework. The MTR was an opportunity for reflection on, among other topics, progress by States towards integration of human rights in their disaster risk reduction legal frameworks, strategies, policies, plans, investment and practices, and to consider strategies to accelerate and amplify progress to date.

This publication seeks to contribute to this discussion by supporting States, local communities and other stakeholders to deepen a shared understanding of what it means to take a human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction. This publication builds relevant guidance from United Nations treaty bodies and other international human rights mechanisms, and shares examples of good State practices, case studies and developments drawn from across the Asia-Pacific region, as collated through desk-based research (and not

4 See the IASC policies on Protection in Humanitarian Action and Protection in Natural Disasters. See also: UNSG, ‘COVID-19 and Human Rights: We Are All in This Together” (April 2020). See also: OHCHR, About humanitarian crises and human rights.

5 Sendai Framework, para. 19(c).

assessed independently) as well as through a small number of consultations with key stakeholders working on human rights and disaster risk reduction.

The publication is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** introduces the concept of a human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction, providing an overview of the components of such an approach and its relevance in the development, implementation and monitoring of national frameworks for disaster risk reduction laws, strategies and plans, and specific projects.

- **Chapter 3** illustrates further specific ways in which a human rights-based approach can support efforts by States and others to implement the Sendai Framework, including through: (a) ensuring that people are at the centre of disaster risk reduction; (b) mobilising maximum available resources for disaster risk reduction; (c) regulating business activities to prevent and reduce disaster risk; and (d) taking longer-term measures to tackle the underlying drivers of disaster risk.

- **Chapter 4** concludes with key recommendations for States and other stakeholders towards further strengthening of human rights-based approaches to disaster risk reduction.

Rather than a definitive or static perspective on a human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction, this publication is intended to provide a foundation for further targeted research, dialogue and collective activity by States across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, recognising the value of a diversity of perspectives in such endeavours and in the continued implementation of the Sendai Framework.

### Box 2. Why does the Sendai Framework highlight the right to development in particular?

#### What is the right to development?

The right to development is a human right that belongs to everyone. It means that everyone – individually and collectively – has the right to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development, through which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised and enjoyed.⁷

#### The impact of disasters on the enjoyment of the right to development

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development has confirmed that “[e]xtreme weather events and natural disasters, rising sea levels, floods, heat waves, droughts, desertification, water shortages and the spread of tropical and vector-borne diseases … directly and indirectly affect the enjoyment of a range of human rights, including the rights to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination and culture, as well as the right to development.”⁸

The specific reiteration of the right to development in the Sendai Framework acknowledges that disaster risk reduction is essential in the prevention of harms to lives, livelihoods and health, but also plays a significant role in ensuring that States are not derailed from their longer-term, constructive efforts to improve the well-being and full flourishing of all people and their environments, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is

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important also to reference the central promise of the 2030 Agenda to Leave No One Behind (LNOB)\(^9\) – a commitment by all UN Member States to end discrimination and exclusion.

**Further guidance on the right to development**

Activities to implement the right to development can take many forms, at national, regional and international levels. Learn more by reading about:

- **Milestone events** in the right to development and an overview of the [UN mechanisms addressing the right to development](https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf)
- **Guidelines and recommendations on the practical implementation of the right to development**, released by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development in 2019, following a series of regional consultations. These identify good practices in designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing policies and programs that contribute to the realisation of the right to development.\(^{10}\)
- At the Asia-Pacific regional level, the [Asia Pacific Knowledge Management Hub](https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf) (focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda) and the [Asia regional consultation](https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf) undertaken by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development, which resulted in almost 60 [recommendations](https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf) on topics including inclusive development, partnerships and participation, accountability, and promoting sustainability.

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\(^9\) See the Shared Framework for Action on LNOB:

\(^{10}\) UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development, Guidelines and Recommendations on the Practical Implementation of the Right to Development (2020).
2. **A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

Generally understood, a human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a practical framework for decision-making and action in relation to specific topics or emerging challenges. It is an approach grounded in international human rights standards and principles, with defined roles and responsibilities to support effective implementation and accountability, and directed to promoting and protecting human rights.¹¹

This chapter introduces the concept of a human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction, providing an overview of the components of such an approach and its relevance in the development, implementation and monitoring of disaster risk reduction measures.

2.1 **GROUNDING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION MEASURES IN STATES’ INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS**

Every human in the world has inherent rights and freedoms, encompassing civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights and the right to development. These human rights are set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and across the nine core international human rights treaties,¹² and in other more specific human rights instruments.¹³ Human rights are similarly protected in various regional human rights instruments, some of which provide for specific protection mechanisms such as regional courts or committees dedicated to considering allegations of human rights violations. Around the world, most States have also adopted Constitutions and/or a range of laws which guarantee human rights in national legal frameworks.

Human rights are universal (meaning every person is equally entitled to human rights), inalienable (meaning they cannot be taken away and that any restrictions are applied only in specific situations and according to due process), indivisible and interdependent (meaning that one set of rights cannot be enjoyed fully without the other).

¹¹ UN agencies have agreed a number of essential components over time to guide States and others in the application of a HRBA, as set out in the 2003 Common Understanding on HRBA to Development Cooperation, and developed further in, for example, UN Sustainable Development Group, Human Rights-Based Approach and the UN HRBA Portal – A Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming, as well as in relation to specific sectors, for example, see Paul Hunt, 'Interpreting the International Right to Health in a Human Rights-Based Approach to Health' (2016) 18(2) Health and Human Rights 109 and David R. Boyd and Stephanie Keene, 'Human rights-based approaches to conserving biodiversity: equitable, effective and imperative. A policy brief from the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment' (August 2021) OHCHR Special Procedures Policy Brief.


¹³ For example, other international instruments relevant to disaster risk reduction include the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (2018) and the ILC Draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters (2016), among others.
In the context of disaster risk reduction, a HRBA provides States and non-State actors with a lens through which to anchor, review and guide relevant laws, policies and projects. The approach would ensure those most likely to be affected by a particular disaster participate in the analysis of the potential impacts and in the design of risk reduction measures. It would require that communities would be consulted on appropriate mechanisms for effective remedy. The framework for analysing hazards would reflect on the rights of those likely to be affected including the right to adequate housing, the right to effective remedy, the right to public participation and the right to information. Disasters always give rise to a range of human rights concerns so, for example, floods and droughts can severely disrupt agricultural systems and food supply, damage housing and infrastructure which can leave people without food (right to food), water (right to water) and displaced from their homes without shelter (right to adequate housing) while exposing them to a range of harms, including GBV, abuse and neglect. Furthermore, they may lose access to their land or be resettled to a new area involuntarily; they may suffer discrimination and unequal access to assistance because of who they are or where they come from; and, they may be restricted in accessing the justice system or from receiving effective remedy. However, States can take proactive measures to protect against such outcomes by strengthening human rights measures across different sectors, in ways that minimise exposure to hazards, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities for resilience.

This starts with explicit recognition of the relationship between human rights and disaster risk reduction in laws and policies [See Box C on aligning disaster risk reduction laws and policies with human rights]. It also means drawing on human rights in the context of specific projects [See Box D on aligning disaster risk reduction projects with human rights]. In this regard, a HRBA to disaster risk reduction highlights that States already have considerable experience, guidance and technical assistance available to draw upon to support this process, as existing laws, policies and practices relevant to protecting, respecting and fulfilling civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights will also be, in many cases, relevant to disaster risk reduction.

Further guidance comes from human rights bodies and experts at national, regional and international levels [See Box E on where to seek human rights support and guidance] as part of a continuing global conversation about the substantive components of each human right and what it means to apply these rights in practice to local circumstances, across sectors and to take account of differently situated communities. For example, the UN’s Universal Human Rights Index provides a comprehensive repository of recommendations from key human rights mechanisms and using the search term ‘economic and political crisis, natural disasters or other emergencies’ returns almost 500 recommendations or observations from close to 200 documents issued by UN treaty bodies and other mechanisms.14

2.2 CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

Through their ratification of various international human rights treaties, States (as ‘duty-bearers’) have agreed to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of every individual (as ‘rights-holders’) in their jurisdiction. Duty-bearer is understood to mean the organs of the State

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14 See OHCHR, Universal Human Rights Index (with results accurate at time of publication). Further thematic search terms are available, and searches can be additional refined by country, mechanism and by categories of ‘concerned persons/group’.
from national to regional to local level and would include the line ministries, such as the ministries of health and education, the police, the judiciary, and authorities, such as those dealing with disaster management. The obligation to respect human rights means that States themselves must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect means that States must protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses by non-State actors, such as corporations. The obligation to fulfil means that States must take positive action, through legal, administrative, budgetary and other relevant measures, to facilitate the enjoyment of human rights. Non-State actors themselves may also have responsibilities to respect human rights, in certain situations.

The application of international human rights legal obligations and accountability mechanisms to disaster risk reduction is a growing area of focus, which explores what human rights obligations look like in practice in this area. For example, the protection of life and health are of central concern in disaster risk reduction. States’ obligations to respect, protect and fulfil these rights have been held to require both substantive and procedural measures, such as: removing or preventing human-made hazards; providing inhabitants with information about relevant risks; mitigating the consequences of natural hazards through early warning and effective response; implementing appropriate regulatory measures (such as adequate health or planning policies); undertaking prompt and effective judicial enquiries to determine relevant responsibilities and circumstances in connection with disasters.

States should also refrain from deliberately taking measures which have an adverse impact on the enjoyment of human rights (often called ‘retrogressive measures’), whether directly or indirectly. A HRBA to disaster risk reduction can help States to ensure that relevant measures will not have unintended consequences. For example, disaster preparedness to reduce exposure to certain hazardous events may include proposed relocation to safer locations, and States have human rights obligations which must be adhered to regarding evictions and relocation, covering consultation, access to information, and components of the right to housing related to tenure security, location and so on.

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17 For example, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing has issued recommendations to States to ensure that the right to housing informs displacement related to climate change, which include measures on consultation on appropriate relocation sites and timeframes, ensuring adequate resources, identifying community members in vulnerable situations, and implementing relocation in a manner consistent with human rights principles and guidelines on evictions and displacement. See Human Rights Council, Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing. Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, A/HRC/43/43 (26 December 2019), para. 72. See also UNGA, Right to adequate housing. Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, A/66/270 (5 August
Where human rights violations, or abuses by non-State actors, do occur, governments have an obligation to ensure effective remedies are available through court or administrative actions. These might include adequate compensation, restitution, access to medical and psychological assistance, environmental restoration or other remedies, depending on the circumstances. Such remedies must be widely known, readily available, and ensure prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of alleged violations or abuses and be capable of ending ongoing harm.

2.3 Understanding human rights as an outcome and a process in relation to disaster risk reduction

Human rights should be understood as both an outcome and a process. In the context of disaster risk reduction, this means that such risk reduction must be directed towards, among other goals, the enjoyment of human rights and that relevant laws, policies and practices should include the advancement and realisation of human rights in their objectives. At the same time, States must engage in respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights standards and principles as part of the process to reach this goal. For example, this means incorporating cross-cutting human rights principles and associated obligations in relation to equality and non-discrimination, participation, transparency, accountability and international cooperation and assistance.

Box 3. Aligning national disaster risk reduction laws and policies with human rights

A useful starting point to assess the extent to which States are taking a HRBA to the implementation of the Sendai Framework is to consider whether they reference human rights explicitly in their respective national disaster risk reduction laws and policies such as strategies and plans.

While a review of disaster risk reduction laws is beyond the scope of this report, a preliminary review of disaster risk reduction policies suggests that only a small number of States in the Asia-Pacific region include the words ‘human rights’ in national strategies and plans, and such references are generally limited to repeating the guiding principle on human rights, noting one or more international human rights instruments and/or affirming a general commitment to a human rights-based approach.

For example, States in the Asia-Pacific region which currently include explicit reference to human rights in national disaster risk reduction plans or strategies include, among others: Afghanistan, Fiji, India, Kiribati, Laos, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Such references can help to clarify the overarching approach by States to disaster risk reduction and to encourage the subsequent development of implementation measures at national and local levels which align with human rights.

While only a small number of States in the Asia and Pacific region have explicitly referenced human rights in national disaster risk reduction strategies and plans, various countries have adopted other policies and practices to support non-discrimination, access to information and the participation of different groups in disaster risk reduction, particularly women, children, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and groups in marginalised or

2011) (focused on the right to housing in post-disaster settings) and OHCHR, Climate change and the right to housing. Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, at https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-housing/climate-change-and-right-housing.
vulnerable situations. However, the extent to which inclusion translates from theory to practice, particularly at the local community level, reportedly remains variable.

Further, it is important to recognise that measures are being taken by States in relation to disaster risk reduction which appear to align with the human rights framework, even if not explicitly framed in such terms. For example, review of States’ disaster risk reduction national plans and strategies reveal targeted measures to identify challenges and increase resilience within sectors such as health, housing, food, water and sanitation, energy, social protection, education and livelihoods, among others, which are likely to also be supportive of human rights realisation in practice, although additional focused research is required to assess the extent of harmonisation with the human rights standards and principles and to make concrete suggestions to strengthen this relationship.

**Box 4. Aligning Disaster Risk Reduction Projects with Human Rights**

As States and other stakeholders develop specific projects to reduce risk and implement the Sendai Framework, it is important to connect these with existing human rights obligations and the extensive guidance emanating from the international human rights framework across different topics and sectors.

For example, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) – the body of independent experts responsible for monitoring States’ implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – has clarified that the human right to adequate food requires consideration of different components, including ‘availability’, ‘accessibility’, ‘adequacy’ (determined by prevailing social, economic, cultural, climatic, ecological and other conditions) and ‘sustainability’ (linked to the notion of adequate food or food security, implying food being accessible for both present and future generations). Measures towards the sustainability of food are illustrated through disaster risk reduction projects in various countries. For example, in the Solomon Islands the national government and World Vision are working to support livelihoods in rural areas through climate-smart agriculture. This involves reducing wastage, encouraging communities to stop ‘slash and burn’ practices and adopt organic farming, implementing better food processing and preservation techniques, and promoting entrepreneurship. Similarly, in Papua New Guinea, community-led participatory projects provide training and ongoing mentoring to encourage climate resilient agricultural practices, with an emphasis on gender-responsive strategies and inclusive approaches which recognise the differentiated impacts of climate change and disasters on women and differently situated groups.

Similarly, CESCR has outlined the human right to education as requiring States to ensure the substantive components of education, including ‘availability’ (including requiring protection from the elements, sanitation facilities and safe drinking water), ‘accessibility’,

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19 CESCR, General Comment 12. The right to adequate food (art. 11), E/C.12/1999/5 (12 May 1999).
“acceptability” and ‘adaptability’ (requiring education to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings). Many countries are taking concrete steps as part of their disaster risk reduction strategies which also further these human rights obligations, including Tuvalu (which built climate change and disaster-resilient classrooms to withstand earthquakes and high wind speeds, prevent soil erosion, and also provide new sanitation facilities for girls and boys, as well as rainwater tanks to ensure access to clean potable water), Vanuatu (which is developing disaster-resilient rural schools which ensure that damage does not disrupt education, and which act as social and educational hubs for local communities), and Nepal (which was a leader in the Asia-Pacific region and globally in promulgating a safe schools program, and retrofitted school buildings and added new classrooms to ease overcrowding, following an earthquake that could have killed thousands of schoolchildren had it occurred on a school day).

The human right to adequate housing recognises a multi-dimensional approach to State obligations, requiring attention to: legal security of tenure; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; affordability; habitability; accessibility; appropriate location; and cultural adequacy. Many of these components are being aligned with disaster risk reduction-related housing projects, for example in Palau, where energy-efficiencies measures have been mandated for new buildings and renovations, with implications for climate change resilience through reduced fossil fuel consumption and decreased reliance on international energy price volatility.

**Box 5. Where to seek general human rights support and guidance**

Most countries have a specific government department or designated officials across different departments who are responsible for ensuring the domestic implementation of international human rights standards. Many also have a national human rights institution (NHRI), an independent institution with the responsibility to promote and monitor the effective implementation of international human rights standards at the national level. NRHIs work closely with government human rights focal points, as well as human rights-focused networks, non-governmental organisations and grassroots groups. They could be an important source of guidance and support on a HRBA to DRR as well as a provider of analysis on factors affecting vulnerability such as discrimination and inequality, including gender inequality. It is important to note that NRHIs typically face limitations in terms of their resources and capacity to engage in new areas of work, therefore a pragmatic approach should be adopted by DRR actors to developing closer working relationships and availing of this expertise.

At the international level, oversight and guidance as to the implementation of international human rights treaties in practice occurs via a range of mechanisms including:

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22 CESCR, General Comment No. 13. The right to education, E/C.12/1999/10 (8 December 1999).
24 UNDRR - Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, ‘Resilient buildings offer protection and boost recovery’ (23 December 2020).
25 UNDRR - Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, ‘Nepal’s safe school lesson’ (30 April 2019).
• the UN human rights treaty bodies (the committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties and provide guidance to State parties by, for example, considering reports from States, considering complaints from individuals about treaty violations by States, conducting country inquiries, and adopting general comments/recommendations to provide additional guidance on the practical interpretation of treaties)

• the special procedures mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Council (independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective, by, for example, undertaking country visits, acting on claims of individual or systemic human rights violations, contributing to the development of international human rights standards and engaging in advocacy, public awareness raising and the provision of technical advice)

• the Universal Periodic Review process conducted by the UN Human Rights Council, (a State-driven process which involves a regular review of the human rights records of all UN Member States, providing the opportunity for dialogue on actions taken to improve the human rights situations in each country and to fulfil human rights obligations)

Technical guidance and support is also provided through various UN agencies and bodies such as the UN Human Rights Office, UN Women and other departments, offices and organisations.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has developed policy and guidance on protection (including human rights protection) in humanitarian action. The IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action affirms that all humanitarian actors have a responsibility to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action. In addition to promoting a strategic, comprehensive and collective approach to protection, the policy emphasizes that under international law, authorities at all levels of government hold the primary obligation and responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons on their territory or under their jurisdiction.

The Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in situations of Natural Disasters outline the human rights obligations of States in disaster settings induced by natural hazards which include: preventing or stopping harm; ensuring that affected persons have access to relevant goods, services and opportunities; ensuring that affected persons can claim their rights; and avoiding or combating discrimination. In effect it sets a framework for DRR laws, regulations and policy.

Unlike in Africa, the Americas or Europe, there is no regional human rights court or mechanism in the Asia Pacific that undertakes regular review of States’ human rights records or where people can turn to when they face violations or abuses of their human rights. However, a number of regional intergovernmental organisations do exist as key sources for human rights guidance and technical support. These include, among others, the:

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28 Defined as “... all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., International Human Rights Law (IHRL), International Humanitarian Law, International Refugee law (IRL)).” See also, Giossi Caverzasio, Sylvie (2001) Strengthening Protection in War: a Search for Professional Standards. Geneva: ICRC, p 19. The definition was originally adopted by a 1999 Workshop of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Protection.


- ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
- Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
- Pacific Community
- Pacific Islands Forum
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
3. Exploring Specific Benefits of a Human Rights-Based Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction

Building on the overview above, this chapter illustrates further specific ways in which a human rights-based approach can support efforts by States and others to implement the Sendai Framework, including through:

- **Ensuring that people are at the centre of disaster risk reduction.** A HRBA can support an understanding of the groups which face exposure to hazardous events, as well as reveal and address structural inequalities which increase vulnerability to disaster risks. It can also empower the meaningful participation and leadership of people, particularly those in vulnerable or marginalised situations, in the development, implementation and monitoring of disaster risk reduction measures, which can strengthen individual and collective capacity to respond to hazardous events.

- **Mobilising maximum available resources for disaster risk reduction.** A HRBA provides guidance on the relationship between the use of resources and the enjoyment of human rights. In particular, it draws attention to a State’s human rights obligations related to maximising available resources to ensure the enjoyment of human rights, including through advancing human rights-based economies and participatory processes to facilitate equitable generation and allocation of resources, including in the context of disaster risk reduction investment.

- **Regulating business activities to prevent and reduce disaster risk.** A HRBA can guide the effective regulation of business activities through clarification of both State human rights obligations and business human rights responsibilities in the context of disaster risk reduction.

- **Taking longer-term measures to tackle the underlying drivers of disaster risk.** As well as guiding specific laws, policies and projects focused on disaster risk reduction, a HRBA offers a common set of standards and targeted guidance for States and others as they seek to address the structural and systemic challenges that underlie and intensify disaster risk. By focusing on the root causes and contributions to disaster risk, a HRBA can highlight timely measures to minimise exposure to hazardous events, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities for resilience, as well as supporting coherence across topics and synergies between bottom-up and top-down strategies.

Each of these areas are discussed below, revisiting relevant provisions in the Sendai Framework and referencing relevant guidance from the international human rights framework as well as good State practices, case studies and developments across the Asia-Pacific region. It is important to note that these areas are non-exhaustive and a HRBA to disaster risk reduction should take factors into consideration such as, but not limited to, location, timeframe, resources and specific circumstances.

3.1 Ensuring People are at the Centre of Disaster Risk Reduction

3.1.1 What does the Sendai Framework Call for?

The Sendai Framework highlights the need for “a more people-centred preventative approach to disaster risk” and affirms that “[g]overnments should engage with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants,
indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards.31

Further, one of its guiding principles directs that:

Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted. In this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organized voluntary work of citizens.32

This people-centred approach is reiterated in Part V (on the Role of Stakeholders) – which enshrines the principle of shared responsibility between governments and other stakeholders33 – and throughout the Sendai Framework. This includes direction regarding, among other things: the open exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data, including by sex, age and disability;34 freely available and accessible disaster risk information;35 strengthened public education and awareness, taking into account specific audiences and their needs;36 collaboration among people at the local level to disseminate disaster risk information through the involvement of community-based organization and non-governmental organisations;37 gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes and adequate capacity-building measures;38 the recognition of children and youth as agents of change;39 and the investment in and participatory development of people-centred early warning systems, tailored to the needs of users, including social and cultural requirements.40

3.1.2 GUIDANCE FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK, GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

A HRBA can guide States and other stakeholders in advancing a participatory, people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction in various ways. A key starting point will be the collection of disaggregated data to identify which groups live within, or might be exposed, to hazard-prone areas. Such information also provides a platform for investigation into situations of heightened vulnerability, for example when underlying patterns of discrimination or inequality lead to different or disproportionate disaster risks for certain groups.

Further, a HRBA outlines measures to facilitate meaningful participation in the creation, monitoring and implementation of relevant disaster risk reduction laws, policies and practices, with a focus on those in marginalised situations, which can strengthen individual and community resilience.

31 Sendai Framework, para. 7. See also Part V on the Role of Stakeholders.
32 Sendai Framework, para. 19(d).
33 Sendai Framework, para. 35, which provides: “While States have the overall responsibility for reducing disaster risk, it is a shared responsibility between Governments and relevant stakeholders.”
34 Sendai Framework, para. 19(g).
35 Sendai Framework, paras. 24(c)-(e).
36 Sendai Framework, para. 24(m).
37 Sendai Framework, para. 24(o).
38 Sendai Framework, para. 26(a)(i).
40 Sendai Framework, para. 33(b).
C. Collecting disaggregated data as a basis for understanding disaster risk

Disaggregated data should be collected “by sex, age and disability, at a minimum”,41 with “self-identification in terms of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and legal and disability status”.42 Collecting disaggregated data to understand disaster risks is a core component of the Sendai Framework. While data collection and disaggregation efforts are the primary responsibility of States under their human rights obligations, these should be supported by national statistics offices and national human rights institutions.43 Recognising that “...certain categories may be excluded from research, leading to a lack of data [and] stigma may negatively impact on data collection, which can make people in vulnerable situations invisible”,44 such processes should involve active leadership or involvement of the community about whom the information is being gathered, to support equitable and inclusive data collection, including sex-disaggregated and other diversity data, and measures taken to enhance civil society’s capacity to gather disaggregated data.45

Such collection should be targeted to provide relevant information and directed towards specified aims relevant to disaster risk reduction, which will include identifying who lives in hazard-prone areas or may be displaced through exposure to hazardous events [See Box F on disaggregated data collection to support disaster risk reduction]. In this regard, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of displaced persons has recommended that States:

...[e]nsure the collection of comprehensive data, including disaggregated data, and analysis on human mobility, including internal displacement in the context of the adverse effects of climate change, to inform prevention, preparedness, response, protection and solutions to disaster displacement...46

BOX 6. DISAGGREGATED DATA COLLECTION TO SUPPORT DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

As discussed during the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022,47 in Cambodia, the Institute of Statistics improved its gender statistics, allowing it to understand specific issues and gaps, and provide evidence to support gender-responsive budgeting and planning. In Mongolia, the National Emergency Management Agency is working with the National Statistical Office of Mongolia to implement standardised templates and tools to collect and report on disaggregated data, in line with the Sendai Framework, as a strategy to ensure effective use of data across government departments and levels, and by different stakeholders across society.

41 UNGA, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to development, A/74/163 (15 July 2019), para. 52.
42 A/74/163, para. 52.
43 A/74/163, para. 52 (footnotes omitted).
45 A/74/163, paras. 52 and 55. For resources and practical tools on a HRBA to community-led monitoring and data collection, developed by civil society actors, see for example: ESCR-Net – International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ‘Reclaiming our stories. Resources on Community-Led Research’ (undated); Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), ‘Decoding Injustice. Using data to right the wrongs of systemic oppression’ (undated); and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), ‘Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)’ (undated).
46 UNGA, Human rights of internally displaced persons. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/75/207 (21 July 2019), paras. 68(d) and (e).
States should "promote practices that aim for data to be interoperable, standardized, open and publicly available", with consideration given to the balancing of data privacy and transparency, as well as security and protection. In the context of disaster risk reduction, “[i]ntegration and coordination with other existing frameworks such as the UNFCCC, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework are essential to ensure a consistent and effective approach”.

A HRBA to data collection requires that adequate resources are provided for this process. For example, in discussing gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate, the CEDAW Committee has affirmed that States parties should “[e]mpower, capacitate and provide resources, if necessary through donor support, to the national institutions responsible for collecting, consolidating and analysing disaggregated data across all relevant sectors, such as economic planning, disaster risk management, SDG planning and monitoring, including at the local level”.

D. Investigating patterns of discrimination and inequality in order to identify and reduce vulnerability through targeted measures

It is recognised that differently situated groups face significant and/or disproportionate impacts of hazardous events, as highlighted by the UN Secretary-General as follows in relation to the adverse impacts of climate change:

People who are disproportionately at risk...may include indigenous peoples, local communities, peasants, migrants, children, women, persons with disabilities, people living in small island developing States and least developed countries, persons living in conditions of water scarcity, desertification, land degradation and drought, and others in vulnerable situations who are at risk of being left behind. Climate change impacts can vary based on a number of factors, including geography, poverty, age, gender, sex, disability, migration status, religion, race and cultural or ethnic background.

Disaggregated data collection and analysis therefore also forms a foundation for States to deepen an understanding of relationships between different lived experiences, capacity, vulnerability and disaster risk in their countries, when coupled with further analysis in line with their human rights obligations related to non-discrimination and equality [See Box G on understanding the substantive equality framework]. In this regard, the international human rights framework has issued helpful guidance on the vulnerabilities experienced by certain groups in relation to disaster risk and targeted measures to reduce these.

Box 7. Understanding the Substantive Equality Framework

Under the international human rights framework, States have obligations to ensure non-discrimination and equality, with particular focus on those in marginalised or vulnerable situations. This requires consideration of:

48 A/75/207, para. 68(e). See also CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, CEDAW/C/GC/37 (13 March 2018), para. 40(a).
49 A/74/163, para. 52.
50 For further see the Guidance Note on a HRBA to Data: www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf
51 CEDAW/C/GC/37, para. 40(b).
52 CEDAW/C/GC/37, para. 40(d).
53 A/HRC/50/57, para. 4 (footnotes omitted).
• **direct forms of discrimination** (as based on a particular characteristic such as gender or race); and

• **indirect discrimination** (where an apparently neutral law, policy or practice affects a particular group adversely in a disproportionate way, because of biological difference, a shared characteristic and/or the ways in which members of the group are situated or perceived in the world through socially and culturally constructed differences).

Achieving **substantive equality in practice also requires a multifaceted approach** which is useful in considering complex challenges including disaster risk reduction, that seeks to:

• redress disadvantage (based on historical and current social structures and power relations that define and influence people’s abilities to enjoy their human rights);

• address stereotypes, stigma, prejudice, and violence;

• transform institutional structures and practices (which are often oriented towards those with existing power in societies, particularly men or historically elite groups, and ignorant or dismissive of other experiences); and

• facilitate social inclusion and political participation (in all formal and informal decision-making processes).

For example, a national law or strategy may establish an oversight committee which, if based only on nomination of senior government officials, would often be made up of men and possibly from a particular group or class in that society. Achieving gender balance and diversity among decision-makers in disaster risk reduction will usually require positive measures such as quotas or targets and changes in recruitment criteria and processes. Such positive measures to address past inequality or discrimination are authorised under human rights law and are part of a HRBA.

For example, in 2018, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) – the body of independent experts responsible for monitoring States’ implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – issued detailed guidance through its General recommendation No. 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate. The CEDAW Committee affirmed that “[t]he vulnerability and exposure of women and girls to disaster risk and climate change are economically, socially and culturally constructed and can be reduced. Such vulnerability may vary with different disasters and across geographical and socio-cultural contexts.” It elaborated further as follows:

In many contexts, gender inequalities limit the control that women and girls have over decisions governing their lives as well as their access to resources such as food, water, agricultural inputs, land, credit, energy, technologies, education, health, adequate housing, social protection and employment. As a result of these inequalities, women and girls are more likely to be exposed to disaster induced risks and losses related to their livelihoods and they are less able to adapt to changes in climatic conditions.

To ensure substantive equality and non-discrimination in this context [See Box H on Taking a gender-responsive approach to disaster risk reduction], the CEDAW Committee recommended that States parties should take concrete, targeted and measurable steps to:

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54 For more information on this framework, see Sandra Fredman and Beth Goldblatt, Gender Equality and Human Rights (2015) UN Women Discussion Paper No. 4. While focused on gender, these substantive equality dimensions can be applied generally to interrogate barriers to equality in different contexts.

55 UN Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/37.

56 UN Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/37, para. 6.

57 UN Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/37, para. 3 (footnotes omitted).
Identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination, including intersecting forms of discrimination, against women in disaster risk reduction and climate change policies, legislation, policies, programmes, plans, and other activities. Priority should be accorded to addressing discrimination in relation to the ownership, access, use, disposal, control, governance and inheritance of property, land and natural resources, as well as barriers that impede the exercise by women of full legal capacity and autonomy in areas such as freedom of movement and equal access to economic, social and cultural rights including food, health, work and social protection.  

Similarly, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – the treaty body responsible for monitoring States’ implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – has commenced the process towards formal guidance for States’ parties on their obligations under Article 11 (on the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies). 

A 2014 study by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction, prevention and preparedness initiatives set out analysis of some of the factors that place indigenous peoples at particular risk of being affected by disasters. These include climate change, environmental and geographical factors, vulnerable livelihoods, resource extraction, health risks and migration. By understanding such factors, as further contextualised within particular local and national contexts, States can target measures to reduce disaster risks. In this regard, recommendations from the EMRIP included the following:

(a) Supporting legal recognition of indigenous peoples’ collective and intergenerational rights to their lands, territories and natural resources, as the basis for livelihood security, cultural identity and political leverage. (b) Promoting access to financial resources for the development of basic services in indigenous territories. (c) Developing educational and informative materials in appropriate media on the causes of disaster and climate change risk, and on measures to reduce it. (d) Encouraging the holding of forums within and between indigenous communities to identify and share traditional mechanisms for coping with climate variability and natural hazards, and to analyse their potential effectiveness in future climate change scenarios. (e) Promoting access to technology and scientific knowledge generated by nonindigenous peoples. (f) Integrating participation by all indigenous peoples into regional early warning systems.

Further, it is important to note that the members of any group sharing a particular characteristic, such as gender, are not homogenous. Intersecting forms of discrimination or inequality may limit the access of particular members of a group to information, political power, resources, and assets. For example, speaking on human rights and climate change, the UN Secretary-General noted that “multiple forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism and classism, may combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of people in vulnerable situations.” Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons similarly noted that “[s]low-onset processes and related

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58 CEDAW/C/GC/37, para. 31.
59 See https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/day-general-discussion-and-call-written-submissions-article-11-convention. Article 11 provides: "States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters."
61 A/HRC/EMRIP/2014/2, para. 69 (footnotes omitted).
62 The CEDAW Committee, among others, has reiterated that discrimination against women is inextricably linked to other factors that affect their lives. See, for example: CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention, CEDAW/C/GC/28 (16 December 2010).
displacement also intersect with gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, cultural background and disability, resulting in differentiated impacts on different groups and exacerbating pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities.\(^{63}\)

**Box 8. Taking a gender-responsive approach to disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region**

Countries across the Asia-Pacific region are taking concrete steps to integrate gender into disaster risk reduction, with numerous case studies now available to share experiences, for example:

- in 2010, Pakistan established a ‘Gender and Child Cell’ under the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, which helps to ensure that disaster risk reduction policies and programs are gender-responsive, including guidelines, policy documents, and standard operating procedures on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health\(^{64}\)
- the Kiribati National Expert Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management works with the International Planned Parenthood Federation to ensure that sexual and reproductive health is considered in climate change and disaster risk reduction discussions\(^{65}\)
- in Japan, capacity building for women-led disaster prevention, building on past experiences, has encouraged female community leadership and the development of women-led initiatives, including gender-responsive evacuation centres which ensure appropriate products for women, privacy for breastfeeding and changing clothes, and space for equal conversation and participation in managing the centres\(^{66}\)
- the Shifting the Power Coalition of women-led civil society organisations, working in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Australia, is encouraging leadership and participation of women in the design of inclusive early warning systems, and highlighting the socially constructed vulnerabilities and impacts of climate change and disasters for women including unpaid work, gender-based violence, food insecurity, and institutionalised marginalisation of women’s voices and leadership\(^{67}\)

Examples at the Asia-Pacific regional level include:

- the Women’s International Network on Disaster Risk Reduction (WIN DRR) convened by UNDRR aims to empower women to attain leadership and enhance their role in decision-making in disaster risk reduction in Asia-Pacific\(^{68}\)
- the UN Women’s ‘Women’s Resilience to Disasters Programme’ (WRD) shares toolkits, case studies, women’s perspectives and technical insights from Pacific and Asia countries, among other regions, and its WRD Policy Tracker follows the progress and

\(^{63}\) A/75/207, para. 28.
\(^{64}\) See https://pdma.gop.pk/gender_child_cell.
\(^{65}\) Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022, Session Summaries. Plenaries, Working Sessions, and Spotlight Sessions, p.44.
\(^{66}\) UNDRR - Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, ‘How women leaders emerged from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami’ (4 November 2021).
\(^{68}\) UNDRR, Women’s International Network on Disaster Risk Reduction (WIN DRR) (2021).
good practices of gender-responsive and inclusive legal, policy and planning frameworks in 193 countries⁶⁹

- the ADB's 2021 Gender-Inclusive Legislative Framework and Laws to Strengthen Women’s Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters report provides good practice examples from across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond of gender-responsive laws on disasters and climate change, as well as laws that underpin a range of other important rights and opportunities that support women’s overall resilience in the face of climate and disaster risk.⁷⁰

E. Facilitating meaningful participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction:

The human rights framework and associated guidance offers direction to States as to what participation looks like in practice for the purpose of responding to specific needs of particular groups and drawing on a diversity of perspectives and strengths across diverse populations. Areas of particular focus include: available and adequately funded mechanisms for participation; access to information; and measures to ensure participation of all groups, with a particular emphasis on groups in vulnerable and marginalised situations.

Regarding mechanisms for participation, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development has noted national platforms as:

...instrumental in ensuring the integration of the right to development in disaster risk reduction efforts by providing the space for the participation of all relevant parts of society in the planning, evaluation, monitoring and implementation of disaster risk reduction plans and programmes at the State level [and recommended that States] endeavour to create favourable conditions for gender-balanced participation in such platforms and for the inclusion of representatives of marginalized groups [and] greater investment to support national platforms, which would allow them to perform their functions effectively and increase their legitimacy and accountability at the national level. ⁷¹

Further, similar platforms for participation at the regional and/or community levels have been recognised as serving a dual purpose of “providing information on the most pressing concerns of the communities and acting as a depository of local knowledge regarding possible disaster prevention measures and solutions.”⁷²

In terms of access to information⁷³, the UN Treaty Bodies and the UN Special Procedures mechanisms have commented extensively on access to disaster risk information. The Special Rapporteurs on the right to health, on Toxic Wasters and on the right to water and sanitation have all reported on the right to access information in the context of disasters. While the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons confirmed that meaningful participation in decision-making means that people:

...must have access to relevant information, in a language and format that they can understand and that is adapted to their needs relating, for instance, to literacy, disability or their location. This includes information on the conditions in the place of origin, local integration or settlement

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⁷⁰ ADB, Gender-Inclusive Legislative Framework and Laws to Strengthen Women’s Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters (2021).
⁷¹ UN Doc. A/74/163, para. 50.
⁷² UN Doc. A/74/163, para. 51.
elsewhere. Even before a disaster takes place, they must be informed and prepared about the possible dangers and risks, and warned of imminent threats.74

**Box 9. Mandating Participatory Disaster Risk Reduction**

| The Fiji Council of Social Services, mandated under the National Disaster Management Act 1998 to coordinate civil society organisations, is a good example of the importance of having a legal framework which enables civil society engagement in disaster risk reduction.75 Similarly, other countries in the Asia-Pacific region have developed their legal frameworks to ensure greater participation, including for example, Vietnam (which recognises local organisations, households and individuals as first responders and makes explicit provisions for community participation in local plans on disaster prevention) and Mongolia (which embeds multi-stakeholder national and local platforms into institutional structures on disaster risk reduction).76 |

Access to information was emphasised by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development, who outlined that effective disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programs requires States to ensure that:

...the individuals and communities concerned be well informed of the processes for their creation and their outcomes. States should establish mechanisms that provide easy access to information related to disaster risk reduction development policies and processes and enact legislation guaranteeing the right to obtain access to information, including information about financing. Legal remedies should be provided to ensure that access to information is not denied. States should provide information in public spaces in relevant languages and accessible formats, such as images and posters, using larger fonts and audio transmission. The gender and diversity dimensions of how and where such information is displayed should be considered. Warning communication technology should be equally accessible to persons of all ages, disabilities and backgrounds. Information on hazards, vulnerabilities and risks and on ways of reducing the impacts thereof should be disseminated to everyone and in formats that are accessible to persons who are deaf or blind or who have a learning disability. States should enhance international cooperation provided for the dissemination of information.77

Significant guidance has been issued in relation to facilitating participation of particular groups, including women, persons with disabilities, children and displaced persons [See Box J on supporting the leadership and engagement of children in disaster risk reduction]. For example, to ensure that women and girls are provided with equal opportunities to participate in, lead and engage in decision-making in disaster risk reduction and climate change activities, the CEDAW Committee recommended that States: adopt targeted policies such as temporary special measures, including quotas; develop programmes to ensure women’s participation and leadership in political life; ensure women’s equal representation in disaster risk reduction and climate change fora and mechanisms at the community, local, national, regional and international levels; strengthen national gender and women’s rights institutions, civil society and women’s organizations and provide them with adequate resources, skills, and authority;|

74 A/75/207, para. 54.
77 A/74/163 (15 July 2019), paras. 38 and 56.
and allocate adequate resources to build women’s leadership capacities and create an enabling environment to strengthen their active role in disaster risk reduction.\(^78\)

**Box 10. Supporting the Leadership and Engagement of Children in Disaster Risk Reduction**

The UNDRR’s Words into Action Guide on ‘Engaging Children and Youth in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building’ highlights that children and youth under 30 years old represent half the world’s population and stand to benefit the most from reducing the risk and impact of disasters.\(^79\) The guide offers key principles for meaningful engagement and safeguarding of children and youth, case studies and strategies for using creativity, innovation and play towards disaster risk reduction.

In Fiji, the government developed an arts-based initiative to empower young people and raise awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic.\(^80\) Local artists worked with young community members in 70 informal settlements across the country to paint murals with simple yet powerful public health messages, supported by technical assistance from UN-Habitat to ensure message accuracy. In Samoa, Vanuatu, Tuvalu and Kiribati, various government ministries, NGOs, international agencies and other bodies partnered with the PACMAS Action Against Climate Change initiative to support young people to communicate compelling stories on local climate change projects, through training, mentorship and media productions skills.\(^81\)

Strategies to provide education relevant to the current and future needs of young people and showcase young people as active agents of change include the Pacific Island Youth Leadership Programme.\(^82\) This aims to provide youth and community workers with community-based disaster risk reduction capacity through formal certificate and diploma qualifications, where students learn practical skills such as community mapping exercises and participatory workshops.

To ensure the genuine and informed participation of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction efforts [See Box 11 on disability inclusion in disaster risk reduction], States have been directed to, among other measures: strengthen the capacity and resources of organizations representing persons with disabilities and actively involve them in all stages of disaster planning and management; develop systems to identify existing risks with the participation of organisations representing persons with disabilities and caregivers; seek the input of persons with disabilities to ensure that their expertise is included in the design of physical environment accessibility; and establish special measures to provide equal access to persons with disabilities, irrespective of the nature of their disabilities, and of all backgrounds, who wish to participate in disaster reduction.\(^83\)

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\(^{78}\) CEDAW/C/GC/37, para. 36 (footnotes omitted). See also A/74/163, para. 59.


\(^{80}\) UNDRR - Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, ‘Engaging the Youth of the Pacific: Young artists paint a way to COVID-19 safety’ (25 August 2020).

\(^{81}\) Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Compendium of Case Studies on Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (2015), p.16.

\(^{82}\) Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Compendium of Case Studies on Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (2015), p.18.

\(^{83}\) A/74/163, paras. 58-59 (footnotes omitted).
**Box 11. Disability inclusion in disaster risk reduction**

In 2022, UNDRR released a scoping report ‘Persons with disabilities in situations of risk’, which provides insights on how strengthening the connection between disaster risk reduction and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) could **reinforce efforts to enhance the protection of persons with disabilities in disaster risk situations**. The report affirms the human rights approach set out in the CRPD which, among other things, highlights persons with disabilities as rights-holders, the CRPD as a legal framework for inclusive societies, the CRPD guiding principles, and the focus of article 11 of the CRPD on the dimensions of disaster risk.

Civil society **good practices of inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action**, can share learnings across countries, including in relation to: inclusive disaster risk reduction and preparedness; collecting and using disability-disaggregated data for assessments and programming; participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in response and recovery; removing barriers to access humanitarian assistance and protection; and inclusive coordination mechanisms and resource mobilisation.

Recognising participation not as a framing of victimhood but as a key avenue for building durable solutions and resilience across communities [See Box 12 on integrating local, Indigenous and traditional knowledge and practice into disaster risk reduction and Box 13 on guiding principles to support participatory processes], the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons has advised that:

> Internally displaced persons, communities at risk of displacement and host communities must be involved in decision-making processes relating to the planning and implementation of prevention and response strategies as well as durable solutions, at all stages of development, implementation and monitoring of laws, policies, programmes and strategies. The participation of specific groups, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, must also be ensured. The participation of affected persons and communities constitutes a great asset to the development of laws, policies and programmes as diverse groups can share their enriching knowledge, perspectives and experiences...  

Further, participation should not be limited to a ‘tick-the-box’ or passive exercise but should facilitate active agency by people in any decision-making impacting their lives. For example, in relation to disaster displacement:

> ...the free, prior and informed consent of populations must be obtained before any measures that affect them are taken to address disaster displacement, for example in the case of planned relocations. Similarly, the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples must be obtained before the adoption and implementation of legislative or administrative measures or the approval of projects that might affect them, including climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in their territories.

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86 A/75/207, para. 54.
87 A/75/207, para. 54 (footnotes omitted).
**Box 12. Integrating Local, Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge and Practice into Disaster Risk Reduction**

States and others are increasingly recognising that effective disaster risk reduction requires – and is strengthened by – a diversity of knowledge and practice, with particular regard to local, Indigenous and traditional perspectives and practices. For example:

- **In Australia**, the application of *Indigenous cultural burning practices* to combat bushfires was recognised as a potential management tool to mitigate climate-driven catastrophic bushfires[^88] – for example, an initiative led by Firesticks Alliance offers First Nations women a culturally safe environment in which to come together and exchange intergenerational, cross-cultural knowledge, whilst highlighting the importance of women leading in those spaces.[^89]

- Passing **traditional songs and poems** down through the generations is recognised in **Indonesia** as an important way to share knowledge on responding to disasters.[^90]

- **In Papua New Guinea**, the Red Cross Society’s inclusive Community Resilience Participatory Approach trains volunteers to identify and develop community and individual strengths and encourage the community to take action based on existing local resources with one example being a local community project to ensure **dependable, clean water supply**, with an associated reduction in **time-consuming water collection** usually undertaken by village women and children.[^91]

- **In Vanuatu**, a project to train over 500 women in **low-cost, climate adaptive, greenhouse gas mitigating and rural-appropriate technology** for the preservation of fruits, vegetables, nuts and fish, with the training accessible even to women with low literacy rates or without formal schooling, and based on existing gender-specific cultural knowledge and set of skills.[^92]

- Customising **communication about hazards to reach diverse populations**, particularly marginalised groups, for example, through the use of social media, simplifying and targeting forecasts to specific sectors, translating messages into local languages, and the use of local volunteers who understand local perceptions and culture.[^93]

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**Box 13. Guiding Principles to Support Participatory Processes**

The Pacific Community’s **PLANET principles** reflect a people-centred approach that places human rights, gender and social inclusion, the Pacific culture and environmental sustainability at its core. It acts as a set of guiding principles for implementing a people-centred approach to development, covering: participation; link to rights; accountability; non-discrimination; empowerment; and transforming social norms.[^94]


[^89]: See https://www.firesticks.org.au.


[^92]: Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Compendium of Case Studies on Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (2015), p.38.

[^93]: UNDRR - Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, “Early warning systems and “the last metre”” (9 April 2019).

[^94]: People-Centred Approach | Human Rights & Social Development (spc.int).
3.2 MOBILISING MAXIMUM AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

3.2.1 WHAT DOES THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK CALL FOR?

Through its Priority 3 on ‘Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience’, the Sendai Framework affirms the necessity for adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, stating that:

Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets, as well as the environment. These can be drivers of innovation, growth and job creation. Such measures are cost-effective and instrumental to save lives, prevent and reduce losses and ensure effective recovery and rehabilitation.95

The Sendai Framework recognises that “[a]ddressing underlying disaster risk factors through disaster risk-informed public and private investments is more cost-effective than primary reliance on post-disaster response and recovery, and contributes to sustainable development”.96 Among other steps, States are directed to: allocate the necessary resources, including finance and logistics, as appropriate, at all levels of administration for the development and the implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies, policies, plans, laws and regulations in all relevant sectors;97 encourage parliamentarians to set budget allocations as part of supporting disaster risk reduction;98 develop and implement social safety-net mechanisms to ensure resilience to shocks at the household and community levels;99 invest in critical facilities, such as schools and hospitals;100 and promote, as appropriate, the integration of disaster risk reduction considerations and measures in financial and fiscal instruments.101

3.2.2 GUIDANCE FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK, GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

States’ decision-making in relation to the use of resources, including in the context of disaster risk reduction, must be guided by the international human rights framework. In particular, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights requires States to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of their available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.102 States must take timely steps which are deliberate, concrete and targeted, take into account the precarious situation of disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and prioritise grave situations or situations of risk.103 They have a legal obligation to design and implement fiscal, tax, debt, trade, aid, monetary and environmental policies so that they are deliberately directed towards the

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95 Sendai Framework, para. 29.
96 Sendai Framework, para. 19(j).
97 Sendai Framework, para. 30(a).
98 Sendai Framework, para. 27(i).
99 Sendai Framework, paras. 30(j) and 31(g).
100 Sendai Framework, para. 30(c).
101 Sendai Framework, para. 30(m).
102 ICESCR, Article 2(1).
103 CESCR, Statement by the Committee: An evaluation of the obligation to take steps to the “Maximum of available resources” under an optional protocol to the Covenant, E/C.12/2007/1 (21 September 2007).
realisation of human rights.104 “Resources” should be understood broadly to encompass the financial, human, organisational and scientific resources available within a country, and also to extend beyond those over which the State has direct control, to include sources such as development aid.

Similarly, the right to development, as well as other human rights such as the right to social protection and cross-cutting human rights principles of participation, transparency and accountability, will be instructive in terms of guiding State action on investment in disaster risk reduction. For example, as informed in particular by the Declaration on the Right to Development105 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,106 the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development has stated that State human rights obligations include, among others: ensuring that benefits of development are fairly distributed and reduce inequalities, with active meaningful and informed participation as a means through which individuals and collectives can agree on benefit sharing; putting in place gender equality and social protection policies; and mobilising domestic resources by retaining State resources, including land, strengthening tax collection capabilities and progressive tax policies.107

A HRBA can inform States’ implementation of these finance-related provisions of the Sendai Framework in various ways, including advancing human rights-aligned economies, and measures to support fiscal space, appropriate resource generation and budgetary allocation to ensure adequate investment in disaster risk reduction.

F. Advancing human rights economies

With escalating and interconnected climate, ecological and pollution-related global crises, many hazardous events are no longer ‘once-in-a-generation’ events and States cannot afford in the longer-term to take a reactive or piecemeal approach to disaster risk reduction. In this context, national macroeconomic policies should create enabling environments for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with attention to disaster risk reduction and the underlying drivers of disaster risk.

In this regard, recognising the contribution of inequality to causing and perpetuating such crisis and in setting out his vision for a new social contract, the UN Secretary-General has called for a new global deal where power, resources and opportunities are better shared and governance mechanisms better reflect contemporary realities,108 and for States to expand measurement of societal wealth beyond a narrow focus on GDP.109 The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for a “human rights economy” to reiterate the

105 Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986.
107 UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development, Guidelines and Recommendations on the Practical Implementation of the Right to Development (2020), Ch.4.
109 Human Rights Council, Question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights. Report of the Secretary-General, A/HRC/49/28 (2 February 2022), para. 34.

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centrality of human rights as a guiding foundation for all economic measures. Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights has been robust in analysis and recommendations as to the way forward for national and global economic decision-making in the context of climate change and disaster risk reduction, advising States that maintaining the status quo “...will be disastrous for the global economy and pull vast numbers into poverty” and that addressing climate change will require:

...deep structural changes in the world economy ... done in a way that provides the necessary support, protects workers, creates good jobs and is guided by international labour standards. A robust social safety net and a well-managed transition to a green economy will be the best response to the unavoidable harms that climate change will bring. Climate change should be a catalyst for States to fulfil long-ignored and overlooked economic and social rights, including to social security, water and sanitation, education, food, health care, housing and decent work. Revenue from climate action, including emissions control and tax restructuring, should be used to fund social protection programmes to protect those affected.

Lessons emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic will also be relevant for guiding macroeconomic policy choices, including recent research by OHCHR which examined the interconnection of COVID-19 response measures, climate finance and human rights, and shared recommendations for enhancing coherence in the pursuit of economic, social and environmental objectives, including: promoting a human rights-enhancing economy; developing a robust knowledge base on post-COVID economic recovery, climate change and human rights; developing a robust knowledge base on post-COVID economic recovery, climate change and human rights; assessments and access to information/ transparency; and pilot projects/actions integrating human rights in climate finance and COVID-19 recovery.

In addition, academic and civil society groups globally are instrumental in the transformation to a human rights economy, to counter the significant human rights impacts of a dominant economic system focused on extraction, degradation of natural resources and exploitation, and associated climate- and ecological-related hazards.

### 3.3.3 Guiding State Generation and Allocation of Resources to Ensure Adequate Investment in Disaster Risk Reduction

The human rights framework offers clear guidance to States to support the expansion of fiscal space and generation and allocation of resources. In this regard, fiscal space refers broadly to the resources available to States, through domestic revenue generation, unconditional/concessional loans and development aid, to facilitate the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights and to remedy human rights violations. States can generate resources in various ways, including through the collection of taxes, fees and fines, profits from State-owned enterprises, trade, foreign aid and borrowing from public and private lenders, both domestic and foreign.

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111 A/HRC/41/39, paras. 43, 55-56 (footnotes omitted). See also para. 58 on human rights as a guide to a green transition.
113 See, for example, Balakrishnan, Radhika, Diane Elson, James Heintz and Jonah Walters, Auditing Economic Policy for Human Rights. A Guide for Activists and Advocates (Center for Women's Global Leadership: 2019) and Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and Christian Aid, A Rights-Based Economy: Putting people and planet first (2020).
Taxation – one of the most powerful tools available to States to expand their fiscal space – must be fair, sustainable, redistributive and progressive. States should pay attention to, among other measures: progressive taxation so that those who are able to, contribute more; fairness in taxation, to ensure that the tax system does not privilege certain groups in undue ways; and the alignment of tax objectives with human rights obligations including measures to tackle underlying drivers of disaster risk.

In the context of disaster risk reduction, resources generated by States should be allocated through participatory processes and spent in an equitable way in alignment with human rights principles and norms, with priority given to the most marginalised. This means spending should be directed to develop, implement and monitor disaster risk reduction laws and policies, as well as relevant projects which benefit all groups fairly, with a focus on minimising exposure, reducing vulnerabilities and increasing capacity to respond to hazardous events. Efforts should be taken by States to ensure budgets are reflective of the diverse realities of rights-holders, including by taking steps towards making budgets risk-informed, gender-responsive \(^\text{114}\) and child rights-responsive \(^\text{115}\) and participatory throughout all stages of the budget cycle. Adequate transparency and monitoring mechanisms should be put in place to ensure accountability and to guard against corruption \(^\text{116}\).

### 3.3 Regulating Business Activities to Prevent and Reduce Disaster Risk

#### 3.3.1 What does the Sendai Framework Call For?

The Sendai Framework emphasises that disaster risk reduction “requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership” \(^\text{117}\) with “a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders, including business and academia, to ensure mutual outreach, partnership, complementarity in roles and accountability and follow-up”. \(^\text{118}\)

While recognising that States have the overall responsibility for reducing disaster risk, the Sendai Framework highlights in its Section V the important role played by stakeholders across civil society, academia, science and research, business and media. In relation to corporate activities in particular, States are guided to determine specific roles and responsibilities, building on existing relevant international instruments, to encourage businesses as follows:

Business, professional associations and private sector financial institutions, including financial regulators and accounting bodies, as well as philanthropic foundations, to integrate disaster risk management, including business continuity, into business models and practices through disaster-risk-informed investments, especially in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; engage in awareness-raising and training for their employees and customers; engage in and support research and innovation, as well as technological development for disaster risk management; share and disseminate knowledge, practices and non sensitive data; and actively participate, as appropriate.

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\(^{115}\) See CRC, General comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children’s rights (art. 4), CRC/C/GC/19 (20 July 2016).

\(^{116}\) The global standard for Public Financial Management (PFM) is set by PEFA. They produce tools for country monitoring on corruption, accountability and transparency for public finances/budgets and specific guidance on PFM in disaster settings: https://www.pefa.org/news/disaster-response-public-financial-management-review-toolkit

\(^{117}\) Sendai Framework, para. 19(d).

\(^{118}\) Sendai Framework, para. 19(e).
and under the guidance of the public sector, in the development of normative frameworks and technical standards that incorporate disaster risk management.\textsuperscript{119}

Other provisions relevant to corporate activities cover, for example, measures to: ensure the availability and accessibility of non-sensitive hazard-exposure, vulnerability, risk, disaster and loss-disaggregated information;\textsuperscript{120} the coherence and further development of laws, regulations and public policies which guide the private sector in disaster risk transparency and reporting requirements;\textsuperscript{121} encourage private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction; and “increase business resilience and protection of livelihoods and productive assets throughout the supply chains, ensure continuity of services and integrate disaster risk management into business models and practices”.\textsuperscript{122}

3.3.2 GUIDANCE FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK, GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

The beneficial role played by many business stakeholders can be strengthened by robust national regulation of corporate activities. Such regulation increases the capacity for effective business responses to hazards by ensuring legal certainty and creating a level playing field among businesses. It also acts to reveal and address corporate-related human rights abuses which cause or contribute to heightened disaster risk.

The human rights framework sets out important parameters for corporate activities generally, which ensure stronger human rights protection than voluntary action or charitable measures. In this regard, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) represent the authoritative global standard for preventing and addressing human rights harms connected to business activity, setting out the distinct but complementary role of States and companies in preventing and addressing business-related human rights harms.\textsuperscript{123}

The UNGPs are comprised of three separate but mutually reinforcing pillars, namely: the State duty to protect against human rights abuses by third parties, including businesses, through appropriate policies, regulation and adjudication (Pillar I); the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, by not infringing on the rights of others, and to address adverse impacts on human rights related to their activities (Pillar II); and access to remedy for victims of corporate-related human rights abuse through judicial or non-judicial mechanisms (Pillar III).\textsuperscript{124}

A HRBA can guide responsible business activities in various ways, including through targeted State measures to prevent and reduce corporate-related drivers of disaster risk, and through encouraging businesses to take proactive action to ensure respect for human rights through their activities, operations and supply chains.

G. State measures to prevent and respond to corporate-related drivers of disaster risk

Unfortunately, certain corporate activities have the potential to exacerbate existing disaster risks or create new risks, by causing or contributing to human-induced hazards, heightening

\textsuperscript{119} Sendai Framework, para. 36(c).
\textsuperscript{120} Sendai Framework, para. 24(e), as part of achieving Priority 1 on Understanding Disaster Risk.
\textsuperscript{121} Sendai Framework, para. 27(a), as part of achieving Priority 2 on Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to Manage Disaster Risk.
\textsuperscript{122} Sendai Framework, Priority 3 and para. 30(o).
\textsuperscript{123} Human Rights Council, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011).
\textsuperscript{124} https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-business/access-remedy
exposure, causing or worsening vulnerabilities or diminishing the capacity to respond to potential hazards. Such activities also constitute – in many instances – human rights abuses.

For example, employees might be forced to operate in unsafe or unhealthy working conditions, receive unfair wages or be prohibited from forming trade unions. Communities more broadly may face breaches of their rights to life and health, among other rights, in connection with the collapse of homes or infrastructure such as dams or bridges, fires, explosions, major industrial pollution accidents, or other hazards connected with corporate negligence or failure to abide by safety regulations. Such impacts also happen in more indirect ways, for example when communities are affected by corporate activities which – although might technically be legal in many circumstances – have a cumulative or significant contribution to the climate, pollution and biodiversity crises, as a result of unsustainable resource use, extraction of fossil fuels, land degradation, displacement or waste production.

Under the business and human rights framework outlined above, States must take appropriate measures to protect against human rights abuses by corporations, including through robust regulatory frameworks and ensuring the availability of effective remedies through judicial or administrative mechanisms. Such regulation can be supported through the development of official national action plans on business and human rights [See Box N on national action plans in the Asia-Pacific region], as encouraged by the UN Working Group on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the mechanism mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to promote the implementation of the UNGPs. Regulation can also be strengthened through attention to corporate activities in specific disaster risk reduction laws or policies [See Box O on regulating corporate activities in disaster risk reduction policies].

**Box 14. National action plans in the Asia-Pacific Region**

A number of States across the Asia-Pacific region have demonstrated leadership in the production of national action plans on business and human rights include, among others:

- **Thailand** – launched in 2019, with reference to “natural disasters that occur frequently and more violently than in the past”

- **Japan** – launched in 2020, acknowledging that “making real progress in implementing the UNGPs will better prepare us for the next crisis”

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126 For example, in 2019, the Philippines’ Commission on Human Rights concluded a ground-breaking, multi-year inquiry into the human rights impacts of climate change in the Philippines and the role of fossil fuel companies in this regard. The Commission concluded that Carbon Major companies played a clear role in anthropogenic climate change and its impacts and found that these companies could be found legally and morally liable for human rights violations arising from climate change. See Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, National Inquiry on Climate Change Report (2022).


• **Pakistan** – launched in 2021, highlighting the instrumental role of human rights “in enhancing business resilience to future crises and transforming businesses into truly sustainable entities”\(^{130}\)

States that have included a ‘Business and Human Rights’ chapter or references in their Human Rights national action plans include **Republic of Korea** and **China**, and States in the process of developing a national action plan on business and human rights or have committed to developing one include, at least, **India**, **Indonesia**, **Malaysia**, **Mongolia**, **Myanmar**, **New Zealand** and **Vietnam**\(^{131}\)

**BOX 15. REGULATING CORPORATE ACTIVITIES IN NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

Building on lessons from past disasters, including a dam failure in 2018 which destroyed lives, infrastructure and farmland and left thousands of people displaced and homeless, Lao’s National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction 2021-2030 clarifies specific roles and responsibilities in relation to, among other sectors, hydropower dam operations. These include the development of guidelines, a mechanism and action plan to ensure that dam project developers, construction companies and operators undertake sufficient risk analysis, immediately disclose safety issues, and maintain effective early warning systems, among other measures.\(^{132}\)

**H. Corporate measures to align activities with human rights**

In line with the focus in the UNGPs on the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, companies should, among other measures: embed respect for human rights across all aspects of their business operations; have in place policies and processes including a human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights; and remedy rights abuses which they caused or to which they contributed.\(^{133}\)

Corporations should seek to eliminate or prevent hazards relevant to their operations and supply chains, for example, through incorporating hazard risk assessment into their human rights due diligence processes and taking appropriate actions to prevent the occurrence of such hazards, such as ensuring safe and healthy working conditions for employees, safeguarding the public from potential hazards, putting in place early warning systems and contingency plans in relation to the impact of potential industrial accidents on people or ecosystems [See Box P on integrating disaster risk reduction into business models, operations and supply chains]. Corporations should collect and share information relevant to disaster risks in a timely and regular manner, and engage in collaborative processes towards deepening shared understandings of disaster risk reduction [See Box Q on information sharing and collaboration on disaster risk reduction].


\(^{131}\) For more information, see: OHCHR, National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights.

\(^{132}\) Lao, National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction (NSDRR) (2021-2030), pp.40-41.

\(^{133}\) UNGPs, Principles 15 and 22. For detail on access to justice for corporate-related human rights harms, see, for example, OHCHR, Accountability and Remedy Project: Improving accountability and access to remedy in cases of business involvement in human rights abuses (undated). For application of corporate accountability to children’s rights, including during emergencies, see UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children, Children’s Rights and Business Principles (2012).
**Box 16. Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Business Models, Operations and Supply Chains**

ARISE, the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies, is a UNDRR-led network of private sector entities which work together to prevent disasters, including through the proactive integration of disaster risk reduction into business models, practices and across their supply chains.\(^{134}\) As members of ARISE, companies commit to supporting and implementing the Sendai Framework, aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and the Agenda for Humanity. In the Asia-Pacific region, ARISE national networks are active in Japan, the Philippines and India. Active engagement by these and other private sector entities in the development and implementation of the Sendai Framework has been instrumental in deepening a ‘whole-of-society’ shared analysis and collective action that shifts from a focus on response and recovery, to the prevention and mitigation of disaster risk, and a deeper understanding of the role of businesses in this area.\(^{135}\)

**Box 17. Information Sharing and Collaboration on Disaster Risk Reduction**

In the Philippines, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation – the country’s major private sector coordinator for disaster risk and reduction management – aims to contribute to the sustainable development and general welfare of the Filipino people, with activities focusing on, among other measures, community resilience (including working with communities and harnessing local knowledge and capacities), fostering inclusive participation (ensuring that everyone, especially those in vulnerable situations, can participate in disaster risk reduction decision-making processes) and promoting partnerships (sharing information and encourage collaboration and cooperation across city and local governments, academics, civil society, households and businesses).\(^{136}\)

Similarly, corporations should take measures to prevent or mitigate disaster risks connected with the longer-term, cumulative effects of corporate activities which contribute to underlying drivers of disaster risk, such as climate change. For example, in discussing greenhouse gas emissions and development projects linked to corporations, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons recommended that businesses, among other steps:

Incorporate human rights risks associated with climate change and disaster displacement in policy commitments and human rights due diligence processes and actively engage in the remediation of harm that the company has caused or to which it has contributed [and] [s]upport rights-based efforts on climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, and programmes for protection, assistance and durable solutions for persons internally displaced in the context of the adverse effects of climate change, through funding, development and sharing of new technology, and other means...\(^{137}\)

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134 See www.ariseglobalnetwork.org.
135 See https://www.ariseglobalnetwork.org/
136 See https://www.pdrf.org/
137 A/75/207, paras. 68(j) and (k).
3.4 **Taking longer-term measures to tackle underlying drivers of disaster risk**

3.4.1 **What does the Sendai Framework call for?**

In the implementation of the Sendai Framework, States are called to focus more dedicated action across the local, national, regional and global levels towards:

...tackling underlying disaster risk drivers, such as the consequences of poverty and inequality, climate change and variability, unplanned and rapid urbanization, poor land management and compounding factors such as demographic change, weak institutional arrangements, non-risk-informed policies, lack of regulation and incentives for private disaster risk reduction investment, complex supply chains, limited availability of technology, unsustainable uses of natural resources, declining ecosystems, pandemics and epidemics.\(^\text{138}\)

This attention to tackling underlying disaster risk drivers is an important component of the overarching goal of the Sendai Framework, which is to:

Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience.\(^\text{139}\)

3.4.2 **Guidance from the human rights framework, good practice examples and developments in the Asia-Pacific region**

Developing strategies to tackle underlying disaster risk drivers presents a daunting task, given the number, scale and complexity of such challenges. However, a HRBA highlights the fact that States and others are not starting from a blank slate in such endeavours, as the same challenges are also considered on a regular basis through a human rights lens, with a significant amount of targeted guidance issued to States in line with their human rights obligations.

The robust implementation of human rights obligations generally is the starting point for tackling underlying disaster risk drivers, as structural or systemic non-enjoyment of human rights within a country is a recognised factor in contributing to general destabilisation, an increased vulnerability to shocks and crisis (which would include hazardous events) and decreased capacity for response.\(^\text{140}\) This relates to both the enjoyment of specific human rights, such as the rights to health, life, food and water, as well as the importance of ensuring non-discrimination and substantive equality in order to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience, particularly for groups in marginalised and vulnerable situations, as discussed above (see Part A). The full enjoyment of civil and political rights including the right to

\(^\text{138}\) Sendai Framework, para. 6.
\(^\text{139}\) Sendai Framework, para. 17.
participate in decision-making\textsuperscript{141}, the freedom to express their opinions and right to access information (including about disaster risks) are essential if disaster risk reduction efforts are to be undertaken in a participative and consultative manner. The international human rights standards relating to the human rights defenders\textsuperscript{142} are also relevant as, in many contexts, the individuals and groups who can contribute most to understanding of who may be vulnerable to disaster risks and why, may be subjected to threats, physical violence and harm and require protection in accordance with international standards.

While it is beyond the scope of this publication to discuss a HRBA to all possible underlying drivers of disaster risk, this section illustrates how such an approach can support implementation of the Sendai Framework through a focus on one of these – namely climate change – by sharing existing guidance from the international human rights framework in relation to measures to tackle this issue, as well as highlighting the importance of being attentive to emerging human rights guidance and the significance of adopting coherent approaches across issues.

I. A human rights-based approach to climate change, as a key underlying disaster risk driver

Unsurprisingly, in recent years much of the guidance from the international human rights framework in relation to or relevant to disaster risk reduction has focused on climate change, given the extreme weather events associated with it, which are expected to continue increasing in severity and frequency and therefore form a significant part of disaster risk.\textsuperscript{143} Generally, the impacts of climate change on the effective enjoyment of human rights have been the subject of increasing numbers of concluding observations in the periodic reviews of the human rights treaty-bodies.\textsuperscript{144}

As well as the CEDAW Committee’s General Recommendation No. 37 on gender, disaster risk reduction,\textsuperscript{145} additional reports have focused on the significant and varied human rights impacts on other groups in the context of climate change, such as children,\textsuperscript{146} internally displaced people,\textsuperscript{147} cross-border migrants,\textsuperscript{148} and people in vulnerable situations,


\textsuperscript{143} For a comprehensive overview of the human rights implications of climate change and the obligations of governments and private actors to respond to these implications, see: UNEP, Climate Change and Human Rights (2015).


\textsuperscript{145} In 2019, OHCHR released an analytical study describing the gendered impacts of climate change, discussing topics including food security and access to land, health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, livelihoods and decent work, cultural impacts, human mobility, and women environmental human rights defenders. See A/HRC/41/26, paras. 4-25.


\textsuperscript{147} A/75/207. See also UNDRR and ODI, Reducing the risk of protracted and multiple disaster displacements in Asia-Pacific (2020).

communities closely connected with place and dependent on local natural resources, as well as those facing hazards in particular geographical locations such as areas subject to water stress, low-lying coastal areas, small island States and Arctic ecosystems. Similarly, for people in poverty, climate change is expected to have devastating consequences, with the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights stressing that:

Even under the best-case scenario, hundreds of millions will face food insecurity, forced migration, disease and death. Climate change threatens the future of human rights and risks undoing the last 50 years of progress in development, global health and poverty reduction.

Further, the relationship between climate change and particularly rights have been examined, and recommendations issued to States regarding their obligations. For example, expert reports have focused on climate change and, variously, health (with examination of the impacts of climate change on physical and mental health, related human rights obligations and responsibilities of States and other actors, and benefits of a rights-based approach to addressing climate change), water and sanitation (including recommendations for a hydrological transition that strengthens environmental and social resilience and lessens the risk of disaster), food and agriculture (including calls for “drastic changes to agricultural production and consumption habits” among other measures) and housing and relocations (recommending integration of the right to housing into climate adaptation strategies, to support environmentally sound construction, protective infrastructure and rights-based relocations).

J. Being attentive to developments in the international human rights framework, as they relate to underlying disaster risk drivers

Although the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment only achieved formal recognition at the international level in 2022, this human right had already been recognised in more than 150 countries at the national and regional levels. This development demonstrates widespread, worldwide support for this right, and it is likely to become of increasing focus in connection with measures to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis (and related disaster risk reduction measures) given the connections between natural and human-induced hazards and ecosystems. The right has been articulated as including procedural...

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149 A/HRC/50/57, paras. 15, 17 and 28 (footnotes omitted).
155 In July 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a landmark resolution recognising the human right to a healthy environment on 28 July 2022, see A/RES/76/300 (28 July 2022), which followed recognition of the right by the Human Rights Council, see A/HRC/RES/48/13 (18 October 2021).
156 UNDP, OHCHR, and UNEP, What is the Right to a Healthy Environment? (2023).
elements (covering access to information, public participation in environmental decision-making and access to effective remedy) and substantive elements (relating to safe climate, clean air and water, adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainably produced food, non-toxic environments for living, work, study and play, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems). 157

K. **Human rights as a common set of standards to enhance coherence across issues**

Cutting across each of these areas is the urgent need for a more holistic, longer-term approach by States and other stakeholders to the areas of disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, mitigation and adaptation in relation to other environmental challenges (including biodiversity loss and pollution) and sustainable development. Despite the obvious interconnections, these areas remain siloed to various extents. They must be considered not as discrete issues but part of a continuum, requiring coherent analysis, strategies and investment, as guided by the human rights framework as a common set of standards.

**Box 18. Adopting coherent approaches to climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development**

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a pioneer in terms of its adoption of an integrated approach to handling disaster risk and climate change in the Pacific, as demonstrated by its **Joint State Action Plans for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change**. 158 Institutional arrangements also support coherence across government departments, with both the Division of Emergency and the Division of Climate Change sitting jointly under the national Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (responsible for protecting the FSM’s environment from natural and human-induced threats to ensure sustainable development).

In Kiribati, the adoption of its **Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2019-2028** enabled the establishment of the Kiribati National Expert Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, a national multisectoral coordination body composed of government ministries, community members and NGO representatives, to act as the main advisory body, coordination mechanism and entry point for climate change and disaster risk reduction initiatives. 159

Similarly, Tonga also has a **Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management**, setting out policy objectives, targets and an implementation strategy for the country to achieve its vision of a Resilient Tonga by 2035. 160

At a regional level, the **Pacific Resilience Partnership** was established in 2017 as an umbrella mechanism for the **Framework for Resilience Development in the Pacific**: 161 which provides high level strategic guidance on how to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters in ways that contribute to and are embedded in sustainable development.

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4. **Recommendations to Strengthen a Human Rights-Based Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction**

With consideration of progress to date and relevant guidance from international human rights mechanisms and experts, the following (non-exhaustive) recommendations are offered to strengthen a HRBA to the implementation of the Sendai Framework and to encourage further research, shared analysis and dialogue, and collective action by States and other stakeholders.

### 4.1 Emphasize States’ Existing Human Rights Obligations as the Foundation and Guiding Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Laws, Policies and Projects

Recommendations to States and other stakeholders include:

a. at the local and national levels, foster a deeper shared understanding of the relationship between human rights and disaster risk reduction, including through dialogue, shared analysis, capacity building and collective action across human rights and disaster risk reduction focal points;

b. at the regional and international levels, undertake focused analysis and provide targeted guidance for States and other stakeholders on the relationship between human rights and disaster risk reduction, including by UN treaty monitoring bodies, UN special procedures and via the Universal Periodic Review process, among other experts and mechanisms;

c. undertake human rights impact assessments and regular monitoring of laws, policies and practices aimed at disaster risk reduction, to ensure that these are consistent with human rights standards and the corresponding obligations of States and responsibilities of non-State actors and that these also include the realisation of human rights in their objectives;

d. ensure that such laws, policies and practices are non-discriminatory and are designed to focus particular attention on those in vulnerable or marginalised situations;

e. engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development, monitoring and implementation of such laws, policies and practices, including national human rights institutions, academics, civil society and local communities, recognising the significance of local, indigenous and traditional knowledge to inform measures and contextualise international human rights standards at community levels; and

f. adopt an international treaty enshrining a clear legal obligation to reduce disaster risk, taking the lead from the proposed draft articles on the Protection of the Persons in the Event of Disasters elaborated by the United Nations International Law Commission.

### 4.2 Ensure People-Centred Approaches to Disaster Risk Reduction, with a Focus on Those at Higher Risk from Hazardous Events and Most Likely to Be Left Behind

Recommendations to States and other stakeholders include:

a. identify which communities are at risk of hazardous events, and the specific risks facing different segments of these communities, including through the regular collection, analysis and targeted use of disaggregated data (by sex, age and disability status at a minimum) and with the meaningful engagement of national human rights institutions,
academics, civil society, private sector and local communities in transparent and participatory data collection processes;

b. understand the ways in which differently situated groups might be impacted by hazardous events, and adopt corresponding measures to transform existing discriminatory conditions and patterns of inequality, including through analysis and measures which eliminates direct and indirect forms of discrimination and also seeks to:
   i) redress disadvantage (based on historical and current social structures and power relations that define and influence people’s abilities to enjoy their human rights)
   ii) address patterns of stereotyping, stigma, prejudice and violence
   iii) transform institutional structures and practices (which are often oriented towards those with existing power in societies and may be ignorant or dismissive of other experiences)
   iv) facilitate social inclusion and political participation (in all formal and informal decision-making processes);

c. facilitate meaningful participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction, including through adequately funded and accessible platforms and other mechanisms (such as early warning systems), access to relevant information in accessible language and format, and specific measures to encourage participation of all affected communities, with a focus on those most at risk or living in vulnerable or marginalised situations;

d. strengthen individual and collective capacity to take preventative measures and respond to hazardous events, including by recognising the importance of all forms of knowledge, including in particular local, indigenous and traditional knowledge;

e. facilitate decision-making at the local level, empower communities to manage changing risks, including through increased engagement with and technical and financial support to local actors; and

f. deliver awareness-raising and formal and informal capacity building opportunities so that people understand their rights in the context of disaster risk reduction, hazardous events and/or disasters, can take action to advance these rights and can seek remedies if they experience human rights harms.

4.3 SUPPORT THE MOBILISATION OF MAXIMUM AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Recommendations to States and other stakeholders include:

a. advance ‘human rights economies’ which establish the enjoyment of human rights as the foundation for each country’s overarching economic policy, rather than a narrow focus on continual economic growth on a finite planet;

b. generate and allocate adequate financial resources for disaster risk reduction measures, including by expanding fiscal space through progressive taxation and international cooperation and assistance, and by ensuring the fair and transparent direction of resources through participatory budgetary processes (including with attention to closing the ‘policy to practice’ implementation gap, by directing adequate funding disaster risk reduction activities at local and community levels);

c. build universal social protection systems to strengthen resilience, recognising their function as powerful economic stabilisers in times of crisis and as contributors to a sense of security, belonging and social cohesion; and

d. increasing investment in disaster risk reduction through international assistance and cooperation measures and mechanisms, with a focus on supporting least developed
countries, small island developing States and countries in special situations, and to ensure the enjoyment of human rights by both current and future generations.

4.4 **Regulate responsible business practices to prevent and reduce disaster risk**

Recommendations to States and other stakeholders include:

a. develop and implement national legal frameworks to regulate business activity in alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, in order to disclose, prevent, monitor and address corporate-related drivers of disaster risk and to provide certainty and a ‘level playing field’ for constructive business activities;

b. mandating participatory, gender-, age- and disability-responsive human rights due diligence practices by businesses, in order to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for corporate-related human rights harm, to modify any activities that may increase disaster risk, and to communicate externally on their due diligence work; and

c. taking appropriate steps to ensure, through judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate means, that when business-related human rights abuses occur, those affected have access to effective remedy.

4.5 **Connect disaster risk reduction with a larger story – the shared global commitment to sustainable development, to strengthen the well-being and flourishing of all life on Earth**

Recommendations to States and other stakeholders include:

a. foster and nurture a close collaboration between the disaster risk reduction focal points and government departments and officials responsible for human rights compliance, climate change adaptation and related environmental measures;

b. advance progressive interpretation and implementation of the human right to a healthy environment, foregrounding local, indigenous and traditional knowledge, leadership and practices, to ensure disaster risk reduction measures are carried out in harmony with nature; and

c. apply the full range of human rights to support States and other stakeholders to make sense of complex situations and undertake decision-making practices that incorporate a diversity of perspectives, embedded human activities within local and global ecosystems, and take into account the needs of both present and future generations.