

**Statement of the United Nations**  
**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

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Asia-Pacific is the most disaster-prone region of the world. Almost two million people were killed by disasters in this region between 1970 and 2011, representing 75 per cent of global disaster fatalities.

There is increasing concern that disasters occur together with other shocks such as financial crises and food and fuel crises. While such disasters and shocks may seem to be unrelated, they are all shocks applied to the complex systems that interlink social, economic and environmental factors. A single incident, which might once have been localized and managed in isolation, now has multiple and interrelated impacts which may have far reaching regional and global consequences.

Regardless of the nature of the shock, those who are most exposed are the poor and vulnerable. They live on hazardous land and make a living from precarious means. And each shock erodes their capacity to cope with the next shock.

Building resilience to multiple shocks is one of the most urgent development challenges facing Asia and the Pacific today, as recognized by the Ministers at the ESCAP's 69th Commission, the highest intergovernmental and decision-making platform in Asia Pacific.

The overlapping and interlinked shocks call for a more comprehensive and systemic approach to building resilience. This means multi-sectoral analysis and multi-stakeholder participation in decision making. And it calls for action at all levels—governments, the private sector, local communities, as well as collective actions at the regional and international levels.

We heard clearly the voice of Asian and Pacific countries, that disaster risk management and better preparedness are key development imperatives; that people at every level must be empowered partners in change; political, technical and financial resources must be mobilized before shocks hit; that apathy is our biggest risk; and early warnings and early actions save lives and livelihoods.

Governments must invest in prevention and preparedness—it is far more effective and less costly than recovery efforts. At the Commission, Ministers agreed on a series of action to build resilience of countries and people across the region, enabling them to better withstand, adapt to, and recover from disasters and other shocks.

The proposed Asia Pacific regional framework for resilience involves the following action points. First, we need to build resilience into macroeconomic frameworks by balancing short-term macroeconomic stability with long-term development. During a crisis or disaster, the overarching aim of policymakers should be to arrest the spread of the shock to the real economy, to labour markets and, above all, to the poorest and most vulnerable. Second, existing social protection programmes must be extended to address multiple shocks, and align these programmes to support community coping strategies. Local communities and their local governments need to be empowered, not only because they are at the forefront of recovery efforts, but also because they can build a groundswell of support, at the local level, for investing in disaster risk management. Third, countries must identify critical sectors and protect them from disasters. Fourth, having integrated environmental policies is critical to prevent tipping point and the collapse of the interlinked land, water and energy nexus. Good land management plans, and effective regulation are crucial to prevent the overuse of these resources. And finally, collective actions by countries in the region to achieve these goals are fundamental to building resilience in the region.

In this regard, a crucial resolution was passed at the Commission on enhancing regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters, and strengthening ESCAP's mandate to integrate disaster risk considerations into national development frameworks. The resolution 69/12 called on ESCAP to provide the inter-governmental platform for member States to foster a strong regional voice to integrate disaster risk reduction considerations into the post- 2015 development agenda.

In the coming months, we will take forward the recommendations of the Commission through our intergovernmental Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction to respond to the call of the region for building resilience. We will work with all regional and global partners to integrate building resilience to disasters in the post-2015 development agenda.

Thank you.