

The United Nations University (UNU) acknowledges the priorities for action outlined by the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) to date, which take into consideration the need to assess risk, reduce it, and proactively manage those risks in a comprehensive manner. Also acknowledging that work of the HFA is included in the UNFCCC climate negotiation process such as the Cancun Adaptation Framework as well as the Doha Climate Gateway Decision, particularly the decision on Loss & Damage, UNU notes the following reflections on next steps for the post-2015 Hyogo Framework of Action.

### **Focus on resilience building, and understanding the root causes of vulnerability**

In the context of climate change, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2007) defined vulnerability as “the degree to which a system is susceptible to and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change”. Resilience, by contrast, is usually portrayed in positive terms as the capacity of a system to maintain its basic functions and structures in a time of shocks and perturbations (Oliver-Smith, 2009). In all formulations, vulnerability research and resilience research have common elements of interest—the shocks and stresses experienced by the social- ecological system, the response of the system, and the capacity for adaptive action.

From this perspective, **disaster risks have social roots as well as social solutions. Understanding the root causes of vulnerability—natural hazards and the way they interact with elements of human society—is at the foundation of all policy and efforts to address it.** Considering vulnerability demands understanding of and approach to climate change impacts because it leads to the recognition that the loss and damage related to these climate impacts are not caused by a single agent but by the complex interaction of both environmental and social features and forces (Oliver-Smith 2004). By assessing specific political, economic and social variables in combination with specific environmental features, the cause and impact of climatic stressors is situated in the intersection of society and environment. The United Nations University recommends 3 points on disaster risk assessment for the post-2015 Hyogo Framework of Action:

### **Assessing disaster risks**

- **Systematic support at community level to assess disaster risks.** Communities are often left with no support to make choices about adaptation. These assessment tools must be accessible to communities and understandable to the lay person. Assessment tools could be enhanced as part of the work under the post-2015 HFA and.
- **Assess non-economic losses.** UNU research shows that disaster-related losses go beyond quantifiable, formal sector economic impacts that can be measured in terms of physical assets or gross domestic product. Failing to measure these non-economic losses means that they could elude policy attention. Without explicit efforts to assess these kinds of losses, policymakers may have a myopic view of both impacts and solutions.
- **Advance threshold notification systems.** The research has shown that current negative impacts are already translating into societal and/or individual loss and damage. In coping with extreme events, early warning information is essential. More research is needed, in both natural and social science, to enable forecasting of these

thresholds with the aim to operationalizing threshold notification systems to guide national and international policy.

The United Nations University recommends 3 further points on addressing and reducing disaster risk for the post-2015 Hyogo Framework of Action:

**Addressing and reducing disaster risks through a human security lens**

- Address potential loss and damage from disasters as part of **risk reducing anticipatory, resilience building social processes**. That includes addressing system vulnerabilities and increasing social resilience and equity.
- **Mainstream the reduction of social vulnerability** and enhancement of social resilience in the post-2015 HFA policy discussions
- **Evaluate disaster risk reduction plans considering social processes** across temporal and spatial scales. Recognize that both causes and solutions for disaster risk reduction are found in social-climate interactions.

In order to enable resilience-building in a comprehensive risk management framework post-2015, the Hyogo Framework of Action can facilitate sustained commitment to risk assessment that considers social aspects of vulnerability, and address and reduce disaster risks through a human security lens.