

Making the SDGs sustainable and resilient Disasters and Resilience in the OWG Outcome Document

The SDGs Open Working Group has finished its work, agreeing by acclamation 17 goals, 169 targets and a chapeau. The [outcome document](#), released on 18 July, retains key disaster and resilience targets that reflect the importance and support states are giving to this cross-cutting issue. Agreement of the outcome document was very difficult in the last few days, with several contentious issues, but risk reduction was generally perceived as necessary and relatively straightforward.

Summary of DRR and resilience in the Outcome Document

Resilience in the goals: The outcome document includes goals on *resilient* infrastructure (goal 9) and *resilient* cities (goal 11), providing a certain political visibility for resilience.

Key resilience target under the poverty goal: target 1.5 reflects how shocks push people into poverty. This strong target explicitly requires states to reduce the exposure and vulnerability of poor and vulnerable people, thereby reducing their risk, and applies to all economic, social and environmental shocks.

Key DRR target under the cities and human settlements goal: target 11.5 requires states to reduce social and economic losses due to disasters. The latest version is an improvement as it goes beyond a narrow focus on mortality. This target does not explicitly refer to cities or settlements, and therefore can apply to all populations, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Other targets clearly focused on DRR and resilience require states to:

- 2.4: implement agricultural practices to strengthen capacity for adaptation to disasters.
- 9.1: develop resilient infrastructure, which is crucial for both 'disaster-proofing' existing development and also preventing the creation of unacceptable levels of new risk.
- 11.b: develop and implement policies and plans for disaster resilience and this target makes a crucial link with the Hyogo Framework for Action.
- 13.1: strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity in all countries and for all people.

A further set of targets help to support resilience building, for example relating to social protection, land, incomes of small-scale food producers, food price volatility, preventable deaths of under 5s, management of health risks, safe education facilities, safe housing, upgrading of slums, ecosystems management, desertification, violence, and the rule of law.

Some considerations of next steps

Whilst not perfect, the outcome document offers a very useful collection of targets on DRR and resilience. States have different views on the status of the outcome document, and more will become clear in the coming months. For DRR and resilience, this document provides a useful framing but it should be seen as a baseline, not a ceiling, for the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations.

There is a dynamic tension between the desire for a shorter document that is easy to communicate and mobilise around, and the necessity to reflect a balance across all three pillars of development. A move to condense or cluster goals and targets could put significant pressure on existing DRR and resilience targets.

At the same time, the targets that have emerged from a politically-negotiated process must now be reviewed to ensure they are clear and feasible; perhaps with the development of indicators that show how they would work in practice, or speak to specific sectors. This review should be undertaken in close connection with work underway to develop the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action to ensure that targets, indicators and review mechanisms are complementary.

More detailed analysis of DRR targets

DRR and resilience in the goals

There are no standalone goals on disaster risk reduction or resilience, which perhaps represents a missed opportunity; late in the process, several governments expressed an interest in this. If there is a significant reshuffling of targets in the coming process, this may be worth revisiting. Nevertheless in the outcome document:

1. Two of the goals refer to resilience in their titles – resilient infrastructure and resilient cities. This is important in terms of political visibility for resilience.
2. DRR and resilience are cross-cutting across several goals and broadly speaking, these targets provide the right combination and coverage of targets.

Key targets relating to DRR and resilience

Targets relating to DRR and resilience feature across most of the goals, particularly under goals relating to poverty, food/agriculture, infrastructure, cities and climate change. Key targets include:

Target 1.5 by 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

The evidence is clear that the combination of shocks and low levels of resilience, play a major role in pushing households below the poverty line and keeping them there. Including a resilience target under the poverty goal is crucial, as the poorest and most marginalised people bear the highest burden of disasters. This target will address all shocks, both rural and urban contexts, and cover localised frequent shocks which relentlessly erode the wealth of poor people as well as mega shocks with their systemic impacts on poverty.

This target is technically strong as it explicitly requires states to reduce the exposure and vulnerability of poor and vulnerable people, thereby reducing their risk. It also applies to all shocks – economic, social and environmental – rather than a narrower natural hazards definition, and thereby requires an integrated approach to risk management.

Target 11.5 by 2030 significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of affected people and decrease by y% the economic losses relative to GDP caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with the focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

This target is more specifically focused on natural hazards, with a clear target to reduce social and economic losses. This is a clear improvement on previous versions, as it includes a reference to ‘the number of affected people’ rather than a narrower focus on mortality. This target could be improved further by broadening this to include a specific objective of reducing disaster risk that looks to future losses and will require an anticipatory approach to reducing vulnerability.

This target is located under the cities and human settlements goal, but does not explicitly refer to cities. This is helpful because, whilst recognising the particular challenges of accelerating urbanisation, 75 per cent of poor people in the developing world currently live in rural areas, and are particularly exposed to recurrent, localised disasters. It should be understood that this target applies to even the smallest human settlement, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Target 11.b by 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels

This is a ‘Means of Implementation’ target because it is focused on inputs (policies and plans) rather than outputs (reduction in losses or risk). It therefore offers a very useful element to the Goals, and makes a crucial link with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Target 13.1 strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

There is an obvious connection between natural hazards and climate change and it is right that this is reflected in the goals. This particular target is important as it requires *all* countries to build resilience for *all* people (whereas target 1.5 applies only to the poorest); it also offers something new in referring specifically to adaptive capacity.

Target 9.1 develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

Ensuring that infrastructure is resilient is crucial as we have seen from countless recent disasters – cyclone shelters have saved many thousands of lives in Bangladesh, and the destruction of ports, roads and airports in Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines significantly hampered relief and recovery. Investments made today in assets and infrastructure will lock in risk for the future thus this target needs to incentivise both ‘disaster-proofing’ of existing development and also preventing the creation of unacceptable levels of new risk.

This target is not written in particularly strong terms, with no thresholds and just a call to ‘develop’ appropriate infrastructure. It is also a combination of two previous targets and the formulation is rather convoluted. Stronger clearer language should be sought, for example, ‘*by 2030, x% of all key infrastructure should be is reliable, sustainable and resilient*’

Target 2.4 by 2030 ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality

This target, and target 2.3 that is focused specifically on small-holder farmers, provide an essential link between food, climate change, disasters and rural communities. Stronger language would make this a more useful target.

Gaps remaining

We have previously suggest the following amendments

- **Incorporating the impact of shocks in the chapeau.** The impact of shocks and stresses needs to be reflected in the chapeau as, if left unchecked, they are a fundamental barrier to the achievement of the SDGs. We proposed new language, taken from paragraph 178 of *The Future we Want*, to be inserted in the tenth paragraph.
- **Ensuring a strong linkage between development and humanitarian sectors.** Humanitarian crises and emergencies undermine development gains. Preventing or reducing the impact of disasters requires a coherent resilient approach across both sectors to reduce the risk of disasters and strengthening the capacity of local and national actors to lead emergency response. We propose a new target on Global Partnerships.

Proposed 17.14bis: *encourage and promote more integrated partnerships and collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, building national and local capacity to manage shocks and stresses and better coordinate emergency response and prevention work with sustainable development.*

- **Addition to target 8.2 in the economic growth goal.** There is a disconnect between national economic promotion and growth policies and disaster risk management strategies yet the drive for economic growth can expose countries to more risk, as has been seen in Thailand, India and [elsewhere](#). Impacts can be far-reaching and go way beyond borders - the 2010 floods in Thailand are [estimated](#) to have set back global industrial production by 2.5 per cent.

Amended 8.2: achieve higher levels of productivity of economies through diversification, technological upgrading, *risk reduction and transfer* and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labour-intensive sectors

Very important supporting targets for resilience

A huge number of other targets can help to support resilience building. These include the following::

1.3 implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

1.4 by 2030 ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership, and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services including microfinance

2.3 by 2030 double the agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

2.c. adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives, and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

3.2 by 2030 end preventable deaths of newborns and under-five children

3.d strengthen the capacity of all countries, particularly developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks

4.a build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

9.a facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

10.4 adopt policies especially fiscal, wage, and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality

11.1 by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums

13.2 integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning

14.2 by 2020, sustainably manage, and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans

15.1 by 2020 ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

15.2 by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and increase afforestation and reforestation by x% globally

15.3 by 2020, combat desertification, and restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world

15.4 by 2030 ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, to enhance their capacity to provide benefits which are essential for sustainable development

16.1 significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all

Chapeau para 16. Rio+20 reaffirmed that, in accordance with the Charter, this shall not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. It resolved to take further effective measures and actions, in conformity with international law, to remove obstacles and constraints, strengthen support and meet the special needs of people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism.