Arab Region synthesis report: Consultations on the post - 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

UNISDR
The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

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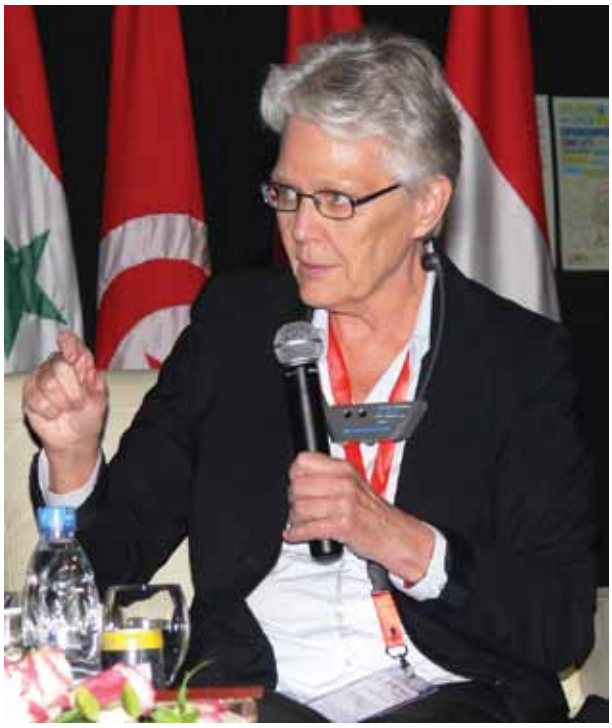
Introduction:

Since 2012, series of consultations on the post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) took place in the Arab region at the local, national, and regional levels. These consultations were, in most cases, organized by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Regional Office for Arab States (UNISDR), in cooperation with other national, regional and international partners. Consultations on post-2015 focused on identifying the challenges and the priority concerns with respect to disaster risk reduction in the Arab region. These local, national and regional consultations meetings provided a platform for multi-stakeholders dialogues on emerging disaster risk issues and highlighted challenges faced and achievements made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Through this consultative process several good practices and successful experiences were identified and shared by stakeholders focusing on risk prevention measures carried out by local authorities, municipalities, national governments, as well as non-governmental organization and civil society.

The Arab region's consultations were held in Lebanon (Two meetings, one with the National Committee for Hyogo Framework for Action on 4/6/2012, and the other with the municipalities on 18/12/2013), and national consultations in Algeria (17/02/2013), Comoros (30/3/2013) and Tunisia (27-28/12/2013), in addition to the first Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Aqaba 19-21/3/2013), the Second Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sharm El Sheikh 14-16/9/2014), and the regional workshop on disaster risk reduction (League of Arab states Headquarters/ Cairo 24-25/11/2013). Some Arab countries contributed to the Mediterranean workshop on resilience in urban areas (Lisbon 15-19/10/2012). The Middle East and North Africa Network for DRR, which involves international organizations supporting DRR in the Arab region, held its consultation on post-2015 as well in Cairo on 23/10/2013.



The head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlstrom, at the opening of the 2nd Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

This paper was prepared to summarize and analyze the challenges of disaster risks in the Arab region and to provide recommendations for post-2015 DRR framework in light of the results of the different consultations referred to above and other reports and studies of relevance on the Arab region. The report reviews examples of disaster risks and the challenges facing disaster reduction, and outlines an Arab vision on post-2015 DRR framework.

It should be noted that progress on implementing Hyogo Framework for Action and disaster risk reduction by Arab states is reflected in a different synthesis report on Arab Region progress in implementing HFA 2005-2015, which builds on the HFA national progress reports submitted by Arab countries.

First: Disaster Risk in the Arab region

The total population of the Arab region in 2012 was about 361 million people living in arid and semi-arid lands, where 90% of the population lives on 4% of the total area of the 1.4 billion hectares region. In this region, where the population annual growth rate is among the highest in the world, nearly 70% of the population of the region lives in low-lying coastal areas, and more than 57% of the population lives in urban areas (big cities and small towns). This percentage increases in some Arab countries to more than 80% of the total population. Economic and human development activities are usually concentrated in the urban areas because of the opportunities they offer in employment, education, health, utilities, communications, transportation, commerce, and tourism. Additionally, a number of Arab towns and cities are home to some of the world's important cultural heritage sites. The political and security conditions prevailing in several Arab countries have significantly impacted livelihoods, development, infrastructure, investments and productivity.

Different parts of the Arab region are exposed to geological hazards (e.g. earthquakes and landslides) and to hydro-meteorological hazards (e.g. drought, sand storms, floods, and snow storms, extreme events in temperatures, forest fires, and cyclones). The disasters taking place in the Arab region are not sudden events as they occur when natural hazards are coupled with high exposure and vulnerability, which in turn is linked to development process and its consequences including environmental degradation and accelerated, unplanned urban growth in high-risk areas. National and local management and governance systems are linked to the ability to prepare, manage and recover from disaster events. Disaster losses are often increased due to lack of information and data on risks, lack of resources, weakness or failure of the early warning systems and the fragility of the infrastructure.

The rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, water scarcity, the changing demographics and the migration trends, in addition to risks associated with the population displacement, the disease outbreaks, pandemic influenza, and ongoing conflicts and turmoil in the Arab region present multifaceted challenges on a larger scale than ever before, which have a negative impact on the capabilities of the Arab countries to manage and reduce disaster risk. However, this multi-dimensional and intense nature of risk in the region offers and an opportunity to address disaster risk reduction in a comprehensive approach integrated with sustainable development plans, efforts and investments.

The pace of environmental change in the Arab region is faster than it is in the rest of the world due to rapidly growing population coupled with increasing environmental pressures, the degradation of marine and coastal areas, the change in the water balance, the shrinking of water basins, the loss of habitat and the effects of climate change.

Water scarcity is a major challenge for 19 of the 22 Arab countries while desertification affects 17 countries and makes the already limited arable territories exposed to more danger, noting that only 14.5% of the total area of the Arab region is arable. Global records on disaster losses indicate that between 1980 and 2008, more than 37 million people were affected by droughts, earthquakes, floods, and storms, and the Arab economy endured losses estimated at 20 billion dollars.

While the absolute number of disasters worldwide has almost doubled since 1980, the average number of disaster events has almost tripled during the same period in the Arab region. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events also increased. The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011 stated that while the risk of flood mortality in the world continues to drop since 2000, it still increases in the Arab region. The percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) at risk due to floods has tripled between the period of 1970-1979 and the period of 2000-2009.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the region experiences an annual increase in average temperature, the summer has become hotter and drier, and at the same time the rainfall has decreased leading to a longer and more intense drought. Therefore, the risk of drought is one of the major factors in the region, which affects GDP, especially agricultural production on a regular basis. Seismic activities

also pose significant risk in the Arab region. The great fault that extends from East Africa to Turkey, and crosses a number of Arab countries, puts some countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria) at high risk of earthquakes. Likewise, some countries in the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) are also exposed to seismic risk.

Second: the pressing challenges and recommendations on disaster risk reduction in the Arab region

There are several challenges impeding progress on disaster risk reduction in Arab countries. Some of these challenges contribute to creation of risk, increasing risk and undermining resilience building. Key challenges are summarized below with highlights of recommendations to overcome these challenges.

1. Translating declared political commitment and support for disaster risk reduction into concrete action and effective implementation

Arab countries have committed to the implementation and follow-up on Hyogo Framework for Action. The League of Arab States, through the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment, took concrete measures toward increasing the awareness and commitment to disaster risk reduction, the integration of the disaster risk reduction measures in the regional policies for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change. The Ministerial council also called for the development of coordination and management mechanisms for DRR. The Arab strategy for disaster risk reduction 2020 was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment in 2010, and approved by the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States at its session in September 2011. It was also adopted by Heads of States Summit in Baghdad in March 2012, and recently, the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment adopted in June 2014 the Framework Plan of Action for the implementation of the Arab strategy with a specific time frame and activities. In early 2013, the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States announced its commitment to develop a road map to reduce disaster risks. The Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States called for a strong regional commitment toward developing a strategy for disaster risk reduction to enhance the capacity of nations and individuals to confront the risks of natural hazards.

At the national level, and despite declarations of some Arab countries on the development of national platforms for DRR (or national coordination mechanisms for disaster management), most of them have not yet develop national plans for DRR. Legislative assemblies in the region showed little interest in disaster risk reduction, hence there is a lack of appropriate legislative frameworks that support translation of commitments and declarations into actions. Implementation mechanisms are either weak or slowly progressing, lacking dedicated budgets at national and local level for disasters risk reduction. In most of Arab countries, if not all, there is no national institution in charge of disaster risk reduction, which has capacity and potential for the implementation of programs, and the necessary authority to make decisions and identify the roles and responsibilities for disaster risk reduction at all levels. The national institutional mechanisms are important to promote accountability from community level upward to national authority and decision makers. It is to be noted though that the security and political conditions prevailing in the region have impacted a progressive implementation on DRR in many countries.

Declarations of political commitments need to supported by strong political will and strong and effective institutional basis for DRR within a national DRR mechanism that is governed by accountability, transparency, clear roles and responsibilities, and identified resources to support implementation. Enhancing and promoting decentralization and good governance will effectively contribute to translating commitments to measurable actions on DRR.

2. Weak management of disaster risk reduction

Several Arab countries face institutional challenges and gaps that affect the planning, management and implementation of disaster risk reduction. These management challenges include lack of technical skills, relevant experience, and human, logistical and financial resources to plan and implement disaster risk reduction measures. Weak institu-

tional frameworks for preparedness and response to emergencies; weak institutional structures to enforce policies, laws and regulations; and a high degree of centralization in decision-making, which undermines the local authority, all hinder the local participation in decision-making processes, and weakens the relationship between citizens and the local government.

The lack of data, information, and mapping tools on vulnerability, hazard exposure and risk add to the challenges facing effective disaster risk management. The inconsistency of the flow of information between the local and national institutions and sectors; the lack of a sound and comprehensive framework to monitor and evaluate scenarios; the lack of coordination at all regional- national, national- national, and national- local levels; and the absence of a framework for a public policy to reduce the risk of disasters, are factors that weaken effective implementation of DRR plans and activities.

Effective management and implementation of disaster risk reduction requires the establishment of a multi-stakeholder mechanism that is empowered and well-resourced to carry out DRR functions and responsibilities. Strengthening capacities of national and local institutions in charge of planning, managing or implementing disaster risk reduction activities should be a priority. The capacity at the local level should be supported and enhanced to enable decentralized actions within the structure of the national framework and the multi-stakeholder national mechanism.

3. Negative impacts associated with climate change and the worsening of water security and food security

Most of the Arab region, as it was mentioned above, is located within the scope of the arid zones and drylands. The Arab region is the most water-scarce region in the world, and is one of the world's most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change including rising temperature, threatened coastal areas, intensification of drought and desertification, water scarcity, increase of groundwater's salinity, and the spread of epidemics, pests and diseases in an unprecedented manner. Climate change has become a reality in the Arab region, and it affects the lives of individuals and their livelihoods, and increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and related disasters, which affect both water security and food security in the region. Climate change threatens to exacerbate disaster risk and affect environmental, economic and political vulnerable conditions in the region, which in turn poses serious challenges to national and regional security as well as human security of the Arab citizen itself.

The Arab region has become drier, with drought becoming a common phenomenon that increases in frequency, intensity and duration. Recent studies indicate that the temperatures increasing has intensified the severity of the drought because it increases the evaporation, which in turn worsens the desertification, land degradation and poverty, and increases the frequency and severity of sand and dust storms. The region already witnesses the severe negative effects on water security and food security, and some estimates that agricultural output in the Arab region as a whole would be reduced by 21% by 2080, with a drop of up to 40% in parts of North Africa. Food production will not be the only one affected, but also all the four dimensions of food security: food availability, accessibility, stability, and use. The region currently imports 70% of its food at a mounting cost; the top nine importers of wheat in the world are from the Arab region; while Egypt is the largest importer of wheat in the world. Noting also that some of the most important food-exporting countries in the world have been hit by drought, which in turn will drastically impact food security in the Arab region.

Drought cannot be prevented, but learning to "live with drought" is doable. This is a real challenge for the Arab region and facing it comes through taking and implementing better policies and measures to reduce and manage drought risk. Drought risk management will help improving water security and food security through the development and implementation of integrated strategies and policies to prepare for drought, including through evaluating and determining drought risk and vulnerability factors, developing early warning systems, building national partnerships to manage drought and help local communities to be prepared for droughts in the future. Improved drought risk management policies will support the reduction of drought-related impacts on livelihoods and national economy. Policies could

include social safety nets, insurance schemes, special compensation programs, schemes for microfinance focused on the marginalized groups and farmers. It is important to also consider the application of scientific and technological tools to manage drought through the use of crop varieties resistant to drought, sustainable management of water, water productivity improvement, and the expansion of conservative agriculture that increases productivity and reduces carbon dioxide emissions at the same time in addition to building ecological production systems capable of confrontation in the marginal lands (integrated crop/ pasture/ livestock) using participatory community-based approach.

The 1st Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) brought together the key actors in DRR in March 2013 in Aqaba, Jordan.

Climate change is happening now and not in the distant future. The Arab region is currently experiencing its negative effects and already incurring losses due to climate-related disasters. It is time now to move from scientific warning that climate change associated impacts increase disaster risk to actually planning for and managing those climate related risks. Disaster risk reduction efforts should be integrated with the efforts to adapt to climate change to strengthen resilience. It is important to improve climate information services and strengthen the links between the departments of meteorology, agriculture, disaster risk reduction, and environment. There is a need for long-term strategies to address food security and nutrition in the context of climate change associated risks and in light of the limited water resources in the region. Improving the availability, accessibility and accuracy of climate data is instrumental to improving climate risk management.

An integrated and more coherent approach for climate change adaptation taking DRR into consideration will ensure prioritization of the most vulnerable populations, areas and sectors.

4. Urban growth and rapid urbanization that is not risk-sensitive

The Arab region is diverse in terms of GDP per capita, population distribution, literacy rates, poverty rates, resources availability and diversity, and quality and standards of services, etc. Population living in urban areas has grown by more than four times during the period 1970 - 2010, and will be doubled or more during the period 2010-2050. The Arab region is one of the most urbanized regions in the world with an increasing trend anticipating that by 2050 the population of the Arab region will reach 646 million inhabitants and the percentage of the urban population will increase to 68%. Rapid urban growth in the region is triggered by economic development, migration to oil-rich countries, drought, and conflict-induced displacement and migration.

Urban risk is a major concern in the region as big urban centres and mega cities are burdened by extreme poverty, slums, poor neighbourhoods, unemployment, and lack of basic services. Many urban areas, and not only the poor ones, are located in zones of high risk and are vulnerable to damage from floods, earthquakes, landslides and snowstorms.

Disaster risk in urban centers also threatens cultural heritage in the archaeological sites and the traditional old towns, which form a major part of the identity and the popular fabric in Arab countries. The provision of decent housing at affordable prices will remain a major challenge throughout the region, including the Gulf States. Although some Arab countries made good progress in managing informal settlements and slum areas through development and resettlement programs through partnerships between the public institutions and the private sector, however, there is a steady growth in the slums.

Young people, less than 25 years, constitute 53% of the demographics, and the unemployment rate increases among them, which intensifies the pressure on urban areas. Although the livelihoods in urban areas are relatively less dependent on natural

environment, yet the urban population will also be affected by the climate change and increased frequency of extreme events.

Majid Shangab during the Youth and Children Session at 2nd Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Flood risk is increasing in towns across the region because of concrete surfaces that do not absorb water, inadequate or clogging of drainage systems and the increased construction in low-lying areas in floodplains. It is likely that climate change will increase these events with more frequent and intense rainfall in areas traditionally known as dry land with dry climate. In addition, and in cities that have combined infrastructure for sewage and rainwater, there is risk for public health when wastewater contaminates flood water.

Around 70% of the population in the Arab region lives along its 37,000 km low-lying coastline, this exposes them to the risk of sea-level rise that can be disastrous for many of the coastal cities with high population density, and the economic, industrial and commercial centres including oil production facilities.

In this context, Arab cities need to strengthen their resilience to disasters. This could be achieved through the implementation of a number of measures in the framework of effective partnerships between public and private sectors and civil society to improve urban planning, service provision, the sustainability of Arab cities by improving the living conditions of the poor in the urban areas; and the expansion of urban development programmes that improve functional efficacy of Arab cities. More work needed on capacity building, improving transparency and accountability, enforcement of zoning and building codes, development of social housing at affordable prices away from high-risk zones, and ensuring a fair policy for land acquisition. There is also an urgent need to develop a simple construction law to be used in the informal construction, to ensure that if it cannot be stopped, then to be at least safer.

Promoting green architecture with the use of science and art will help achieve harmony and compatibility with the surrounding environment and improve the optimal use of resources, reduce negative impacts on the environment and contributes to disaster risk reduction. The Arab traditional architecture is a good example of green building and there are existing models that could be used as good practice examples.

To manage and reduce climate risk and associated impacted, early warning systems to identify, assess and control risks must be developed and strengthened; assessing vulnerability of critical infrastructure (with multi-hazard approach) is important and identification and zoning of high risk areas is necessary. Cities need to identify resilience-building measures and plan towards then with cost-benefit analysis and risk-sensitive planning.

5. Lack of accessible published scientific research and reviews from the region

Disaster risk related scientific studies and research are carried out in universities and scientific centres with focus on seismic activity, water scarcity, drought risk, land reclamation and agriculture, climate change impacts, sustainable development, and others. Some studies developed regionally but not necessarily reflected in international scientific reports or journals. This may be due to the fact that the majority of these reports are written in Arabic. For instance, in the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risk of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX), drought was not handled in a satisfactory manner, and its trends and future outlook were not analysed deeply

enough, both in the Arab region and the other regions due to the lack of evidence-based scientific research.

Research needs to be oriented towards vulnerability analysis and impact of disaster risk associated with climate change and natural hazards. There is a need to develop scientific research and technical tools for climate monitoring, hazards mapping, use of GIS and remote sensing tools, bridging gaps in national capacity building focusing on risk assessment and vulnerability assessment. It is important to encourage development of scientific evidence and the use of scientifically-tested traditional knowledge. Undertaking cost-benefit analysis with accurate and validated data will help improve understanding of the economics of disaster risk reduction for sustainable development.

The knowledge must be based on the documentation, recording and dissemination of available related studies, research and scientific reports addressing disaster risk reduction. It is important to strengthen the coordination and cooperation between scientific centres and universities within the Arab region with the relevant global research centres to develop early warning systems and bridge the gaps on information and data from the region for international research. This may be accomplished through the establishment of a regional mechanism for Arab scientists that targets the enhancement and participation of the academic and scientific communities, the mobilization of science and technology to support the measures of disaster risk reduction, and the building strong linkages between scientists and policy makers to ensure decisions and plans are based on the best available scientific evidence.

A significant positive step in this direction was the initiative of nine countries, which are Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Tunisia, to develop national databases for losses caused by disasters, and make them available to all public, private and governmental entities, which provides a better understanding of the real impact of natural hazard risks from the social and economic point of view and in terms of losses and damages. The United Arab Emirates and Comoros have begun the development of similar databases.

6. Absence of Risk Reduction Culture and Weak Engagement of Stakeholders

The culture of prevention and risk reduction remain limited but signs of progress began to develop in the region. Risk management tools used in other regions such as insurance and social protection are not yet available. Public awareness of the principle of safety varies from one country to another according to the applicable laws, the extent of their implementation, the governance mechanisms of risk, and the extent of community participation in the decision-making processes. The scarcity of audio-visual tools and media focus on risk reduction, contributes to the lack of public awareness and attention.

Insurance is one of the internationally established risk tools, but it is not applicable in the types of insurance offered by national insurance companies operating in the Arab region, so the awareness of the insurance sector has to be developed to change its approach and to study and apply some good experiences to insure against the effects of climate change on agricultural crops as applicable in some Arab countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. The social protection programs are almost non-existent, so there should be more emphasis on those programmes to enhance the capacity of communities to cope with disaster risks (learning from the experiences of some of the Latin American countries).

It is clear that there is still an urgent need to build a culture of safety, raise the awareness of officials and communities at large and demand a political commitment for prioritization of prevention measures to be undertaken by decision-makers to reduce disaster risk at all levels, and in particular, within local communities, and among local government leaders. It is crucial to provide the appropriate incentives to encourage the participation of all stakeholders and sectors in the country for improved engagement in planning and implementation.

The role of civil society and private sector is of utmost importance to support disaster risk reduction. Both groups need to be actively involved in disaster risk reduction. It is noticeable that the participation of civil society is weak because of the limitations associated with the resources and capacity. The private sector must also be mobilized to give attention

to the impact of disaster risk on their services and productivity. Risk assessment need to be integrated in feasibility studies and plans for investments, whether public or private investments, as much as environmental impact assessment has become a pre-requisite for new projects. Large corporations and enterprises should support strengthening the capacity of small and medium enterprises in risk assessment, risk management and risk reduction. Disaster risk management must be an integral part of the management of any investment project because it reduces the uncertainty, cuts the cost, and generates a value from risk reduction. Investment in risk management should be seen as an opportunity to enhance resilience, competitiveness and sustainability. The social responsibility of the private sector should be ensured and the development of partnerships with civil society to disaster risk management should be stimulated.

There is a need to attract new partners in order to change behaviours and perceptions towards risk, improve accountability and participation in building resilience and reducing disaster risk. Partnerships with financial institutions and professional associations is valuable as well as the engagement and participation of specific groups such as women, youth (Scout Movement) and parliamentarians; as well as paying due attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly those with special needs. The enhancement of awareness and knowledge of disaster risk reduction at all levels for all stakeholders is key to generate commitments and transform societies from the culture of coexistence with risks to a culture that is fully aware of risk, a culture of safety and disaster risk reduction.

7. Lack of financial resources for disaster risk reduction

The lack of available and dedicated funds is one of the main challenges for disaster risk reduction not only in the Arab region but worldwide. National budgets of the majority of the Arab countries do not include allocations for disaster risk reduction. Governments in the region are suffering from budget constraints, particularly in the low-income and least developed countries. However, disparity has another side as well. While the oil-rich countries have the financial resources to invest in initiatives to reduce disaster risk, countries that face financial challenges are more vulnerable to the damage from disaster risk due to the spread of slums, poor infrastructure, in addition to the limited participation of civil society organizations and the private sector in the activities for disaster risk reduction, thus leading to added stress on governments' budgets and resources made available for DRR.

However, it is noted that ministries do have allocations within their budgets that can be used for prevention and emergency situations, though on ad hoc basis and mostly accessible in emergencies only. Some of the municipalities participating in the campaign of "Making Cities Resilient" have been successful in attracting funding for crisis management and/ or disaster risk reduction through the development of practical projects to enhance the infrastructure or the development plans for adapting to climate change or enhancing early warning systems.

A key challenge that faces Arab countries is to systematically allocate a percentage of national budgets for disaster risk reduction, where each related ministry have a share of, in addition to what is allocated to the local level. Additionally, the mobilization of funding itself is a challenge that could be overcome by engaging private sector to become a strategic partner that promotes investment and financing mechanisms to reduce disaster risks. It may be useful that states examine the possibility to establish a national fund for disaster risk management and develop a mechanism for local governments to take advantage of such fund.

Third: Recommendations of the Arab region for the Post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

The Arab states anticipate that the "Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction" will allow to take the necessary action and measures to reduce the existing risks, decrease the exposure to risks and prevent the generation of new risks through the adoption of paths for growth and sustainable development that integrates disaster risk reduction and enhances resilience to enable the states and communities to absorb the losses and damages, to re-

duce the effects of disasters, and to quickly recover from their impacts.

The prevention of generating new risks, the reduction of the existing risks to acceptable and sustainable levels, and the building of resilience requires the inclusion of disaster risk reduction in all decision-making processes to achieve sustainability, the participation of all segments of society and not to exclude a group or a region, and the commitments of all the stakeholders at all international, regional and national levels towards disaster risk reduction. It also requires that the "Post-2015 Framework for DRR" becomes an integral part of the Post 2015 Framework for Sustainable Development.

Arab states recognizes that the "Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction" should rely on the acquired experience of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and be practical and based on general and specific strategies and policies to build more safe states and communities that can confront the risk of disasters and save lives and livelihoods. It should enhance the accountability and enforcement mechanism, have the ability to handle the scenarios of natural hazards, be a long-term framework that includes parameters and objectives to be achieved during a certain period of time, and have a system of monitoring and periodic reviewing to assess the results and make sure that the strategies, policies and risk management has become a reality and part of the normal business day of the stakeholders, and thus the "risk management with sustainability become a method for life".

Arab states recommended several areas for consideration in developing a framework for DRR, which are key elements of what a global framework for disaster risk reduction must include, and are not restricted to the Arab region. These areas are:

- **The new framework for disaster risk reduction must include everyone in an all-inclusive approach, give everybody the due diligence, and not take any country or region out of the account.**

This means that everybody's priorities and interests on natural hazards and risk reduction should be provided in the new framework. There should be a clear recognition of risk in dry land, which occupy more than 40% of the area of the world, has less than 8% of the renewable water resources, and has a population of 2.3 billion people, or about 30% of the world population, who live in nearly 100 countries. About half of the population of the dry land -one billion people- are poor, marginalized and represent nearly half of the world poor, women and children are highly exposed to vulnerability and a high proportion of children suffers from malnutrition. Many of the inhabitants of the dry land depends in their livelihoods on a low and deteriorating natural resource base that is affected by the highly negative impacts of climate change, especially the rising temperatures and drought, which increase the degradation of natural resources and the deterioration and loss of the livelihoods, food insecurity and poverty. There is a need to recognize that dry land is part of the scope of disaster risk reduction, that it is one of the world most affected areas by disaster risks, and drought is a natural hazard with long term impacts. This is linked to recognizing that the size and magnitude of the disaster is not counted only by the number of deaths but also by the numbers of who lost their livelihoods.

- **Focus on the issues arising from the lack of water security, food security and the effects of climate change, extreme weather events and drought.**

The "Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction" should focus on the risks arising from the lack of water security and food security; on risks posed by climate change and extreme weather events that affect people lives and livelihoods and damage the agricultural and economic productivity, causing in turn a rise in commodity prices, and the lack and disability in the supply chains and export markets. Increasing intensity and frequency of drought due to climate change is a risk that was not scientifically well examined so far; and there is a need to develop strategies and policies to address drought that contribute to the achievement of food security and improve livelihoods. These strategies need to consider trans-boundary risks. Mechanisms to adapt to climate change linked to disaster risk reduction need to be developed, as well as the promotion of resources and monitoring such joint mechanisms.

• Promote coherence between international agreements for the post-2015 (framework for disaster risk reduction, climate change convention, and the sustainable development goals).

The year 2015 will see the realization of important agreements on sustainable development and climate change as well as the new global framework for disaster risk reduction. This opportunity of focusing on these 3 processes in 2015 offers an opportunity to increase harmonization and coherence among these issues. National and regional consultations on these various processes leading to agreements in 2015, led to change of the perspectives of many on the consideration of disasters as external shocks affecting normally operating economies, and the resulting risk are seen now as aspects that highlight the underlying risk factors in the development policies and practices. Many acknowledge that the sustainable development cannot be achieved without disaster risk management and that risk management must be an integral part of the process of sustainable development to meet current challenges and seize potential opportunities. Policies and procedures should go beyond the idea of reducing the current risks to prevent the accumulation of new risks and to build the ability of states and communities to cope with disasters. The year 2015 offers all of us a great opportunity to achieve a great deal of coherence, consistency and reinforcement among them, which will be reflected positively on the effective use of resources.

• Means to implement a Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

It is not enough to integrate disaster risk reduction and resilience in the articles of other post 2015 agreements as essential supportive measures to achieve sustainable development goals. It is also not enough to include the consistency between the three frameworks in the mechanisms and indicators to monitor the achieved progress and the periodic review process. The post-2015 framework for DRR must also include the appropriate and sufficient means of implementation. It should be recalled that in the mid-term report to review the progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action, it was stated that the most important reason for not achieving the desired goals in the desired timings was the lack of the means of implementation in this framework. However, the current Hyogo Framework for Action and the post-2015 framework for DRR are not mandatory and are optional voluntary process. Therefore, there should be means of implementation to support the achievement of the commitments made by the states and relevant parties. It also should be noted that international security is at stake as a result of the increasing risk of disasters, especially the effects of climate change and extreme weather events, not to mention the social, economic and political far-reaching implications, and that disaster risk reduction will remain a challenge for many countries because of the mega gaps in the needed funds, technology transfer and capacity building.

Providing the adequate means for the implementation signifies the provision of sufficient financial resources, technology development and transfer, and capacity building. States bear the responsibility for disaster risk reduction, however in the face of the increasing scarcity and unpredictability of external resources, it is indispensable to strengthen the capacities to mobilize resources internally and build partnerships to achieve it. However, and at the same time, there is a need for a global commitment to intensify the mobilization of resources internationally. Developed countries, in their efforts to disasters risk reduction and building resilience, should find a way to support countries at risk from climate change impacts and extreme weather events. It may include debt relief/ debt cancellation/ debt swap, and allow for climate funds to support initiatives of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

The development and transfer of technology is also essential to ensure that development is risk-sensitive and there is no or limited accumulation of new risks to safe-guard sustainable development. This could be achieved through the establishment of an international mechanism to facilitate and accelerate the transfer and dissemination of for disaster risk reduction, as well as attract resources for the development of human and institutional capacities to ensure the development of knowledge and skills at all levels for DRR.

• Emerging technological risks

It is recommended that the “Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” also includes the

emerging technological risks on the basis that, on the one hand, technology helps states and communities to deal with disaster risk, but on the other hand, states and communities are exposed to its harmful effects. This is true, but Hyogo Framework for Action emanated from the "Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a safer world", which is the guidelines to manage natural disasters and prevention, preparedness and mitigation. It is recommended that the new framework include new technological risks, but only those related more or less to natural hazards.

• Declarations and political commitments

It is important that countries renew their commitment to disaster risk reduction. However, the announcement to commit to the post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction may not necessarily be translated into action if it's not supported by political leadership at the highest level for the implementation of actions nationally and locally. This can be followed up through regional meetings and platforms. Political leadership will facilitate implementation and enhances coordination between disaster risk reduction, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development.

The Regional intergovernmental organizations- including the League of Arab States- have a key role in monitoring the implementation of the States obligations. This could be pursued through strengthening their performance, fulfilment of the role assigned to them, allocation of resources within their budget for the implementation of the regional programs for disaster risk reduction, making the necessary coordination between the three post 2015 frameworks, and ensuring the establishment and promotion of national forums for disaster risk reduction. The role of the regional and governmental organizations should be stimulated, enhanced, and coordinated with the regional offices of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

• Voluntary commitments of the stakeholders

Stakeholders' voluntary commitments signal their acknowledgement of responsibility and willingness to work towards DRR. These commitments are valuable supporting factors for the implementation of the post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The commitments of all stakeholders must clearly provide the confirmation that all activities carried out by them will not result in any risk that may damage communities or individuals. These voluntary commitments should not be limited to the participation of the civil society, scientists, local authorities, local communities, media, business and others, but should also include voluntary commitments of the developed countries toward the developing countries to strengthen their efforts to reduce disaster risk and build resilience.

It must also include the voluntary commitments of the international, regional and national financial institutions, in particular the World Bank and the regional development banks, to reduce the risk of disasters, and build the resilience capacity of the countries and communities. It is necessary to ensure that risk assessment is an integral part of the feasibility studies for any investment project - similar to the environmental impact assessment.

• Disaster risk reduction and prevention- an international obligation to ensure the application of human rights

The document of the "suggested elements for the post-2015 framework of the DRR" included a clause stating that disaster risk reduction and prevention is an international legal obligation to ensure the application of human rights. There is no doubt that the preservation of lives, assets and livelihoods is a human right, but there must be a more clear and detailed clarification of the meaning and implications of this clause by linking disaster risk reduction to human rights as it raises fears of raising the commitment status to the post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction from a voluntary framework to a mandatory.

• Strengthening the role of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) plays an effective and important role in providing guidance to member states and regional organizations, in promoting regional coordination mechanisms, in supporting the strengthening of capabilities and resources of countries to be able to effectively implement DRR measures. UNISDR also offers critical support to countries in the monitoring and evaluation of their commitments towards

the DRR framework. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen the role of UNISDR, in particular at regional offices, in order to enable it carry its mandate and role effectively with adequate resources. UNISDR could also be effective in brokering financial support from donors and international financing institutions to scale up national and local actions on DRR.

• Documents of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

Documents of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), including the post-2015 DRR framework, the political declaration, voluntary commitments, etc. should be made available in a one package “Single Document” to facilitate implementation and follow-up.

The Arab region pushed for a decentralized post-2015 framework in November 2013 at the League of Arab States, Cairo, Egypt.

Annex 1 : Aqaba Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Cities

21 March, 2013

We, Mayors and Local Government representatives together with National Government Officials,

Having participated in The First Arab Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction, 19-21 March in Aqaba, Jordan, and

Welcoming the support by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the League of Arab States, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), and the hospitality of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), which facilitated the mobilization of Arab mayors, local and national authorities.

We emphasize the importance of reducing disaster risk in Arab cities and declare from Aqaba the following:

Recognizing that:

- Over 56 % of the Arab population at present lives in urban areas (large cities and small towns), while in some countries the percentage of people living in urban areas is as high as 87% of the total population[1];
- The urban population is growing at an accelerated speed of the overall growth in population, while the overall population growth rate is also amongst the highest in the world;
- Arab urban areas are a major source of economic and human development for the opportunities they provide in the form of employment, education, health, communications facilities, trade and tourism;
- A well-conserved environment, supported by viable traditional knowledge and skills, considerably reduces underlying disaster risk factors, strengthens the resilience of communities and saves lives, assets and livelihoods;
- Many Arab cities and towns are located in high risk areas, including coasts and highly seismic zones as well as volcanic areas making them exposed to disaster risks from earthquakes, flooding, flash flooding and storms leading to losses in lives, assets and livelihoods;
- Disaster risk is driven by climate change due to increased frequency and severity of hydro-meteorological incidents including what the Arab region faces from climate change negative impacts manifested in droughts, desertification, flash flooding, and storms leading also to food insecurity. Arab cities and villages are expected to be increasingly exposed to coastal erosion, sea level rise, storms and flash flooding among other climate related risks.
- Sustainable development principles must be closely linked to urban development planning across all sectors (e.g. infrastructure, environment, energy, socio-economic development) to increase resilience to disaster through protection and conservation of natural resources (water, land, green belts, watersheds, swamps) with gender sensitive approach and prioritization of most vulnerable population.
- Strong disaster risk management policies and functional implementing institutions are a must to undertake disaster risk reduction measures.
- Sufficient investments in disaster risk reduction activities are necessary to minimize losses, damages and risks and sustain livelihoods;
- Civil society plays a valuable role in strengthening capacities and enhancing community awareness, hence it is important to engage civil society organizations in planning, implementing, monitoring and assessing disaster risk reduction programmes and actions.

(1) . UNHABITAT, 2012: The State of Arab Cities Report 2012, Challenges of Urban Transition.

Recalling:

- The World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2015 Making Cities Resilient: “My city is getting ready!” which is aimed at achieving resilient, sustainable urban communities based on the principles of the Hyogo Framework for Action;
- The Mayors’ Statement on Resilient Cities at the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which calls on UNISDR to work with city networks, UN entities and civil society organizations to sustain local preparations for disaster risk reduction and local resilience-building;

Until the end of 2017, we resolve to:

I. Set up a dedicated local unit for planning and management of disaster risk reduction strategies, including mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery actions at municipality level;

II. Recommend issuance of legislations and ensure enforcement of laws and regulations with respect to: (a) responsibilities of stakeholders for disaster risk reduction, (b) identification of zones for land-use planning to reduce hazard exposure of city infrastructure, (c) enforcing penalties for non-compliance and providing incentives for compliance to safety standards;

III. Allocate between 1% and 5 % of city’s annual budget for disaster risk reduction works to be spent on integrating risk reduction measures in all development sectors, strengthening institutional capacities, enhancing resilience of infrastructure and improving community preparedness[2];

IV. Prepare at least one risk assessment report of the city (including public buildings, schools, health facilities, historic old towns, and cultural heritage areas) to guide urban development plans and decisions, and ensure that this information and the plans for city’s resilience are readily available to the public;

V. Prepare City’s Disaster Risk Reduction strategy through consultations with stakeholders to define realistic schemes for risk reduction and link it to national strategy for disaster risk reduction;

VI. Implement at least one public awareness campaign to increase the understanding of local communities in cities, towns and rural areas about disaster risks and actions they can take to minimize the risks;

VII. Recommend development of education and training programmes on disaster risk reduction in schools and universities and integration of disaster risk reduction in educational curricula;

VIII. Build or restore at least two infrastructure facilities to reduce disaster risks; a dike, a dam, or a flood drainage system, where needed;

IX. Ensure the implementation of disaster mitigation measures in at least two government offices, two schools and two hospitals or health facilities in the city[3];

X. Set-up a system to monitor the enforcement of building regulations and land use planning;

XI. Setup a municipal early warning committee to prepare and disseminate disaster warning to high risk communities in urban and rural areas[4];

XII. Setup local community volunteer groups and train them to support search and rescue, fire fighting, medical aid, and evacuation operations in case of floods and earthquakes, where applicable;

XIII. Implement at least two schemes to protect natural resources and mitigate disaster risks; e.g. natural drainage channels (canals, rivers), swamps/marsh-lands, mangroves, forests/green belts, watersheds, where needed;

XIV. Pay special attention to historical sites and world cultural heritage in the Arab region and allocate resources to protect and maintain these sites to reduce disaster risk;

XV. Strengthen joint cooperation among Arab cities and towns to transfer knowledge and expertise across municipalities and local governments;

XVI. Announce the 21st of March every year the Arab Day for Disaster Risk Reduction.

(2) . According to local conditions, such works may include construction and repair of dikes, flood drainage system, maintenance of green belts/forests, public awareness, early warning, training, purchasing rescue and warning equipment, setting-up rescue teams, storage of relief materials, and or provision of micro-credits after disasters for recovery of livelihoods etc.

(3) . This may include: Purchase insurance for critical buildings and infrastructure (city government offices, bridges, hospitals, schools, airports, train/bus-stations, ports) so as to transfer disaster risks from the public exchequer to the insurance sector, and partner with the insurance sector to promote risk insurance for private sector industry and housing;

(4) . This may include: Set-up a multi-disciplinary committee to receive disaster warning information from national and international sources and to disseminate it amongst general public using variety of channels; e.g. media, mosques, churches, community organizations, educational institutions;

Annex 2 : Sharm El Sheikh Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction

16 September 2014

We, the Arab ministers, heads of government delegations, mayors, parliamentarians and representatives of regional and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participating in the Second Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the city of Sharm El Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 14 to 16 September 2014, express our gratitude and appreciation to the leadership, the Government and the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt and to the South Sinai Governorate for hosting the Second Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. We also wish to thank the League of Arab States and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) for their effective contribution in ensuring the successful outcome of the Conference.

We welcome the hosting by Japan of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Sendai in March 2015. We also thank Japan for its kind invitation to the heads of State of the Arab countries to participate in the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and look forward to the results and outcomes of that important conference in 2015.

We stress the importance of disaster risk reduction and declare the following:

Recognizing that:

1. Commendable Arab endeavours and achievements have been made in the field of disaster risk reduction, particularly through the adoption of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and its Implementation Plan and the establishment of several national platforms in Arab States;

2. Various parts of the Arab region are exposed to geological hazards such as earthquakes and landslides, in addition to climate change-related hazards such as droughts, sandstorms, flash and other floods, snowstorms, extreme variations in temperature, forest fires, locust migrations and tropical storms;

3. Disaster losses are compounded due to the lack of a database and updated information on risk exposure in the Arab region;

4. Lack of resources, weakness or non-availability of early warning systems and infrastructural vulnerability increase the magnitude of disaster losses in lives, livelihoods, assets, the economy and the environment;

5. Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, water scarcity, demographic structural changes and migration trends, in addition to secondary risks associated with population displacement, disease outbreaks, pandemic influenza, conflicts and turmoil in the Arab region constitute multifaceted challenges that negatively impact the capacity of Arab States to reduce and manage disaster risk;

6. Only 14.5 per cent of the total area of the Arab region is arable due to water scarcity, desertification and land degradation;

7. Between 1980 and 2008, more than 37 million persons were affected by drought, earthquakes, flash and other floods and storms and the losses to the Arab economy were estimated at around US$ 20 billion;

8. Ecosystems play an important role that can influence the disaster risk reduction system by supporting livelihoods and basic needs;

9. Enhanced awareness and knowledge of disaster risk reduction at all levels among all stakeholders and decision makers is key to generating commitment and transformation from a culture of coexistence with risk to an awareness of risk that will promote a culture of safety and action to reduce the risks.

Recalling:

1. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1989), the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World (1994), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (1999) and the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005);

2. The (Baghdad) Arab Summit resolution O.S. 563 (23) of 29 March 2012 adopting the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020;

3. The activities organized in the Arab region by the League of Arab States, some Arab States and UNISDR on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, taking into consideration the comments made by Arab States on the draft recommendations and the outcomes of the consultation meetings in the Arab region;

4. The outcomes of the First Arab Regional Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Aqaba, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 19-21 March 2013);

5. The Aqaba Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Arab cities (Aqaba, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 21 March 2013);

6. The outcomes of the first preparatory meeting for the Third United Nations Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Geneva, Switzerland, 14-15 July 2014);

7. The statement of the Major Group for Children and Youth, including Middle Eastern and North African children in a climate change coalition, and the statement by civil society organizations on disaster risk reduction in the Arab States;

and in line with the expected results of the current Hyogo Framework for Action, the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will aim to achieve a significant reduction in disaster losses in lives and livelihoods and in social, economical and environmental assets of communities and States.

Taking note of the pre-zero draft of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and its following three strategic objectives:

1. The prevention of disaster risk creation which requires the adoption of risk informed growth and development measures that aim to address increase in exposure and vulnerability;

2. The reduction of existing disaster risk which requires measures that address and reduce exposure and vulnerability, including preparedness for disaster response;

3. Strengthening the disaster resilience of individuals, communities, institutions and States, which requires social, economical and environmental measures that enable them to absorb loss, minimize impact and recover.

Taking into account the disaster risk reduction challenges facing the Arab region, we shall endeavour to:

1. Strengthen political will and establish an effective joint institutional base for disaster risk reduction within the framework of a national system governed by transparency and accountability which defines roles and responsibilities and specifies the national resources needed to support such a system;

2. Build a culture of safety and prevention and raise public awareness as a priority for disaster risk reduction decision makers at all levels and particularly in local communities and local governmental authorities;

3. Promote decentralization and good governance in disaster risk reduction;

4. Develop an appropriate institutional framework, such as a committee or commission, provided with adequate resources and delegated powers to fulfil its disaster risk reduction responsibilities;

5. Strengthen local capacities and grant local authorities some freedom of action within the national framework;

6. Adopt and implement more effective measures to address drought and achieve a higher degree of water security and food security by devising and implementing integrated strategies and policies, informed by risk and vulnerability assessments, with a view to strengthening resilience to drought;

7. Build national partnerships for disaster resilience in order to help local communities to prepare for disaster reduction impacts on livelihoods and the economy through social safety nets, insurance and special indemnity programmes and the funding of microfinance schemes;

8. Integrate disaster risk reduction efforts with endeavours to cope with climate change in order to promote resilience, enhance agrometeorological/hydrological services and strengthen linkages between agrometeorology, disaster risk reduction and climate change administrations;

9. Implement a number of measures within a framework of effective partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society to improve urban planning, upgrade the provision of services and enhance the sustainability of Arab cities by improving the living conditions of the poor in urban areas; and develop urban programmes and bold local initiatives to address multisectoral obstacles limiting the functionality of Arab cities;

10. Promote the principle of green architecture to achieve the optimal use of resources, minimize negative impacts on the environment and contribute to risk resilience;

11. Develop and strengthen national and regional early warning systems to identify, assess and monitor risk and to assess vulnerability levels of vital infrastructure and high-risk areas in order to identify options for disaster resilience;

12. Focus on scientific research and the promotion of technical means to assess risk, monitor and develop hazard maps, analyse vulnerability using GIS and remote sensing tools, and enhance national risk assessment capacities;

13. Develop a regional mechanism linking Arab scientists to the International Science and Technology Advisory Group on Disaster Risk Reduction with a view to strengthening the commitment and participation of the academic and scientific communities and mobilizing science and technology to support disaster risk reduction measures;

14. Raise awareness of the insurance sector to apply good practices such as the disaster risk insurance available in some Arab States;

15. Mobilize private sector resources to address the impact of disaster risk on the sector's performance. Risk assessment, such as environmental impact assessment, should form an integral part of the economic feasibility studies for any investment project in the public or private sectors;

16. Ensure the social responsibility of the private sector and promote the development of partnerships with civil society in disaster risk management;

17. Develop national financing mechanisms, from which local authorities can benefit, to reduce disaster risks and manage disaster impacts;

18. Review and enhance the implementation of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 in a manner consistent with the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the sustainable development agenda;

19. Support the Technical Secretariat of the League of Arab States to strengthen its capacity to monitor the implementation by States of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the outcomes of Arab conferences on disaster risk reduction.

In the light of the above, the Arab region stresses the importance of taking the following elements into account in the draft post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction:

1. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction should outline the measures and actions needed to reduce existing risks and risk exposure. It should identify approaches and guiding principles for growth and sustainable development that integrate disaster risk reduction and strengthen resilience.

2. The framework should be practical and based on public policies and strategies designed to enhance the safety and resilience of communities and preserve lives and livelihoods. It should strengthen accountability and implementation mechanisms and ensure a multi-hazard approach.

3. The new framework for disaster risk reduction should apply to all States without exceptions and should pay special attention to the occupied Arab territories.

4. It should focus on issues related to water insecurity and food insecurity, impacts of climate change, extreme climatic events and droughts and should show special concern for dry land and arid zones.

5. There should be greater coherence between the various internationally negotiated processes of the post-2015 agenda (Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Convention on Climate Change, Sustainable Development Goals).

6. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction should include appropriate and adequate means of implementation and follow-up, such as the provision of financial resources, technology development and transfer and capacity building.

7. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction should include emerging technological risks related to natural hazards.

8. The League of Arab States should be supported in its monitoring of the fulfillment of the commitments of member States and the implementation of regional disaster risk reduction programmes.

9. In accordance with the Rio Principles, and particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the developed countries should undertake to help the developing countries to intensify their disaster risk reduction efforts and build resilience.

10. International, regional and national financial institutions should undertake to support the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction by providing States and communities with financial assistance to build their disaster resilience.

11. Stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society should undertake to implement the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and ensure that their actions do not put communities and individuals at risk.

12. Disaster risk reduction should be viewed as a necessity to safeguard lives, assets and livelihoods of communities while respecting human rights.

13. Disaster risk management requires the active and non-discriminatory involvement of all segments of society, including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities and the elderly, in the formulation and implementation of disaster risk reduction policies.

14. UNISDR and its regional offices should play a greater role as an independent entity with sufficient resources to enable it to support States and regional organizations, strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance the capacities and potential of States to implement disaster risk reduction measures.

15. States should declare their commitment to implement the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Arab Region synthesis report: Consultations on the post - 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

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