United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
ZERO DRAFT Proposal for the Rio+20
November 1, 2011

General Content:

a. What are the expectations for the outcome of Rio+20, and what are the concrete proposals in this regard, including views on a possible structure of the Outcome document:

- The structure of the Outcome document should ensure the balanced integration of economic development, social development and environmental protection, as these are mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The Outcome document should also deliver a concise, action oriented and forward-looking plan that reflects current trends and realities and develops measurable targets.

- The Outcome document should also consider that any sustainable development framework will never be realized unless it includes a clear prescription and the practical application of disaster and climate risk management. Disaster risk is increasing globally due to climate variability, poor land-use planning and management and ecosystem degradation that endanger people, assets and development efforts. Any future framework for sustainable development needs a clear prescription and practical application of disaster and climate risk management. The series of catastrophes in 2011 is a strong reminder that disaster risks associated with hazards such as tropical cyclones, floods, earthquake, droughts, tsunamis, as well as technological hazards, constitute a major challenge to development. The Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami sent a clear message that both developed and developing countries are exposed to high risks and raised the potential trans-boundary implications of disasters.

b. What are the comments, if any, on existing proposals e.g., a green economy roadmap, framework for action, sustainable development goals, a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, or others?

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's):** The SDG proposal builds on main Agenda 21 issues such as combating poverty, changing consumption patterns, promoting sustainable human settlement development, biodiversity and forests, oceans, water resources, advancing food security and energy. In order to ensure that any proposed goals are attained and new development investments protected, it is important that disaster and climate risk management is integrated in the plans. For example, factoring disaster and climate risk into investments for sustainable development, human settlements and the construction of schools, hospitals and energy infrastructure could scale-up risk reduction and protect investments.

- **Green Economy Roadmap:** *See Specific elements (b)*

c. What are the views on implementation and on how to close the implementation gap, which relevant actors are envisaged as being involved (governments, specific major groups, UN system, IFIs, etc.)

- Governments are increasingly recognizing that disaster risk reduction is crucial to sustainable development. This has been reflected in a number of inter-governmentally agreed, development-related outcome documents, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002), the 2010 MDG Summit and more recently in the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. However, only little has been achieved in terms of implementation as shown by the increasing vulnerability and exposure of communities and assets to disaster risks. Ahead of Rio+20, a strengthened political and financial commitment is crucial to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes a core component of sustainable development. Such commitment can only be achieved with an active participation of all major groups.

- There is a greater recognition of the increasing importance of the role of local governments and the private sector to address the implementation gaps and achieve sustainable development. As providers of social services, builders of economic infrastructures, regulators of economic activity and managers of the natural environment, local authorities have many direct instruments that could influence sustainable development. At the same time there has been an increasing commitment and interest in sustainable development actions from the private sector that could stir up jobs and income opportunities. The concerted and complementary efforts of these stakeholders will be essential for effective and sustainable development.

d. What specific cooperation mechanisms, partnership arrangement or other implementation tools are envisaged and what is the relevant time frame for the proposed decisions to be reached and actions to be implemented.

- The *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* (HFA) is a 10-year plan adopted by the UN Member States at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in 2005 and subsequently endorsed by the UN General Assembly (GA Resolution 60/195). The HFA sets a clear expected outcome that is to reduce disaster losses in the lives as well as the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries and lays out a detailed set of priorities to be achieved by 2015. First among the strategic goals of the HFA is the more effective integration of disaster risk actions into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

- Several cooperative mechanisms support implementation of the HFA. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is a multi-stakeholder mechanism that is used to accelerate world-wide momentum on disaster risk reduction. Mandated by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/62/192), the Global Platform convenes every two years to assess the progress of the Hyogo Framework for Action implementation, enhance awareness of disaster risk reduction, share experience and lessons from good practice and identify remaining gaps and recommend targeted action to accelerate national and local implementation. Regional Platforms (across six regions) also assess progress but focus on

the details of the plans of implementation and National Platforms act as the national coordinating body for disaster risk reduction. These existing mechanisms could also analyze the gaps and monitor the implementation progress of development-related outcome documents such as Agenda 21 and the future Rio+20 as they relate to disaster risk reduction.

Specific Elements:

a. Objective of the conference: To secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcome of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges.

The practical application, as well as political, financial and technological commitment to disaster risk reduction, needs to be reinforced as a core component of sustainable development and climate adaptation in order to achieve the objectives set out in the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. Such reinforcement is essential if international agreements such as the Rio+20 Summit, implementation of the MDGs, and the UNFCCC Cancún Adaptation Framework[1] are to achieve their objectives. Promoting disaster risk reduction in the new development agenda entails multiple benefits to economy, society and the environment For example:

- Disaster risk reduction measures positively contribute to economic growth through reducing losses to disasters and contributes to reduction of poverty by protecting livelihooods, effecting use of social safety net programs and opening new potentials for developing social capital and assets.

- Integration of disaster risk reduction in public services such as water management and drought resistant agricultural practices are effective measures that address drought risk, water shortages, increase generation of hydroelectricity, water storage capacity for agricultural use, and availability of domestic drinking water. Similarly, protection of ecosystems such as forests and mangroves could save lives, assets and livelihoods[2] while at the same time serving as natural protective barriers and buffers against physical hazards.

- The benefits of investing in human, financial, technical resources in disaster risk reduction outweigh the costs and negative outcomes of disaster losses and impacts. For example, in a study conducted in Colombia, the inclusion of disaster risk considerations in land-use planning and building was found to be four times less expensive than rebuilding or repairing infrastructure damages from disasters. Corrective measures such as retrofitting or relocation are less cost-effective but can reduce mortality by 40 percent[3]. Protecting schools, hospitals and other public infrastructures is particularly critical in this regard.

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[1] FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1
[2] UNISDR, 2011 : Revealing Risk, Redefining Development. Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011. Geneva: UNISDR.
[3] Ibid

Disaster risk reduction should be highlighted as an important cross-cutting sustainable development issue in the Rio+20. Any future framework for sustainable development needs to include a clear prescription and the practical application of disaster and climate risk management. Equally, poverty and vulnerability reduction are integral to effective risk management. The recommendations below highlight the key opportunities and areas for government action within the context of urgently needed integrated approaches.

- Know risks and account for disaster losses: Estimating recurrent loss is essential in justifying increased investments in disaster risk reduction. Establishment of national disaster loss databases that account for all disaster loss and damage as well as probabilistic risk assessments can enable countries to estimate their probable maximum losses and estimate the costs and benefits of different risk management strategies and options.

- Integrate disaster risk reduction into public investments and sustainable development plans: Public investment projects are shaped through a number of planning processes that include land-use planning and management, development planning, sector investment planning and investment[4]. Factoring and applying disaster risk into public investment decisions directly address critical risk drivers and downplay potential disaster-related losses and costs at a scale impossible to achieve through stand-alone disaster risk management. Through the application of disaster risk reduction, quality and sustainability of public spending is enhanced and further contributes to social and economic development[5].

- Utilize disaster risk reduction as an instrument to achieve a more sustainable (greener) economy: Ensuring that physical infrastructure meets disaster resilient design standards is critically important. The exposure and vulnerability of infrastructure takes a significant toll on the economy of disaster affected countries and regions. When buildings and bridges are damaged by disaster, recovery is further inhibited and the ability of businesses to bring employees back to work at full scale is reduced. Addressing these factors can reduce the scale of losses and strengthen the resilience of the local economy. Businesses – both small and large – are increasingly planning for resilience through business continuity planning and the protection of supply chains.

b. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication: views regarding how green economy can be a means to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions, and poverty eradication; what is its potential added value; experience to date, including what has worked and how to build upon success, what are the challenges and opportunities and how to address the challenges and seize opportunities, and possible elements of an agreement in outcome document on a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The green economy concept, advocated in the Rio+20 process, carries the promise of a new economic growth paradigm that generates growth, creates jobs and eradicates poverty by investing in and preserving the natural capital. The transition to green economy however does not entail new solutions but are also based on sustainable actions and practices that are already in place such as energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity and sustainable urbanization. Considering disaster risk reduction in the planning and investment stages promises

[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid

to support the transition to green economy by protecting these news investments and strengthening resilience of countries to disaster and climate risks. Thus, disaster risk reduction and green economy could be mutually reinforcing as reflected in the following examples:

- Public infrastructure investments: green economy could provide opportunities to address the infrastructure challenges in a sustainable way especially in developing countries. For example, remote off-grid electricity generation system is a viable approach to electrify many rural areas. Ensuring that this new physical infrastructure such as this meets disaster resilient design standards is critically important. The exposure and vulnerability of infrastructure takes a significant toll on the economy of disaster affected countries and regions. Addressing these factors can reduce the scale of losses and strengthen the resilience of green economy

- Sustainable agriculture: green economy strongly calls for building natural capital assets by promoting green practices such as sustainable agriculture that include attention to land-cover changes that affect flood, drought and landslide risk and the underlying vulnerabilities of communities reliant on natural capital. There is growing evidence that sustainable forms of agriculture can increase yields and revenues, open up new market opportunities and reduce climate change and environmental vulnerability. Any transition must be managed in such a way as to prevent food insecurity and to promote resilient livelihoods.

- Sustainable urbanization: green economy provides an opportunity to reduce the unsustainable trend of rural-urban migration in many developing countries by empowering (economically) rural areas. Thus, it allows better and efficient planning of cities. However, how land is used in cities and how buildings, infrastructure and networks are designed and constructed all influence exposure to physical hazards and the rise or fall of a country's stock of risk. Factoring and applying disaster risk into urban planning downplays potential disaster-related losses and costs.

- The transition to green economies will not be possible without the full engagement of the private sector. The extent to which the transitional plans also address the concerns and interests of private sector may well be a deciding factor in the success of green growth. While many entrepreneurs will respond to the opening of new markets, others are already recognizing the importance of business continuity planning and addressing vulnerabilities in the supply-chain. Disaster risk reduction is well-positioned as a win-win area of mutual interest where cooperative relationships may be built.

c***. Institutional framework for sustainable development: Priorities and proposals for strengthening individual pillars of sustainable development, as well as those for strengthening integration of the three pillars, at multiple levels- local, national, regional and international.***

In order to strengthen the broader institutional frameworks for sustainable development, other relevant existing inter-governmental instruments, such as the *Hyogo Framework for Action are important.* The HFA emphasises that "*disaster risk reduction is a cross cutting issue in the context of sustainable development and therefore an important element for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals."* First among the strategic goals of the HFA is the more effective integration of disaster risk into sustainable development policies, planning and

programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

In line with the views expressed by some Member States, the value of an objective appraisal of implementation of sustainable development commitments and action plans. In this regard, national reports on progress in implementation of the HFA could contribute significantly.