

**Minutes
of the
4th Meeting of the MENA DRR Network
(UNISDR Premises, Cairo, 25 February 2014)**

UNISDR convened the third meeting of the MENA DRR Network gathering regional agencies working in MENA region for information exchange and joint planning of DRR related activities in the region.

Following the welcome words of UNISDR ROAS (Lars Bernd), participants introduced themselves shortly and adopted the agenda of the meeting.

The group discussed the following issues:

Progress made from the last meeting

Participants noted the following updates on progress presented by UNISDR:

- The **TOR for the MENA DRR Network** were **adopted** in December 2013 and **shared with network members**.
- The **Report of the Post-2015 framework for DRR inter-agency consultation** held on 23 October 2013 has been **finalised and shared with agencies**. According to decision taken at the last meeting, UNISDR will not share it through PreventionWeb, where the meeting is referenced. Instead the report has been shared with UNISDR management.
- The **compilation of agency profiles** for a regional “*DRR agency compendium*” has not advanced since the last meeting. UNISDR has not received any additional profiles since. UNISDR gently reminded all agency focal points, who have not done so, to **kindly submit their agency profile** based on the shared template **ASAP** to recognise the work already done by others (ESCWA, Habitat, IFRC, IOM, Save the children, UNISDR, World Vision) and to avoid jeopardising publication of the compendium before the upcoming Regional Platform in June this year.
- **Membership expansion:** UNISDR welcomed interest by further partners to join the MENA DRR Network (UNESCO and Action Contre la Faim participated for the first time, EU has been contacted). UNISDR promised to continue reaching out to include other members while encouraging other Network members to propose also further agencies to participate. It was proposed to specifically invite also UNHCR and to explore the potential of inviting regional donors both traditional and non-traditional (corporate sector, private sector and oil and energy sector).

Update on the way forward towards the 3rd World Conference on DRR and adoption of the Post-2015 Framework for DRR (“HFA+”)

UNISDR delivered a presentation on the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/211 on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and main aspects included in the SRSG paper on “*Proposed Elements for Consideration in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR*”. Both documents trace the way forward for the coming months “towards 2015” and propose main substantive inputs to define the post-2015 framework for DRR to be adopted at the 3rd World Conference on DRR in Sendai, Japan (14-18 March 2015). The presentation allowed sharing the importance conveyed through the GA resolution to regional consultations on the HFA and an updated (or “drilled down”) regional position to be developed for a post-HFA framework in particular at upcoming Regional Platforms. This included a briefing on the objectives and expected outcomes of forthcoming Regional Platforms according to the General Assembly Resolution.

A longer exchange ensued on the so-called “voluntary commitments” for the post-HFA framework to be announced in Sendai. Several interlocutors expressed their perception that voluntary commitments were not enough and the new framework should be legally binding. They voiced their frustration that the Arab Strategy

for DRR 2020 was not yet sufficiently implemented neither at regional nor national level. With regard to the existing commitments (incl. the *Ten Essentials*, the *Five essentials for business*, others made at the 2009 Global Platform, and regional commitments as the Aqaba declaration on DRR in cities to name a few), OCHA requested UNISDR to provide an overview and share it with ISDR agencies to reflect and engage with constituencies in a debate on what could be put forward in 2015.

Update on HFA+ consultations led by the Children in a Changing Climate Coalition in Arab States

Kathlyn Sumaylo, UNICEF Amman (via Skype), Martina Salvatore (IOM Cairo) and Soso Baghasvili (Save the children, Georgia, via Skype) briefed on progress in consulting youth and children on their perceived risks and disasters and related suggestions towards a post-2015 framework for DRR. Enclosed PPT provides further details on the covered countries and progress.

The initiative was widely appreciated by MENA DRR Network members, and UNESCO and WHO expressed their interest to contribute to these consultations in several MENA countries and possibly at the Regional Platform special session for youth. WHO suggested taking up the dimension of high youth disability (referring to Libya as a dramatic example) and malnutrition (referring to Sudan) in those consultations.

During the discussion, Save the children mentioned that consultations will also highlight the conflict dimension, adopting an all hazard approach, while the post-2015 DRR framework will be addressed through specific questions put forward to children.

Coalition members also informed that consultation will be documented through various communication means, including 2-3 key stories to be developed after each country consultation and a regional outcome leaflet and possibly a short video documentary presented during the Regional Platform. It is also planned to involve established media, as for example Al-Jazeera, to share further information on the topic of DRR and youth. Coalition members asked other MENA DRR Network agencies to support their work in particular in terms of dissemination of consultation results (FP to contact: UNICEF).

UNESCO informed about their work with teachers (ToT) on risk aspects including availability of an educational kit on risks, and related facilitation guide in several languages.

UNISDR highly commended the coalition members for their proactive engagement and consultations culminating in the 2nd session of the Arab Conference for DRR/ Arab Regional Platform.

2nd Arab Conference for DRR/ 2nd Arab Regional Platform

The subsequent session allowed UNISDR to present background, plans, including objectives, expected outcomes, zero draft agenda and information on modalities for participation at the 2nd Arab Conference for DRR/ 2nd Arab Regional Platform taking place 9-12 June 2014 in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Ensuing exchange helped to clarify outstanding issues with regard to the venue and particularly the role and expectations of UNISDR vis-à-vis MENA DRR Network members to contribute to this main regional ISDR event in the lead up to the 2015 World Conference and beforehand related Preparatory Committee sessions taking place in Geneva in July and November 2014. UNISDR asked participating agencies to express their interest (commitments) for their substantive participation in the Regional Platform. In this regard, UNISDR referred to and praised the stance taken by the Changing in a Changing Climate Coalition in the lead-up to the conference and for organisation of a special event on youth and DRR at the Sharm-El-Sheikh conference. UNISDR invited participating agencies to take leadership in (co-)organising or contributing with resource persons to main session and side events, market place booths and other support to finance delegates from various sectors and constituencies to allow their participation in meeting, as direct reflection of those agencies policies and plans

for DRR as expressed through various documents and good collaboration as part of the ISDR inter-agency group and the MENA DRR Network in the region. An additional aspect mentioned was the planned organisation by UNISDR of a distinct session at the Regional Platform on the roll-out and ISDR agency support to country teams and countries following adoption of the UN Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience by the CEB/HLCF in April 2013.

To guide discussions, UNISDR led through enclosed PowerPoint Presentation and shared a draft guidance note for session organisers for in situ consultation before finalisation.

Participants discussed the agenda and expressed their perception on what should be included (and not) in the Regional Platform:

- Participants reacted positively to UNISDR's proposed conference theme and proposals to address in particular the drought and desertification thematic.
- UNEP mentioned the need to work further on knowledge management and risk assessments, which need to be expanded. The challenge of capacity building should be addressed, including its link to the governance structure on DRR.
- UNESCO asked for a DRR science network to be established. Also participants called for further use of IT solutions to DRR.
- IOM expressed interest to feature more prominently the link between disaster/ disaster risk and migration.
- Habitat suggested "simplifying" the proposed agenda and referred in this regard to the agenda of the 2016 Habitat Conference on Urban Sustainable Development. This aspect was echoed by WHO, who called to avoid parallel sessions (and praised in this regard the first session of the Regional Platform). This applies particularly for official statements.
- UNDP called for further focus on investment and suggested a session on "*Challenges for DRR funding and how to overcome them*", which could involve good practices to learn from other regions. Qudsia Huda of WHO mentioned contacts she has to oil companies and Banks, which could contribute to a proposed private sector session at the conference.
- Zubair Murshed advised that Hyogo Focal points' role should be highlighted to the conference audience.
- ACF proposed that the link between DRR and conflict should be tabled in Sharm-el-Sheikh; also the aspect of safety and security should be addressed.
- OCHA called for a session on early warning systems, which were almost non-existent in the region. Also it was suggested to include the Gulf Cooperation Council's Emergency Management Centre in the RP.
- WHO requested organisation of a session on "Awareness and advocacy for DRR". A session should focus on best practices in the region, in combination with best practices from other regions.
- A further request was made to change the title of suggested "women consultation on DRR" to become "Gender DRR consultations".

It was agreed that agencies can and as appropriate should combine efforts around a particular theme where they provide a joint contribution (For example if mobility/migration was featured, WHO can address the health aspect therein, which would be more tangible).

Following the general debate expressions of interest to contribute to the Regional Platform were shared:

- **ACF** voiced its interest in contributing to the session on drought and climate change, as they also have ACSAD as a partner. ACF also endorsed the risk assessment/early warning system importance and suggested to participate in a session if these topics come forward.
- **IOM** requested to have a session on DRR and mobility and will take the lead to develop it
- **OCHA** is committed to organize a session related to preparedness for DRR foreseeing consultations with stakeholders.
- **UNDP** expressed interest to organize an event around urban risk.

- **WHO** confirmed commitment to launch a “Health Platform for DRR” and will share further details in due course

Further expressions of interest were made beforehand by:

- **IFRC:** The MENA Zone office will be heavily engaged and leading the coordination within the RCRC Movement for the participation in the Conference and we will be closely coordinating with all stakeholders. IFRC is also in the process of collecting from National Societies across the world including MENA their key messages with regards to the Proposed Elements for Consideration in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR.
- **ESCWA:** ESCWA will present results of its projects “Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region”, which included partnership with UNISDR on developing disaster loss database in Tunisia and updating existing ones.
- **WFP** will lead with possibly support by **ACSAD, FAO, IPCC** development of a main session on drought and climate change and DRR
- **World Vision** plans to organize a side event on “*DRR in Somalia: Building Resilience by Linking Community-Based Early Warning Systems to Informal Safety Nets*”. The session will be based on the work and experience gained by the Somalia Resilience Program (SomReP), a multi-year effort by seven leading NGOs to tackle the challenge of recurrent droughts—and the chronic vulnerability that results—among pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, and peri-urban households across Somalia. The program is designed to address communities’ unique needs toward building resilient livelihoods, and is implemented by consortium members Oxfam, DRC, COOPI, CARE, ADRA, WVI and ACF. SomReP’s DRR approach is built around a community-based early warning system which drives early action at the community. This proposed side event will outline SomReP’s innovative approach, share early lessons emerging, and provide a forum for discussion on other DRR approaches being tried in Somalia.
- **World Vision** also shared its commitment for participation of its Global Director of DRR to sit on an expert panel, with regard to participation in the CCCC youth event and to host another event on HFA priority 2 and 4 across the ARAB states (OpT, Lebanon and Somalia)
- **WB/UNISDR:** Both agencies are in contact to host an disaster risk and impact evidence session (Desinventar, CARAD/ MAPRA)
- **UNISDR:** NP Forum

UNEP requested UNISDR to propose a deadline for submission of proposals to (co-)organise sessions and otherwise contribute to the Regional Platform (Dr. Adel Abdelkader suggested a 15-days deadline).

UNISDR thanked participants for their comments and expressed commitment to organize or contribute to RP events, which now have to be further substantiated with the preparation of background papers/ session outlines. UNISDR will share a related guidance note in due course. UNISDR requested all other agencies, which have not yet proposed their support to do so ASAP. At this stage these expressions should be informal by email.

Agency updates

- **IOM** shared information on its pilot project on “***Assessment and Strategy Development to Respond to Sea Level Rise on Human Mobility in Abu Qir, Egypt***” through a new CD-ROM and “***IOM’s key advocacy messages on Mobility & Disaster Risk***”
- **IFRC:** IFRC could not attend the meeting due to previous engagements, but shared the following updates y email prior to the meeting:
 1. IFRC is undertaking a **mapping activity on all DRR and climate change related projects** that have been implemented in 2013 by Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies in MENA Zone. Once all the data is collected, IFRC will generate a visual map that will showcase RCRC DRR activities in MENA Zone, and

will share it with the MENA DRR Network and other partners, hopefully before end of March. In this perspective, **IFRC suggested for the MENA DRR Network to do a mapping on funding and financial opportunities/partnerships for DRR in MENA Zone.** Moreover, **IFRC inquired whether a mapping on scientific and research facilities engaged in DRR in MENA Zone is available.** In IFRC's view, this is an important resource that, as humanitarian actors, they are not tapping into and constitutes a pivotal component for an enhanced design and greater impact of DRR projects.

2. IFRC announced that **several reports on DRR projects implemented in 2013** in MENA are being finalized at the moment and **will be shared.**
3. An **Urban DRR/DM workshop** was **held in December in Beirut** and was attended by 4 NS (Egypt, Lebanon, Iran and Morocco), American RC, Austrian RC, British RC (through the web), the GDPC (Global Disaster Preparedness Center), UNISDR and AUB. The report is enclosed.
4. Following the Urban DRR workshop in Beirut, an **Urban DRR pilot study** was **launched in January 2014 in Tehran, Iran.** A one-day workshop was held on January 26 with the Iranian Red Crescent, Universities, municipality, emergency committees, and other concerned stakeholders in Tehran (total of 50 participants) where every institution presented their work, whether operationally or research-wise, **on hazards threatening the city of Tehran, capacities that have been built, and recommendations for the future.** Upon the recommendations collected, an **operational plan is being devised for the pilot study** that will be conducted through September 2014. It is to be noted that 5 pilot studies are being conducted across the world in the 5 zones, each stressing on a particular side of Urban DRR/DM. Once all reports of the studies are finalized, **a global document will be shared by the beginning of 2015.**
5. After global consultations in 2013, the **IFRC's Community Safety and Resilience Framework has been revised** and will be launched during the **RCRC Global Resilience Meeting** that will be held in Columbia tentatively in October 2014.

- **UNISDR** referred to its earlier communication on the launch of the **2013-15 HFA Reporting Cycle**, in which it requested agency support to HFA Focal points for completing the survey (Lars Bernd's email). The period of this cycle is 1 January 2014 – 13 March 2015 for national reports. Interim reports are expected by 30 April 2014 in Arab States to inform the preparation of a Regional Report being compiled in May 2014 to be ready for the RP. UNISDR informed that in the previous cycle 2011-13, 13 countries prepared country reports (including all six French-speaking Arab countries) and this led to the preparation of the Regional Report shared at the first Regional Platform in Aqaba. Beyond the on-going 2-reporting, there will be a further Regional Synthesis Report for the Third World Conference on DRR as summary of reports covering the HFA period 2005-2015.

Presentation on "The Arab Region: Atlas of Our Changing Environment"

Dr. Adel Abdelkader from UNEP presented the UNEP/ Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI) prepared Atlas of our Changing Environment published in December 2013. The Atlas brings to light stories of environmental change through images showing visual evidence of changes taking place in the land, water and atmosphere, and covering trans-boundary issues like river basins, trans-boundary conservation areas and pollutants.

The presentation was highly appreciated and several agencies requested UNEP to provide them with copies of the Atlas, which was praised for its visualization of change. OCHA requested how this information will serve country activities for DRR, to which UNEP suggested continued exchanges with countries to regularly update information provided for the compilation of the report, which could be part of a regional open knowledge management initiative.

Wrap-up and next steps

UNISDR summarised the major issues of discussion and participants conclude as next steps to focus on:

1. **UNISDR to compile and share a list of existing HFA related voluntary commitments and share with ISDR agencies** to support discussions and preparation of new commitments for the post-2015 era.
2. **UNISDR to share full contact details of HFA FPs with MENA DRR Network members** to facilitate support to the compilation of national HFA reports and other regional related activities (identification of resource persons for side events, etc.)
3. **Compendium of agency profiles for publication:** Those agencies which have not done so yet are asked to submit their DRR profile ASAP.
4. UNISDR to share **guidance note for preparation of events at the Regional Platforms**, which will be followed by agencies to substantiate their interest in contributing to the RP.
5. In the meantime **agencies, which have not done so to share informally details of their commitment to contribute substantially to the Regional Platform.**
6. Offline discussion will be held between UNICEF and WHO, UNESCO on possibility of joining the campaign on DRR and children
7. UNISDR requests network members to comment on **IFRC's requests and proposals** by email and to copy to the group.

The next MENA DRR Network meeting is planned to take place at the Regional Platform (Sharm-el-Sheikh, 9 June 2014). Additional meetings may be called among Cairo-based agencies to prepare for the Platform, where non-Cairo resident agencies can call in. Members also noted with thanks the proposal by IFRC expressed by email to host the next MENA DRR Network meeting in Beirut, which will be taken into account for subsequent meetings.

LB, 10 March 14

Annex: Participants List

	Focal Point	Organization	Title	Personal contact info
1.	Lucia Oliveira	Action Contre la Faim (ACF)	Country Director Egypt	loliveira@ey.acfspain.org
2.	Martina Salvatore	IOM MENA Regional Office – Cairo, Egypt		msalvatore@iom.int
3.	Rana Jaber	IOM MENA Regional Office – Cairo, Egypt	Regional Emergency & Post Crises Specialist	RJABER@iom.int
4.	Abdelqader Abuawad	OCHA - Regional Office for the Middle East And North Africa (ROMENA), Cairo	Regional Disaster Response Adviser	abuawad1@un.org
5.	Soso Bagashvili	Save the Children Georgia	Disaster Risk Reduction & Emergency Preparedness Senior Specialist Humanitarian Response	sbagashvili@savechildren.org
6.	Zubair Murshed	UNDP Regional Centre	Regional DRR Adviser	Zubair.murshed@undp.org
7.	Dr. Adel Abdelkader	UNEP Bahrain	Regional Coordinator Early Warning and Assessment, West Asia, UNEP	adel.abdelkader@unep.org
8.	Mohamed Al-Aawah	UNESCO	Programme Specialist Ecology & Earth Science Programme UNESCO (Cairo) Regional Bureau for Science in the Arab States	m.alaawah@unesco.org
9.	Katja Schaefer	UN-Habitat	Humanitarian Settlements Officer, ROAS	Katja.schaefer@unhabitat.org
10.	Kathlyn “Kissy” Sumaylo	UNICEF Regional Office Amman	DRR consultant	ksumaylo@unicef.org
11.	Dr. Qudsia Huda	WHO Regional / EHA, Cairo	Regional Adviser Health Emergency Risk Management Health Security and Regulations	hudaq@who.int
12.	Lars Bernd	UNISDR Regional Office for Arab States	Regional Programme Officer	bernd@un.org
13.	Fadi Jannan	UNISDR Regional Office for Arab States	Regional Programme Officer	jannan@un.org