

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA ‘Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’

The ‘Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ outcome document represents the culmination of efforts over the last three years to develop a successor to the Millennium Declaration (including the Millennium Development Goals), and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 global targets. The outcome document describes itself as a transformative plan of action for people, planet and prosperity that all countries and all stakeholders will implement.

The new agenda highlights the need for disaster risk reduction across a number of sectors in line with the understanding that disaster risk reduction is cross-cutting and requires a multi-sectoral approach. Going forward, the ongoing development of indicators to monitor the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction will support coherence and align implementation. The ‘Transforming Our World’ call for a revitalized global partnership also echoes Sendai Framework’s call for building disaster risk reduction partnerships across sectors and stakeholders to meet the post-2015 international agreements.

Recognizing disaster risk

The Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outcome document recognizes and reaffirms the importance of reducing the risk of disasters in the future. There are three types of links or recognition of disaster risk reduction in the outcome document. The first are direct references to the outcomes of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The second are where reducing the risk of disasters will be highly relevant and critical to the achievement of the goal or target, for example in reducing exposure and vulnerability of the poor to disasters or building resilient infrastructure. The third are goals and targets that are highly conducive to a disaster risk reduction approach.

Overall there is much to be gained from viewing the Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outcome document through the lens of disaster risk reduction. The direct and highly relevant references to disaster risk reduction can be seen in the following areas:

Declaration

The outcome document highlights the drivers of disaster risk including gaps in governance, urbanization, the impact of poor management of natural resources and ecosystems, as well as poverty and the implications of climate change. In paragraph 14 of the outcome document, the challenge “more frequent and intense natural disasters” present to sustainable development is clearly underscored. The Transforming Our World agenda further outlines the underlying principles and the major policy shifts required to support the implementation of the SDGs, specifically calling for application of technology that is climate-sensitive and resilient, safe and resilient human habitats, and the promotion of resilience and disaster risk reduction.

Goals and targets

There are multiple targets on disaster risk reduction and resilience in the Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outcome document. These focus on poverty eradication; strengthening resilience of sectors such as agriculture, education, and infrastructure; reducing mortality and economic losses from disasters; and enhanced planning around resilience and adaptation.

SDG 1 calls for an end to poverty in all its forms everywhere and recognizes that reducing exposure and vulnerability of the poor to disasters is essential for sustainable poverty eradication (target 1.5).

SDG 4 on quality education promotes safe learning environments (target 4.a) which echoes the Sendai Framework call for resilience and safety of schools to be strengthened in structural and non-structural ways.

SDG 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure with target 9.1 specifically asks to develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Target 9.a aligns one of the targets of the Sendai Framework on the substantial reduction of disaster damage to, and strengthening of, critical infrastructure.

SDG 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements has explicit links are seen with the Sendai Framework targets. Target 11.5 calls for reducing the “number of deaths” and “direct economic losses relative to global GDP” caused by disasters, which align directly with the global targets (a), (b) and (c) of the Sendai Framework. Target 11.b calls for an increase in the number of cities and human habitats with integrated plans on inclusion, resource efficiency, adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters “in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030”, calling for aligned implementation on the ground. Other targets under this goal promote enhanced urban planning and upgrading of slums, which also tackle key risk drivers for disaster losses.

SDG 13 is on combating climate change and where all the targets can be linked to the Sendai Framework, for example target 13.1 which calls for strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to disasters.

Finally, SDG 15 aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. The goal reinforces the need to protect the ecosystem services which includes vital hazard regulating services. The goal specifically calls for efforts to combat desertification and restore land affected by drought and floods. This is closely aligned with the goals and ecosystem-related priorities of the Sendai Framework and reinforces the linkages with related international decisions on ecosystems and disaster risk.

Other targets in the Transforming our World, including those on health and water management, also relate to disaster risk reduction by virtue of promoting the principle of early warning and addressing disaster risk drivers and aiming to reduce vulnerability and/or exposure of people and planet to hazards.

Follow up and review of the SDGs

The High Level Political Forum’s (HLPF) central role to the global follow up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals has been well established in the Transforming Our World outcome document. While exact modalities remain to be decided, it is clear that other review mechanisms, within existing mandates, are expected to contribute to the review of the SDGs, where suitable. In this regard, the monitoring of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction can be expected to generate information on progress in reducing disaster risk that can feed into the SDGs review through the HLPF.

The open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on disaster risk reduction indicators and terminology, established in June 2015, will generate global indicators for the Sendai Framework by December 2016 and has been mandated to work in conjunction with the work to generate SDGs’ indicators to ensure coherence and mutual support. Work on global indicators for the SDGs and the Sendai Framework will continue in parallel forums - while at the same time working to ensure mutual reinforcement and coherence.

Next steps

The Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development document will be formally adopted at the UN summit on the post-2015 development agenda to be held 25-27 September 2015 in New York. At the summit, one of the six interactive dialogues, ‘Protecting our planet and combating climate change’ will focus on disaster risk reduction, among other themes. There will also be other events related to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The key will be developing mutual reinforcement and coherence between Sendai Framework and the relevant global targets in the Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.