

**Report of the Informal Consultations of the Chair of the Open-ended  
Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Indicators and Terminology  
relating to Disaster Risk Reduction**

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**UNISDR**

## I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an account of the key exchange of views during the informal consultations of the Chair of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group (OIEWG) on Indicators and Terminology relating to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), in Geneva, Switzerland, on 20-21 June 2016.
2. The informal consultations derive their mandate from the Second Session of the Working Group held in Geneva from 10-11 February 2016. In concluding the session, to advance the work in the inter-sessional period, it was agreed that the Chair of the Working Group, H.E. Ambassador Wayne McCook, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations in Geneva, would convene informal consultations with Geneva-based delegates. The purpose of the informal consultations was to seek further clarity on central issues and to try to build consensus around possible landing zones on core and critical indicators and relevant DRR terminology, in order to facilitate the completion of work at the Third Session scheduled for the week of 14-18 November.
3. To support the consultations, the Secretariat prepared two technical non-papers on DRR terminology and indicators that were circulated to experts and delegates and posted on the website of the Working Group on 10 June 2016.
4. Delegates and experts from the following 50 states plus the European Commission took part in the informal consultations either in person or via WebEx: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia. Representatives from 7 UN system entities – FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNISDR, WFP, WHO and WMO - also participated in the consultations. Additionally, written comments were received from Japan, Philippines, the UNECE Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environmental Unit on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Industrial and Chemical Accidents.
5. The Permanent Mission of Japan additionally organized a lunchtime briefing on 21 May outlining the results of a feasibility assessment of the proposed indicators for global targets A through D of the Sendai Framework, as contained in the *Working Text on Indicators* emanating from the Second Session of the OIEWG, using existing disaster damage statistics in Japan. The briefing was followed by a formal invitation from Japan to Member States to participate in a feasibility exercise on proposed indicators for the Sendai Framework. A Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Japan, including a detailed timeline, was circulated to all Permanent Missions in Geneva and to the experts of the Working Group by UNISDR on 24 June 2016.

## II. Informal consultations of the Chair on DRR Terminology

6. The informal consultations proceeded with a briefing by UNISDR on the technical non-paper on terminology<sup>1</sup>, which was developed in consultation with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAG). The technical non-paper builds on the previous reports on DRR terminology and focuses on terms and definitions where either differing views were presented by Member States, substantive changes were proposed or where the need for additional clarification was expressed. It also considers new terms proposed by Member States. In addition, general comments made by Member States during the formal sessions of the OIEWG as well as comments received during the inter-sessionals were

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<sup>1</sup> Terminology related to disaster risk reduction: technical non-paper. 10 June 2016.

<http://www.preventionweb.net/documents/oiewg/Terminology%20related%20to%20disaster%20risk%20reduction%20-%20technical%20non-paper.pdf>

reviewed and considered. The non-paper looks at options to advance the identification of terms and related definitions, supported by technical and evidence-based justification, in particular, for the new and contested terms.

7. As a matter of priority, the group went through the contested terms contained in section 2 of the non-paper. The participants expressed opinions not only on individual terms but also on how the terms collectively may be further streamlined and refined to avoid duplication and redundancy and ensure best fit.

8. In the course of the review of the contested terms, suggestions for improvement were formulated. The intent would be to give due recognition to terms of art in the field of DRR. Comments included:

**(a) Acceptable risk, tolerable risk:** May be classified as sub-definitions of “disaster risk”, taking into consideration the broad use of “acceptable risk” in the risk management community and the use of “tolerable risk” as a measurement of a country’s capacity.

**(b) Adaptation:** The experts may decide whether a specific definition of adaptation, that is different from climate change adaptation and contextualized in terms of DRR, is needed.

**(c) Directly affected, indirectly affected:** May be classified as sub-definitions of “affected”. Annotations on sub-definitions may factor in implications of: double-counting; national legislations; and differing use in other languages, for example, distinguishing “victims” as those affected but unable to recover. References to “refugees” may be removed given implications of legal frameworks.

**(d) Build Back Better (BBB):** BBB may be defined in relation to Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework and as a functional approach to take lessons learnt into account. The inclusions of “social systems” may be reconsidered and the scope of resilience may be better captured. Japan recalled its proposed definition from January 2015 that reads: *“Build Back Better is to utilize disasters as an opportunity to create more resilient nations and societies than before through the implementation of well-balanced disaster risk reduction measures including physical restoration of infrastructure, revitalization of livelihood and economy/industry, and the restoration of local culture and environment.”*

**(e) Coping capacity, capacity assessment, capacity development:** May be categorized as sub-definitions of capacity. “Capacity development” may be revisited in terms of international cooperation and may cover what needs to be anticipated for capacity to develop. Strategy and planning may be included in the definition of capacity.

**(f) Disaster Risk Management:** Preventing new risk i.e. “prospective/anticipatory disaster risk management”, reducing existing risk i.e. “corrective disaster risk management” and risk that cannot be prevented or reduced i.e. “compensatory/residual disaster risk management” are specific dimensions of “disaster risk management” and may be categorized as its sub-definitions.

**(g) Disaster (small-scale, large-scale, frequent and infrequent, slow-onset-, sudden-onset):** The concept of capacity may be integrated into the definition of disaster. “Disaster damage” and “disaster impact” may be included as sub-definitions of disaster.

**(h) Disaster Risk Governance:** Definition may be revisited taking into consideration whether to frame it in descriptive terms of a system of institutions or in aspirational and normative terms of whether the institutions are working in the way that they should. It may be defined in terms of process and functions.

**(i) Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Risk Management:** Both terms may be defined as separate stand-alone terminology.

**(j) Early Warning System (EWS):** All levels of government may be referred to among entities enabled to take timely action on EWS. The definition may emphasize risk information and risk knowledge. The treatment of “risk assessment” in the definition may be adjusted to clarify that while EWS benefits from earlier risk assessment, risk assessments are not conducted in the face of hazards. Multi Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) may be classified as a sub-definition of EWS and may emphasize the principle of a single official source in the dissemination of information.

**(k) Economic loss, direct economic loss, indirect economic loss:** The terms may be considered together. The two sub-terms, however, may be decoupled more explicitly as indirect economic losses can occur in areas not directly affected, for example, a supplier working with a client in an affected area. In defining the scope of the term, due consideration may be given to both the availability of indirect economic loss data and the capacity to capture such data.

**(l) Exposure:** The importance of geographical location in the definition of exposure may be reflected upon to assess whether such an approach to defining exposure is adequately inclusive, taking into consideration the specificities of certain hazards that may be independent of location.

**(m) Hazards (including all types of hazards):** There may be a need to define all types of hazards noted in the Sendai Framework as sub-definitions of “hazards”. The definition of hazard and hazardous event, as the occurrence of a hazard, may be clearly distinguished. The definition of multi-hazard may be further elaborated upon. “Chemical hazard” may additionally be defined taking into consideration the work of bodies and conventions dealing with the term. “Biological hazard” may be considered a “natural hazard”.

**(n) Preparedness:** Reference to coordination may be added to the definition of “preparedness” as coordination of actors is an essential component of preparedness. “Actions” may be added in order to reflect the need to practically apply “knowledge and capacities”.

**(o) Prevention:** In the annotation to the term “prevention”, the aspect of “residual risk” may be considered and therefore the wording “completely avoid” may be reconsidered. The reference to “completely avoid” may further make redundant the use of the term “acceptable risk”. Due consideration may be given to reflect the greater duty to not bring harm to others through ones actions, i.e. man-made hazards.

**(p) Recovery:** As Build Back Better is not a principle of sustainable development, the factual correction may be made to delink the two in the definition of “recovery” by replacing “including” with “and of”.

**(q) Response:** The definition of response may be revisited to factor in planning and preparatory steps for response taken immediately before the onset of a disaster. Response, which involves specific actions, may be clearly distinguished from preparedness, which involves similar routine actions.

**(r) Risk, Disaster Risk:** The term “risk” may be deleted or merged into the term “disaster risk” to avoid confusion with other types of risk.

**(s) Vulnerability:** The reference to individuals in the definition of “vulnerability” may be revisited due to potential difficulties in measurement. The addition of references to property and assets in the definition of vulnerability may be considered.

**(t) Contested terms and definitions of which there were no comments:** reconstruction, rehabilitation, resilience.

### III. Informal consultations of the Chair on indicators for the 7 global targets of the Sendai Framework

9. During its second session, the Working Group identified a number of questions on indicator development for more in-depth work during the inter-sessional period. In this context, the Secretariat prepared a technical collection of concept notes on indicators for Targets A to E and G that present: possible computation methodologies, detail the technical requirements for the indicators, propose working definitions for terms to be used for the indicators, and outline sources, data collection and statistical processing methods. Each concept note contains an executive summary with the Secretariat's recommendations.

10. The informal consultations proceeded with a briefing by UNISDR on the technical collection and their rationale, including links to the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). The briefings underscored that the concept notes utilize the approach employed by the IAEG-SDGs to analyze proposed indicators by the level of methodological development and overall data availability and group them into three categories:

- **Category I:** Recommended indicators for global level measurement due to existing/proposed methodology and wide data availability in a significant number of countries;
- **Category II:** Recommended indicators for national level measurement due to existing/proposed methodology but not easily available data;
- **Category III:** Indicators not recommended for adoption due to non-existence of both methodology and easily available data.

11. It was also underscored that the IAEG-SDGs will utilize for SDG targets 1.5, 11.5, 11b and 13.1, the outcome of the OIEWG's work on indicators.

12. With regards to data requirements for constructing the baselines, while 89 countries have national disaster loss databases, many are either not up to date or have data gaps as regards monitoring the proposed Sendai targets, constituting a considerable challenge that needs to be addressed as a matter of priority.

13. The monitoring of the Sendai Framework will go through several key milestones over the next three years including: development, validation and rollout of online Sendai Framework Monitor; readiness review of data availability and baselines definition; retrofitting of existing and building new national disaster loss databases; and development of national targets and indicators. Once the Sendai Framework Monitor is developed by 2017, it is expected that countries will complete the first cycle of reports on Sendai Framework implementation by the end of 2018, followed by a first review of global progress in the Sendai Framework implementation at the Global Platform in 2019. This global review will be a critical contribution to the review of the SDGs by the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLFP) at the level of the General Assembly

14. The technical briefing by UNISDR was followed by interactive discussions with delegates on their perspectives on the proposed indicators for the 7 global targets of the Sendai Framework, with the concept notes serving as the basis for discussion. Emphasis was placed on the consolidation of indicators and on ensuring that they were fit for purpose, including as regards the development of national indicators. Particular attention was placed on the issue of data availability for the proposed indicators and on distinguishing between doable and desirable indicators. It was emphasized that the indicators for the global targets will serve to measure global progress. Delegates outlined treatment options for bracketed indicators and exchanged views on the feasibility of compound indicators and sub-indicators.

15. Key discussions points included:

16. **Target A:** addressing the issue of global variances in timeframes for establishing when a missing person can be legally classified as presumed dead – for example, can be 6 to 7 years in some

countries; the non-existence of an officially accepted cut-off period for data collection and recording following a disaster and the related question of using a proxy, for example, 42 days as used for maternal mortality; utilizing “deceased” instead of “deaths” in indicator A-2; and utilizing “missing persons” instead of “presumed dead” in indicator A-3.

17. **Target B:** either defining what policies for “protection” are and how they will be measured or moving protection related indicators from global to national level public policy indicators due to difficulties in measuring protection in terms of definition, methodology and data; separating “injured” from “ill” in indicator B-2 and establishing a timeline for measuring both terms; removing “immediate” in B-2alt taking into account hazard induced diseases that may occur only after a certain time period has elapsed; consolidating and streamlining indicators B2 to B6 to minimize double-counting; dissociating positive measures from negative ones within an indicator; retaining indicator B-6 which is the only indicator to cover people affected by drought; and seeking guidance from WHO on reporting on diseases related to hazardous events.

18. **Target C:** collapsing the indicators into general categories; moving proposed sub-indicators to the category of national level indicators to allow for data disaggregation; clarifying that indicators adopted serve the purpose of indicating – not measuring - whether global economic losses are going up or down in a 10 year period; measuring baselines in relative terms; recognizing that not all countries will report with the same emphasis on all categories; accounting for diversities of economic sectors for each country; utilizing case study methodology to assess disaster damage at the regional level; using simple economic proxies; tweaking PDNA and DALA methodology developed by ECLAC to assess damage in the context of small-scale disasters; capturing actual damage in the field; and clarifying how damage ratio calculation as regards agricultural loss has been determined.

19. **Target D:** giving due consideration to how many infrastructure areas can be covered based on data availability in terms of national assessments; measuring assessment, rehabilitation and remodeling actions as components of indicator D-3; inclusion of indicators on DRR education in schools, number of days school has been closed and the number of days education has not been provided due to hazardous event; and utilizing the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools as a benchmark.

20. **Target E:** utilizing a progress index to check the degree to which a national DRR strategy satisfies the elements defined in paragraphs 27(a) and 27(b) of the Sendai Framework and subsequently assigning a score to the number of elements covered; whether the percentage of population covered by local DRR plans should be considered as an indicator; ensuring that national DRR plans are overarching; and ensuring that reporting on local implementation is in accordance with national strategies’ parameters.

21. **Target G:** the burden should be upon countries to ensure that they do all that they can to provide early warning for all the hazards for which they have the capacity to provide such a warning; reference to forecasting in indicator G-2 should clarify that multi-hazard does not imply all hazards as certain hazards cannot be forecasted; and incorporating language on geo-hazards into the indicators for target G.

22. **Target F:** On the indicators on international cooperation, utilizing a model of focused consultations that were successfully used in the run up to the Sendai Conference, the Chair invited Egypt and Switzerland, as friends of the Chair, to facilitate informal informal 10+10 consultations on 21 June. Comprising delegates from the Permanent Missions of developed and developing countries, ideas to help advance work on elements for Target F were discussed. The facilitators termed the discussions as both constructive and positive and highlighted the following key points emanating from the consultations: indicators for Target F should be realistic and measurable; the SDGs and the work of the UN Statistical Commission were important elements to take into consideration; the three categories utilized in the SDG means of implementation chapter - namely, financing, technology transfer and capacity building - may be useful to cluster the indicators for Target F; capturing the

provider and recipient aspect may be desirable; and other aspects such as adequacy of cooperation could serve as transversal dimensions within the three overall categories. Serious thought was given to the rationalization of the proposed indicators and the delegates noted that they would consult with their capitals and statistical offices to assess what was feasible and measurable. The informal 10+10 consultations on Target F indicators will continue, with the next meeting to be held on 5 July

#### **IV. Way Forward**

23. Delegates and experts participating in the informal consultations expressed general support for the technical non-papers and the approach therein, and called upon the Secretariat to provide suggestions to further rationalize and streamline the work on indicators and terminology on the basis of the discussions and other technical considerations.

24. Delegates were encouraged to consider Japan's offer to participate in a feasibility exercise on proposed indicators and to communicate their interest promptly in this regard. The Joint Research Centre of the European Commission would also be working with EU countries to check the feasibility of the indicators and data and would provide its findings prior to the Third Session of the OIEWG.

25. In light of the positive and constructive discussions and the need to advance on other critical questions related to terminology and indicators, the Chair indicated that he would convene further informal consultations with Geneva-based delegates on indicators and terminology in early October. The intent would be to maximize efforts towards a final push in November to adopt indicators and terminology that would benefit the mandate given by the General Assembly and would find favor when sent for adoption in New York.