

Towards the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Countries' specific guidance

14 November 2013

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to consolidate the guidance concerning form, monitoring and content of the so called "HFA2" as well as the future role of UNISDR in its implementation, received from countries through their statements at the GP13 and the United Nations General Assembly in November 2013, and the HFA Monitor reports.
2. This paper is based on, and elaborates further, some of the questions considered in the paper "Toward the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction - A prospective retrospective: considerations on, and lessons learned from, the international frameworks for disaster risk reduction"

Introduction

3. Overall, all countries share the same views and approaches concerning substantive questions and form for HFA2. There is a strong convergence on the fact that it needs to be practical and guide implementation, hence the need for clear measurable targets and indicators, as well as a monitoring mechanism. This has significant implications for the substance: careful consideration needs to be given to ensure that the substantive part is not only inspiring and aspirational, but also measurable and actionable – for the purpose of developing an international guidance instrument, the relevance of substance which is not specific and measurable might be questionable.
4. An effective monitoring mechanism is crucial to ensure accountability, and on some accounts it can have more "force" than legally binding provisions.

Considerations on Form

What does the "post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction" called for by the GA consist in? What is "HFA2"?

5. In 2011, the General Assembly through the Resolution 66/199 called for the development of a "post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction". Through the

consultations, countries have called for HFA to continue; they have also indicated that more specific work in certain areas (such as addressing the underlying causes and drivers of risk) need to be articulated further, updated, and added through an “HFA2”. They have also indicated that HFA2 should not rewrite HFA with the understanding that its guidance would stand and continue to guide relevant work areas. This seems to point to the fact that the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” consists of those HFA core elements which would be kept as they are now, plus HFA2, namely amended parts of HFA and new issues. Clarity on what the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” consists in is critical for accountability and implementation purposes.

6. It may be useful to recall that HFA core elements are: the “expected outcome”, the 3 “strategic goals”, and the 5 “priorities for actions 2005-2015”. The actions identifies under the 5 priority areas may be susceptible to being updated to ensure that they are harmonized with the lessons learned to date, and lead to an outcome that is measurable through effective targets and indicators.
7. Linked to the need to “extend” HFA, countries have also indicated the need to avoid “rewriting” HFA and to have a “simple” document. This indication as it points to the need and possibility to develop a relatively short document as the instrument.
8. Countries raise the question of accountability, and the need for participation and commitment of all stakeholders in reducing disaster risk. As the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be adopted through an “intergovernmental” process, its adoption implies the commitments of countries. At the same time, as it is a fact that reducing disaster risk requires all stakeholders’ engagement, a statement of commitment by all stakeholders beyond governments is necessary. Therefore, whereas the “commitments” per se would not be part of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, yet they would be an indispensable ingredient to elaborate the implementation programs and the monitoring mechanisms.
9. World conferences normally include a “political declaration”, which, in the specific case of the 3rd World Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction, would be indispensable to give guidance on a number of crucial points, including clarifying what the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” consist in. In particular, the political declaration would need to: validate HFA core elements; summarily indicate what is new (HFA2); clarify the link between HFA and HFA2 and the fact that together they constitute “the” post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction; clarify the significance of the “commitments”; state the link between the new framework, including its targets and indicators, with the post-2015 sustainable development paradigm; call for the revision of the HFA Monitor; request the periodic review of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction through relevant UN governance bodies; and state the link and recognize the significance of regional strategies and the

need for their possible revision along the lines of the new disaster risk reduction framework.

10. Against these considerations, it emerges that there are 5 apparent elements that need to be combined through the overall “outcome” of the World Conference: HFA, HFA2, the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, the “commitments”, and the political declaration. A possible approach could be for the “outcome” to consist in: a) political declaration; b) the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” resulting from the HFA and HFA2; and c) the stakeholders’ “commitments”.

The nature of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction: legal or not?

11. A few countries have called for the new framework to be legally binding, while others have either cautioned or opposed such an approach. Whereas these positions may appear in contradiction, indeed they are not.
12. The countries which do not favor a legally binding agreement, have not challenged a possible legal nature of the obligation to reduce disaster risk. They have “simply” challenged the added value and usefulness of a legally binding international agreement in this area, since the process to develop a legally binding agreement may render disaster risk reduction contentious and water down its guidance in the furtherance of an acceptable common minimum denominator.
13. Moreover, the current process to develop HFA2 is not structured as a process to develop a legally binding agreement, and a change of the process at this stage would be complex and problematic, likely not feasible within the timeframe at disposal, and thus highly likely to be not desirable nor wanted.
14. Furthermore, as the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” would be the result of HFA and HFA2, even if HFA2 could become a legally binding agreement, the overall framework would not automatically acquire this nature, as HFA is not a legally binding agreement. Therefore, a uniquely “hybrid” “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” would create more accountability problems and grey areas than solutions.
15. A possible and practical point of synthesis of these two apparently different positions (the need to define an obligation to reduce disaster risk; and the need for a flexible instrument) could be to have a non-legally binding instrument which recalls that there is already an obligation for states to reduce disaster risk and to cooperate to this aim – as identified by the UN International Law Commission based on existing states’ practice – and that states are already taking some measures to honor this obligation. Moreover, it could be recalled that a number of international legally binding agreements contain provisions which are instrumental to reduce disaster risk.

16. Therefore, it may be sufficient to recall in HFA2 and in the political declaration that the work to reduce disaster risk is underpinned by the principles and obligations already existing in other relevant legal instruments and states' practice.

Timeframe

17. A specific timeframe has not been suggested by countries, a part from one case indicating "2030". At the same time, comments point to the complexity of implementing DRR across all sectors and the need to extend and continue HFA, as 10 years are just not enough.
18. Therefore, it is possible to derive the intention for a post-2015 framework that looks at least into the next 20 years. Its content may be formulated in a more specific manner for the short term, and more flexibly for the longer term. The monitoring, including the mechanism, targets and indicators as well as periodicity for reporting, should be trimmed accordingly.
19. The monitoring could be considered as instrumental to a more formal periodic review that could take place every 4/5 years, and in synch with, and connected to, the review of the post-2015 sustainable development paradigm by relevant UN governance bodies (ECOSOC and High Level Political Forum).

Considerations on HFA2 content

20. In considering the content of HFA2, the consultations have pointed to two main areas:
a) modalities for implementation and follow-up, and b) substantive questions.

a) Modalities for Implementation and Follow-up

21. There is a strong convergence on the need to define measurable targets and indicators, and to institutionalize the monitoring system at international, national and local levels. This opens the question of how to manage the development of such type of targets and indicators, and what guidance HFA2 can and need to provide.
22. Countries have also pointed to the need for integration of goals of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA+HFA2) and those of other post-2015 frameworks, especially for the future sustainable development paradigm.
23. In light of above, it may be derived the need for HFA2 to determine targets and indicators that, while standing alone, could also be measured and integrated into a wider measurement system for sustainable development. In addition, HFA2 may provide some guidance on how countries could develop their national and local targets and indicators, and monitoring mechanisms. The guidance of HFA2 in this

respect is important to ensure some coherence across countries and thus to facilitate further transboundary and regional cooperation.

24. Moreover, the expressed request that targets and indicators be mutually reinforcing with those of other post-2015 frameworks, also seems to call for the need to ensure that a periodic review mechanism for the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction” be developed and integrated in those foreseen by the UN governance bodies for the post-2015 sustainable development paradigm.
25. Furthermore, the development of targets and indicators for HFA2 requires implicitly the revision of those currently used for HFA in order to ensure the development of an integrated system of targets, indicators and monitoring mechanism for the “post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction”, which is HFA+HFA2. In practical terms, likely there will not be a need to develop a new mechanism for monitoring of implementation, and indeed an upgrade and review of the current HFA Monitor may suffice.
26. Lastly, the question of implementation and follow-up connects to the question of “commitments” which is increasingly raised. The process to develop the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction seems to positively depart from, and improve the system under, the HFA which was mainly focused on outlining some duties for some stakeholders. The formula of “commitments”, to be intended not as a legally binding duty, but as the formulation of concrete and possible actions to be carried out by stakeholders, and as an expression of leadership, would provide a very solid basis for implementation, with an emerging understanding on and indication of how all stakeholders would need to work together.
27. The “commitments”, technically, would not need to be part of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, and thus “negotiated” as part of the intergovernmental process; indeed, they could be statements elaborated by stakeholders groups which could be captured in a package called “stakeholders’ commitments” as part of the overall outcome of the Conference, and recognized for their value in guiding implementation and cooperation in the political declaration of the Conference. The value of the commitments will be to catalyze and inspire further action by other individuals, groups, organizations, networks, etc, who were not at the Conference.
28. Moreover, the consultations have called for a strong participation by civil society, science, local authorities, local communities, media, business, and others in the development and implementation of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The expression of “commitments” by all stakeholders and the integration of the commitments into the Conference’s overall outcome may be considered as a practical way to implement the call of the consultations.

29. Finally, to ensure implementation countries have called for a more structured and better defined mobilization of resources at international and national levels for disaster risk reduction, with reference made to accessing existing climate change funding, and other possible funds as an implementation of an integrated vision in managing disaster risk in the context of sustainable development, climate change, and environmental protection.

b) Substantive questions

30. The guidance that countries have provided concerning substantive questions might be grouped as “general” and “specific”, depending on their scope and focus.

○ General Guidance

31. There is convergence on the fact that the core elements of HFA should be preserved and reinforced and that the five priority areas for action should be retained. This implies that HFA2 does not need to address the same questions which are already addressed under HFA, whose implementation will continue, albeit possibly renewed in targets and indicators.

32. HFA2 will need to build practically on areas requiring further development or elaboration since the Kobe Conference in 2005. It should concentrate upon formerly abandoned and neglected elements of the HFA. Overall, HFA2 also can focus on capacity development.

33. The guidance of HFA2 needs to be flexible and usable by the range of situations that countries and local communities find themselves in – it needs to be usable by more and less developed countries, and as such commensurate to the realities and needs of countries. In this context, it could provide different starting points and different choices. HFA2 should be a framework that is flexible and adaptable to all realities, and recognizes the different levels of vulnerability amongst society, thus resulting in inclusive disaster risk reduction.

34. HFA2 needs to be instrumental to address and protect vulnerable and marginalized groups and ensure the realization of their rights.

35. While being practical, and specific, HFA2 may not be conceived as being directed to specific audiences, like local leaders, women or children. A certain degree of pragmatism would be advisable: the text should address the parties that should be accountable.

○ Specific Guidance

36. HFA 2 should address the following questions:

- Articulate measures to integrate climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development (this seems to be the most political and important request: the integration of agendas). This point is also strongly related to the request for guidance concerning the integration of diverse stakeholders' knowledge into decision making and action, including on investments;
 - Provide a vision for risk management governance and this is also connected to the above-mentioned point;
 - Clearly extend the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to technological and manmade hazards;
 - Elaborate on tackling extensive risk;
 - Focus on underlying risk factors;
37. Some other points made are not new, but it seems that there is a call to place more emphasis on them in the next phase:
- A strong call to keep strengthening early warning systems – this would also be instrumental to addressing transboundary questions and challenges;
 - Guidance for the further development of policies and tools for risk assessments, which need to make a better use of social sciences to understand risk perceptions and related behaviors;
38. Finally, in the context of future policy development, it needs to be considered that an increasing number of countries in Africa is raising the point of integrating into risk management frameworks the questions of conflict, gender-based violence, and landmines. Some has raised the question of sanctions.

Role of UNISDR

39. Countries have given indications, directly or indirectly, concerning areas UNISDR may focus its work on in discharging its mandated functions and supporting the future work on disaster risk reduction. They also have pointed to the need to strengthen UNISDR.
40. Three main areas of focus emerge: supporting international cooperation, especially at regional level, information and knowledge management, and advocacy, policy development and technical cooperation.

Supporting international cooperation

41. Countries have indicated the need to strengthen international cooperation mechanisms. Particular emphasis was placed on the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction, and the cooperation of national platforms at regional and global levels. Regional platforms should more and more support joint planning and implementation.

42. The mechanisms should mobilize technical and financial support, especially for countries with particularly limited progress; support the sharing of implementation progress, including successes, challenges and lessons learned; facilitate the obtaining and use of high-tech ICT for disaster risk assessment and reduction.
43. The cooperation frameworks and working modalities should be developed not only based on geographical criteria, but also on similitude in challenges, risk and characteristics.

Information and knowledge management

44. Information and knowledge management is instrumental to support international cooperation. Countries have placed emphasis on systems capacity development to enable exchange of lessons learnt and good practices, and support decision making.
45. The need for the systems to support education and training of experts and non experts was underscored.

Advocacy, policy development and technical cooperation

46. Countries have requested guidance on how to practically integrate disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, environmental protection and sustainable development.
47. Countries have also asked for the development of common methodologies and standards to improve the quality of risk reduction programmes, including assessments, and of monitoring and reporting of disaster and disaster risk at national and international levels.
48. The further development of (policy) options for effective disaster risk reduction financing, including of adequate funding mechanisms, at national and international levels is in high need.
49. Continued support to local authorities and communities through the development of action oriented guidance is also requested.