Launch Event of Tajikistan's Countrywide Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment Platform

29 January 2021

Opening Remarks

Christophoros Politis
UNDP Resident Representative a.i./Deputy Resident Representative

Your Excellency Mr. Rustam Nazarzoda, Chairman of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence of the Republic of Tajikistan,

Your Excellency Mr. Takayuki Miyashita, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Tajikistan,

Ms. Salome Steib, Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan,

Distinguished Guests for Government, Non-Governmental Sector and Diplomatic Corps,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the Launch of Tajikistan's Countrywide Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment Platform. We at UNDP have been proud to provide technical assistance to the Government of Tajikistan in the development of this platform and making sure disaster-related data and information is scientifically gathered and analyzed.

We have started this work with a comprehensive country-wide risk assessment back in 2016… 2016 holds a special importance for Development and for DRR in specific, as it is the year of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sendai Framework of Action. Through the Platform, we have contributed to ensuring that Tajikistan meets several of the objectives of Sendai: These include building a stronger understanding of hazards and vulnerabilities; designing and implementing forward-looking strategies to mitigate disaster risks, including those emanating from climatic change; and strengthening disaster risk reduction and disaster risk governance.

The Platform is a cornerstone for risk-informed development planning - at all levels of governance, and a pathway to ensuring risk prevention and risk mitigation become basic principles in planning processes in Tajikistan.

The risk assessment platform which we are proudly launching jointly with CoES today covers floods and mud flows, drought, avalanches, landslides, high winds and earthquakes, with detail down to Jamoat level. As you will note from the technical presentations, the risk assessment platform will enable for greater identification and localization of disaster risks within districts.

As we all strive for more solid and comprehensive District Development Plans (DDPs), it is notable that only 20% of the DDPs today are 'risk-proof', in a sense where they are effectively incorporating and mainstreaming DRR.

The information contained in the Platform and the possibility of issuing District Profiles for hazards surveyed, will improve planning and will ensure that risk-informed decisions are made on investments at District level. This will directly contribute to achieving the 3rd Priority of Sendai Framework of Action.

In addition to enhancing Planning Processes and reducing Disaster Risk, it is important to see this platform also as key and direct contributor to building a database that can – and should – be used in related sectors. UNDP sees great potential for this database to be utilized in the water sector, the agricultural sector, transport, urban planning and many others.

Taking the Water sector as an illustration, and with a large proportion of disasters in Tajikistan stemming from Water – floods, mudflows, landslides but also avalanches make up over 60% of officially reported disasters in Tajikistan. From 1997 to 2018, the mudflows have been the most expensive type of hazard for Tajikistan, with total cost of damage estimated to $US 347 million (for 20+ years).

We hence believe that the extrapolation of data and evidence from this platform in strengthening water sector policies would yield positive results. We also believe that the work and priorities of the River Basin Organizations (RBOs) could greatly benefit from the data that is being launched today.

UNDP calls upon the Government of Tajikistan, and more specifically upon CoES, to ensure that this dataset becomes available to all stakeholders to support sector specific and cross-sectoral evidence-based policy making and programming.

Looking forward, I reconfirm UNDP's commitment to continue working closely with CoES and other key national stakeholders to further refine this platform. Our plan in the next phase of this project is to ensure this dataset is overlayed with socio-economic indicator data. We will also in parallel continue building the capacities and knowledge of district-level authorities to use the risk information.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence of Tajikistan, and all stakeholders who worked closely with us on this pioneering intervention. I also wish to express UNDP's deep appreciation to the Government of Japan, and to the Swiss Cooperation Office for our longstanding and fruitful cooperation and partnership in the field of DRR and beyond.

Thank you.