



## The Second Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction *Under the Patronage of H.E. the Prime Minister of Egypt*

14-16 September 2014, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

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### Background and Context:

Losses from disasters, related to hazards such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and tropical cyclones are an increasing challenge to development. Since 2000 it is estimated that global direct economic losses due to disasters total USD 2.5 trillion. Disasters damage and destroy housing, schools and health facilities, water and sanitation, roads and other infrastructure, setting back economic development and threatening social welfare. Disasters are both a cause and consequence of poverty, given that they disproportionately affect low-income households in low-income countries.

The Arab region is exposed to various hazards ranging from earthquakes and landslides to hydrological and meteorological hazards such as floods, drought, cyclones and extreme heat waves. Rapid urbanization, water scarcity, fast growing population with changing demographics are further amplifying the vulnerabilities in the region and adding stress to governmental policies on development and risk management.

In 2005, at Kobe in Japan, governments from all over the world adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) with the objective to reduce economic losses and loss of lives due to disasters. The League of Arab States and its member nations endorsed the HFA and in March 2012 adopted the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 at the Baghdad Arab Summit. The Arab Strategy was developed in collaboration with the UNISDR Regional Office for Arab States and the technical secretariat of the League of Arab States through a consultative

process guided by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment.

As HFA approaches the end of its 10 year timeframe (2005-2015), the Member States of the United Nations requested UNISDR to facilitate the development of a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/199. It is important to ensure that the Arab region provides input and contributes effectively to the development of the next global DRR framework (post-2015), which is expected to be discussed and endorsed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Sendai, Japan in March 2015.

Since 2012, a series of consultations on the post-2015 Framework for DRR took place in the Arab region at the local, national, and regional levels. These consultations were, in most cases, organized by UNISDR Regional Office for Arab States, in cooperation with other national, regional and international partners. Consultations on post-2015 focused on identifying the challenges and the priority concerns with respect to disaster risk reduction in the Arab region. These local, national and regional consultations provided a platform for multi-stakeholders dialogues on emerging disaster risk issues and highlighted the challenges faced and achievements made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Through this consultative process several good practices and successful experiences were identified and shared by stakeholders focusing on risk prevention measures carried out by local authorities, municipalities, national governments and civil society.



### ***The 1<sup>st</sup> Arab Conference on DRR in March 2013:***

Organized by UNISDR, in collaboration with UNDP and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) was an opportunity for all stakeholders in the region to convene and discuss DRR challenges and progress in the Arab Region – including HFA implementation and the post 2015 Agenda.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Arab regional high level multi-stakeholder gathering on DRR facilitated the identification of opportunities and challenges in the existing policies and institutional mechanisms for disaster risk management and discussed the regional progress towards risk reduction and HFA implementation. Participants discussed various issues related to the implementation of priorities outlined in the HFA and acknowledged progress made on DRR in the region as well as gaps to be addressed. Adopting a forward looking approach, Arab countries reiterated their commitment to implement the HFA and to support the development of a successor arrangement for a global DRR framework post 2015.

Recommendations that emerged from the conference are available in the conference report at the following link:

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/regional/platform/arabstates/2013/>

### ***The 2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction:***

In light of the above context, the League of Arab States, the Government of Egypt and UNISDR are organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference on DRR in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt from 14 to 16 September 2014. The Conference is held under the patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. This inter-governmental high level conference will be attended by national delegations, ministers, senior government officials, city mayors, civil society representatives, scientific and academic institutions, regional and international organizations, and United Nations system partners.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference on DRR will be the last inter-governmental meeting in the region before governments around the globe convene in Sendai, Japan in March 2015 to adopt a new post-2015 Framework for DRR at the 3rd World Conference on DRR (3WCDDRR).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference will provide an opportunity for countries and stakeholders to review the progress of HFA implementation in the Arab region, challenges faced and gaps remaining to substantially reduce disaster risk. The Conference will also consolidate the outcomes of extensive regional, national and local consultations on the post-2015 Framework for DRR in order to agree on coherent Arab Region inputs, which will serve as a reference for the global discussions and negotiations of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee working towards the development and adoption of the post-2015 Framework for DRR at the 3WCDDRR.

The preparation of the post-2015 Framework for DRR comes at critical time when two other major international instruments, namely the post-2015 development goals (SDGs) and a new climate change agreement are also under discussion. The



2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference on DRR will provide an opportunity for the DRR community to engage other sectors to further promote disaster and climate risk management as an imperative element for sustainable development.

#### **Objectives and Expected Outcomes:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference on DRR will convene with the aim of agreeing on the Arab Region's inputs and priorities for the post-2015 agenda on DRR.

In addition, it is envisioned that the Conference will be an opportunity to achieve the following expected outcomes:

- To generate stronger political commitment and investment of Arab countries in disaster risk management and sustainable development.
- To identify key priorities for DRR actions in the region at regional, national and local level in the context of progress made and gaps identified throughout the past decade of work within the HFA framework.
- To promote dialogue and exchange among key stakeholder groups in the region, such as scientists, youth and children, women, civil society and local authorities, and facilitate a stronger recognition of their respective roles in promoting and implementing DRR actions.
- To promote sharing of knowledge and experiences to strengthen disaster and climate risk management in the region.

#### **Themes for Discussion:**

- i) Review of outcomes and commitments in the 1<sup>st</sup> Arab Conference on DRR including the Aqaba Declaration for DRR in Arab cities and the current status of the Arab Strategy for DRR;
- ii) Regional progress towards risk reduction and HFA implementation with highlights of good practices in this regard;
- iii) Arab regional position and input towards post-2015 Framework on DRR in the context of building coherent approaches to DRR that enables the achievement of sustainable development goals;
- iv) The linkages between DRR and climate change and the changing landscape of food security in the Arab region – using DRR to address interlinked challenges for post-2015;
- v) Evidence and information for risk-sensitive development and enhanced risk governance mechanisms;
- vi) Strengthening preparedness capacities and coordination mechanisms for effective disaster management and response; and
- vii) The role of stakeholder groups in reducing disaster risk with focus on scientific community, local authorities, youth and children, women, and civil society actors.