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The Future of Disaster Risk Reduction: UNDP's Vision for the Successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action

KEY MESSAGES

- Disaster risk reduction is delivered through risk-informed sustainable and sustained development.
- Governments need practical support, tools and guidance to support their work to reduce disaster risk.
- The successor to the HFA should serve as a voluntary regulatory tool to support risk governance at country level by development actors, especially national governments.
- Comprehensive integration of DRR into post-2015 development frameworks is central to the success of future risk reduction.

FOCUS: SUSTAINABLE AND SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT

Disaster and climate risk governance

Integrating disaster risk into
development planning and
programming

Local-Level Implementation:
making resources and capacities
available where they are need
the most

Social Inclusion: ensuring
vulnerable groups are central
to all aspects of DRR

Resilience through recovery

FORM: BUILDING SYNERGIES ACROSS COMPLEX CONTEXTS

Integrated and outcome-focused

Targets
and goals

Transparency
and
accountability

Engagement
and
partnership

Customized,
flexible
implementation

Commitment
from the
international
community

In March 2015 the international community will gather in Japan to decide upon the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) on disaster risk reduction (DRR). In December 2013 the UN Office for DRR (UNISDR) issued a document outlining 'Proposed Elements for Consideration in the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction', which draws on stakeholder consultations that have taken place since 2012. The document provides a summary of progress to date, while also articulating what needs to happen beyond the lifetime of the current HFA. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) considerations on the 'Elements Paper' and its vision

for the future global framework on DRR are presented in this working paper, drawing on the organization's unique experience and perspective.¹ This paper also presents what UNDP commits to deliver over the next five years as part of its work to deliver DRR through development.

Note that this document is a working paper, and is designed to stimulate discussion running up to the World Conference on DRR in March 2015. Future versions of this vision are planned, as discussions around the future of DRR evolve. To that end, UNDP warmly encourages feedback.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 'ELEMENTS FOR DRR'

UNDP agrees with much that is expressed in the 'Elements Paper'. The sense of urgency concerning the task ahead is not exaggerated, as a changing and increasingly unpredictable climate is exacerbating the ever growing exposure of people and assets to disaster risk. Poorly planned development and weak governance in many countries not only leave this risk unchecked but exacerbate the problem. Disasters affect poor and marginalized members of society most often and most severely, and tend to ensure that they remain vulnerable. Perhaps most importantly, UNDP concurs with a shift in focus from DRR being about protecting from losses to its role in the transformation of development. *DRR is not an initiative in itself, but an integral part of good governance and sustainable development.*

Some of the areas addressed in the paper, however, should be further reinforced, especially to help decision makers understand what is essential in the lead-up to the next World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, and how they could influence the final framework. Each of these areas is related to a need to more firmly entrench disaster risk as part of the development process.

- **DRR is delivered through sustainable and sustained development:** The HFA has clearly galvanized international and increasingly national attention around the importance of tackling disaster risk. Yet at the same time it acknowledges that "in particular, economic growth and an improvement in development conditions... have contributed to a downward trend in mortality risk".² Many governments have delivered on risk reduction and avoidance without the help of the HFA and many were doing so long before it was formulated. This applies not only to high-income countries such as Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland but also to developing countries such as Viet Nam and Mozambique. More emphasis is therefore needed on the centrality of

development and governance processes within the successor to the HFA, with risk as an integral part of those processes.

- **Governments need practical support, tools and guidance:** The 2013 Global Platform for DRR made it clear that we have moved from a period of advocacy to one of implementation.³ Increasingly, governments are looking for practical support. The successor to the HFA must prioritize the integration of disaster risk into development, by promoting and supporting the provision of necessary tools and guidance for countries. It should be structured to support risk-informed development undertaken by national governments, civil society and the international community at a country level.
- **Integration of DRR into post-2015 development frameworks is central to the success of future risk reduction:** In 2015 we are likely to see a unique alignment of global development frameworks: the successor to the HFA, a new climate agreement and a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The future DRR framework needs to be a fundamental and integral part of the future development agenda, and should serve as a voluntary regulatory tool to support that broader agenda. If we are not able to firmly integrate disaster risk into the SDGs it will be a failed opportunity, with significant consequences. Advocacy efforts to this effect require a greater sense of urgency.

In summary, UNDP considers it essential that the next 10 years of risk reduction efforts are governed and implemented as a development concern by national and sub-national governments, supported, where appropriate, by development actors. This will require a different trajectory, one where risk is incorporated into development practices rather than being isolated from them.

UNDP'S VISION FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

The UNDP vision for the successor to the HFA is to build and enhance DRR by transforming the development process so that current and emerging risks inherent to development are

addressed. This can be achieved by being clear on exactly what the focus of the successor to the HFA should be and, in particular, the form and function of that successor.

Focus: sustainable development through disaster risk governance and resilient recovery

For UNDP, two core aspects should underpin the future disaster risk framework as it strives to integrate risk and development, and to move from advocacy to implementation.

Disaster and climate risk governance

Substantial progress has been made since 2005, with many countries having developed significant policies and legislation that increasingly prioritize DRR, often evolving from a previous focus on response and preparedness. Gaps remain across many countries, however, with some still setting up effective institutional and legislative frameworks for DRR, and others unable to translate legislation and policies into practical steps to reduce disaster risk. A recent thematic review of disaster risk governance (DRG) spearheaded by UNDP⁴ confirms that understanding and concepts in this area have evolved significantly since 2005. This new understanding needs to be reflected in the successor to the HFA, with guidance to countries in the setting of appropriate normative standards through legislative and regulatory frameworks, building robust transparency and accountability practices, laying out clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for all relevant stakeholders, forging practical partnerships and making firm commitments to finance. In addition, disaster risk has to be considered in the context of a wider culture of governance—not only is an integrated approach to all risks more likely to be effective, but there are specific opportunities that DRG can offer when tackling other issues such as conflict.

Resilience through recovery

At any point in time, more than a third of all countries are recovering from disasters, and for many communities recovery is an ever-present concern.⁵ This is therefore a critical moment not only for reassessing risk and pushing forward on risk reduction reforms and investments, but also for building comprehensive resilience to disaster. Ill-informed recovery often worsens the underlying conditions of risk and can lead to future events having even worse effects. The HFA included recovery only at the margins—its successor has to ensure that recovery becomes central, seizing this moment of opportunity and helping to ensure sustainable development through the building and rebuilding of resilience.

For UNDP, risk-informed sustainable development is implemented in three interlocking ways:

- **Integrating disaster risk into development planning and programming:** The starting point is to integrate risk into development in a practical manner—only in this way can risk be reduced and development made sustainable. The successor to the HFA, as indicated earlier, needs a stronger and more practical risk/development relationship. Priority must be given to supporting practical and sustained mainstreaming of risk throughout development and recovery processes, whether at national, regional or local levels. This requires articulating precisely what integration means and how it is done, by developing tools and guidance for practical implementation at a country level, and finally by heightened advocacy for this integration at local to national levels and to the global level via the post-2015 development agenda.
- **Local-level implementation:** The evidence is clear: local-level DRR is in need of substantial and sustained investment. Even where countries have invested in risk reduction and have crafted strong legislation to support that investment, the work undertaken at a local level, where it most counts, is highly variable. This is particularly important given that the many localized, small-scale and often unregistered disasters account for a significant disaster impact.⁶ The future framework for DRR should therefore focus attention on the reduction of risk and sustainable recovery at local levels, and its structure should help empower local government and communities to plan together and implement together. This should start with local risk assessments, building the capacity of local actors to assess, manage and reduce disaster risk, and supporting the integration of DRR into local development processes.
- **Social inclusion:** A lack of attention to the social and cultural dimensions of disaster, including gender, age, disability, poverty and social and cultural marginalization, undermines risk reduction and recovery. The future global framework for DRR needs to articulate how the most vulnerable, most marginalized communities are more likely to be affected by disasters, and more severely. Vulnerability and the role that families and communities can and should play in reducing risk must be given a suitably high priority throughout the various components of the future framework. To be empowered, these groups must be in positions of power and must be part of decision-making processes that will impact on the development of their communities.

Form: building synergies across complex contexts

To be effective, the successor to the HFA has to focus on the strengths of a global framework: advocacy, communications and the setting of standards. It should be a supporting tool, organized to help national governments set and meet their commitments, and bringing together a wider range of international and national stakeholders around a shared set of objectives. For UNDP, this demands that the successor to the HFA breaks with the disaster risk focus of its forebear to influence development in general, helping to build synergies across complex contexts.

Integrated and outcome-focused

The original HFA focused largely on process. The new framework should focus on outcome. This starts with a complete examination of the current architecture of the framework, which has tended to isolate each priority action, resulting in risk reduction that at times has been fragmented and disjointed. A new set of priorities should be seen not as separate activities but as component parts of an integrated system, executed within the context of an enabling environment, and represented by the following five elements.

- **Targets and goals:** The HFA outcomes and goals should reflect the language used in the SDG framework in order to align this risk-focused framework with the one that will help govern development as a whole. It should state that disaster-resilient communities and countries are able to proactively prevent, mitigate, reduce, prepare for and manage disaster risk, and that equitable disaster resilience, where DRR is built into sustainable development, is the goal. Outcome targets should meanwhile focus on three key aspects: a reduction in the impact of disasters on mortality, economic growth and poverty. These targets and their related indicators should be used consistently to formulate strategies and activities both within and beyond the successor to the HFA. Crucially, they should also be fully complementary with targets and indicators that are being developed across both the SDG and climate agreements.
- **Transparency and accountability:** The successor to the HFA should be a demonstrably useful tool for both transparency and accountability in risk reduction. This requires investment in clarity, especially at a country level, in the usage of basic terminology, descriptions of activities and programmes and the tracking of financing, especially when risk reduction is integrated within sectors and ministries. At the country level, a truly strong national peer review process needs to be embedded in future reporting on progress.⁷
- **Engagement and partnership:** Key to the future framework is a much wider network and greater partnerships beyond the DRR community. In the past, the focus on risk rather than development has restricted discussions to DRR specialists at national, regional and international levels. The successor to the HFA needs to engage a much wider group of stakeholders in a sustained fashion. At international and regional levels this means a wide range of development actors, whether development banks, regional institutions, actors from the UN system, civil society or governments. At a country level, priority must go to the inclusion of key development ministries such as economy, finance or planning, with ample space set aside for a much wider representation of civil society as well as the private sector. The goal here is to broaden partnerships, mobilize technical resources, incentivize integration of risk and development planning and significantly strengthen financial commitments.
- **Customized, flexible implementation:** The future framework must articulate a flexible model, conceptualizing and supporting risk reduction across diverse contexts. Income status, governance models, levels of decentralization and state fragility all affect how different countries could or should undertake risk reduction. The successor to the HFA needs to articulate how different levels of institutional stability and maturity affect risk reduction, tailoring support to the development of DRR efforts across many more varieties and maturities of governance. The same principle applies to regional contexts, and is especially important given that natural hazards do not recognize borders; the successor to the HFA should recognize regional distinctions and support different regions in appropriate ways. One key practical implication of this flexible implementation is that countries (and where appropriate regions) should set their own targets and goals for implementing the future DRR framework, rather than having them dictated at a global level.
- **Commitment from the international community:** DRR investments by the international community have improved little over the past 10 years, and remain a fraction of overall development assistance.⁸ Many donors and agencies still manage DRR through humanitarian structures, limiting it to largely short-term initiatives, as well as failing to leverage much higher volumes of development financing. This can lead to the international community advocating that a country should integrate risk into development, while it has not done so itself. The future DRR framework should do more to galvanize the international community. Full integration of risk throughout international development planning and financing must be encouraged. The international community's comparative advantage over national governments needs to be more clearly articulated. Finally, the successor to the HFA has to articulate a clearer role for the international community, going beyond blanket support to all countries, towards more nuanced and contextualized aid to those countries most in need.

The challenge and opportunity in complexity

The future framework for DRR must go beyond the 'one-size-fits-all' approach, contextualizing the reduction of risk with the reality of individual country development. This represents not only a challenge but also a substantial opportunity.

Climate change

Despite regularly accounting for more than three quarters of disasters, climate risk was integrated into the HFA in only a marginal way. The successor framework must foreground a changing climate throughout. It needs to do this in three inter-related ways: first, by highlighting how climate is changing both the scale and location of disaster risk; second, by supporting practical integration with actors working on climate change (especially adaptation) at country level; and third, through better alignment with key climate-related processes and actors globally. The substantial volume of climate adaptation financing provides a substantial opportunity to reduce disaster risk. A clear sense of ownership in driving forward the climate agenda is also needed, as well as cross-fertilization of

ideas, incentives and enforcement mechanisms for promoting DRR and adaptation.

Fragile states and conflict

In much of DRR literature, the assumption is that action to reduce risk is happening in stable, peaceful environments, and that institution building and policy reform occur within existing, well functioning country architecture. Yet for many states this is not the case: they are battling to reduce disaster risk while also striving to build strong governance and deliver growth and human development, and are sometimes tackling conflict or post-conflict situations at the same time. DRR has to be seen as a practical contribution to development as a whole: a strong focus on the reality of making change, especially in fragile contexts, needs to be part of the successor to the HFA. In addition, practical support, tools and guidance, tailored to specific contexts, are urgently needed. A strong connection also needs to be made between international efforts to reduce disaster risk and efforts to help nations rebuild, such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

Governments are central to the future of DRR. It is they that will ensure the future trajectory of risk reduction, both within and beyond the successor agreement to the HFA. The following are key actions that national governments need to undertake.

- **Global framework coherence:** Ensure that their country supports the strong inclusion of disaster risk in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as in the likely future climate change agreement.
- **Integration of risk and development:** Advocate for a successor to the HFA that focuses on

supporting the reduction of disaster risk through sustainable development.

- **From national to local:** Continue to press for greater integration of risk into national development policies as part of a comprehensive risk governance agenda. Make local risk reduction a core priority.
- **Build resilience from recovery:** Seize the opportunity that recovery offers to build resilience through multi-faceted risk reduction.

WHAT UNDP OFFERS: DIRECT AND SUSTAINED RISK REDUCTION THROUGH DEVELOPMENT

UNDP offers the following commitments towards doubling its support to the implementation of DRR at a country level over the next five years:

- 1) **Comprehensive programmes of risk governance**, moving away from stand-alone programming and towards long-term engagements at a country level.
- 2) An **understanding of the complexity of country-level risk reduction**, bringing experience from contexts of conflict, poverty and climate change.
- 3) A **focus on evidence and innovation**. UNDP will invest heavily in developing and sharing innovative solutions for the reduction of disaster risk at country level, supporting it by robust use of evidence not only of the reduction of losses

through DRR, but also the substantial and wide benefits for development.

- 4) A **renewed emphasis on local-level implementation**, building sustained capacity for risk reduction for all actors where it most counts.
- 5) Building on its ongoing engagement, and recognizing that different countries are at different stages of evolution of their DRR practice, UNDP will **assist governments in making the successor to the HFA both a national and a local priority**.

Central to UNDP's work in DRR is the leveraging of the organization's sustained investment in human development, which amounts to \$5 billion annually, building resilience and driving change throughout its 177 country offices.

1 Reflecting on the discussions to date, this paper represents UNDP's first draft of a vision for the future successor to the HFA, from its unique position as a global, regional and country partner for development. It is designed as a working paper, evolving as the debate continues.

2 UNISDR, 'Proposed Elements for Consideration in the Post2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction', 2013, p. 2.

3 See, for example, UNISDR, 'Chair's Summary: Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2013. "Participants called for the HFA2 to focus on implementation, as a pragmatic, strategic, dynamic and realistic plan for action advancing integrated risk governance, underpinned by a clear set of principles and commitment to addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable" (p. 5).

4 UNDP, 'Thematic Review on Disaster Risk Governance for the 2015 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction', UNDP, New York, 2014.

5 From 2001 to 2010, 200 countries and territories suffered at least one natural disaster, with an average of 128 countries affected each year, 97 of which were developing countries. A total of 77 countries (60 of which were developing) suffered from disasters in either nine or all ten years of the decade, suggesting that recovery is almost a permanent feature, locally and often nationally (based on a bespoke analysis of data from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). See <http://www.emdat.be>.

6 Such disasters account for 54% of houses damaged, 80% of people affected and 83% of those injured, according to UNISDR's 'Global Assessment Report for Risk Reduction', 2011.

7 The HFA Monitor can play its part in holding governments to account and tracking progress. However, it needs to be a much more robust and easily accessible tool than at present and, as above, should focus indicators on outcomes rather than process. It should also link clearly to national reporting on DRR that highlights how decisions have been made and by whom.

8 Year-on-year volumes have in general increased marginally, reaching \$1.1 billion in 2010. Yet this represents just a fraction (less than 0.5%) of development aid spent that year and only 12.3% of financing spent on disasters; in this same year \$7.1 billion was spent on disaster response and \$1 billion on reconstruction. Kellett and Caravani, 'Financing Disaster Risk Reduction: The 20 Year Story of International Aid', Overseas Development Institute, 2013.