



## 1. Background

International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR), on 13 October 2015 aims to:

1. Raise awareness of the use of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices, to complement scientific knowledge in disaster risk management;
2. Highlight approaches for engaging local communities and indigenous peoples in implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;

At the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the international community was reminded that disasters hit hardest at the local level with the potential to cause loss of life and great social and economic upheaval. Sudden onset disasters displace millions of people every year. In 2014, 19.3 million people were newly displaced by disasters. Disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change, have a negative impact on investment in sustainable development and the desired outcomes. It is also at the local level that capacities need to be strengthened urgently. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is people-focused and action-oriented in its approach to disaster risk reduction and applies to the risk of small-scale and large-scale disasters caused by man-made or natural hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks.

The focus of this year's International Day for Disaster Reduction is on the traditional, indigenous and local knowledge which complement modern science and add to an individual's

and societies' resilience. For example, knowledge of early warning signals in nature can be vital to ensuring early action is taken to mitigate the impact of both slow and fast onset disasters such as droughts, heatwaves, storms and floods. Combined with scientific knowledge such as reports generated by meteorologists, local knowledge is vital for preparedness and can be passed on from generation to generation. New knowledge and coping strategies are being generated all the time as communities in hazard prone locations work out new ways and means to adapt to disaster and climate risk. In many aspects, indigenous people epitomize the importance of local knowledge and community-level engagement in disaster risk reduction. 370 million people around the world identify themselves as indigenous, in 90 countries. Indigenous peoples' territories span over 24% of the earth's surface and they manage 80% of the world's biodiversity.

More than 4,000 of the world's 7,000 languages are spoken by indigenous people. Many traditions, practices and customs which are important to environmental protection and managing disaster risk are embedded in those languages which are threatened with extinction. In both rural and urban settings, indigenous peoples have unique vulnerabilities and needs in disaster risk reduction and in post-disaster recovery. At the same time, indigenous peoples have unique capacities and knowledge.

Over the last four years, the UNISDR Step Up Campaign has focused on the challenge of including major communities in disaster risk management, communities that have built up stores of knowledge on vulnerability and exposure to disasters from their own unique perspectives: Children (2011), Women and Girls (2012), Persons with Disabilities (2013) and Older Persons (2014). All these groups have a communal experience and wisdom which can strengthen preparedness and response for society as a whole. This year's International Day concludes the series with a searching look at how knowledge held by communities united by the common threat of disasters, deploy the knowledge and insight born of place, tradition and experience.

### ***The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction***

The Sendai Framework contains multiple direct references to the need for a strong focus on communities and indigenous peoples:

7. "While recognizing their leading, regulatory and coordination role, Governments should engage with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards."

24. (i) "Ensure the use of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices, as appropriate, to complement scientific knowledge in disaster risk assessment and the development and implementation of policies, strategies, plans and programmes of specific sectors, with a cross-sectoral approach, which should be tailored to localities and to the context;"

27. (h) Empower local authorities, as appropriate, through regulatory and financial means to work and coordinate with civil society, communities and indigenous peoples and migrants in disaster risk management at the local level;

36. (v) Indigenous peoples, through their experience and traditional knowledge, provide an important contribution to the development and implementation of plans and mechanisms, including for early warning;

Nominations of local communities and indigenous groups from Pacific are currently being accepted, and one regional Champion will be announced during the seminar. Profiles of all Champions across the globe will be available on the IDDR website and [unisdr.org](http://unisdr.org).

The build up to the day will be supported by the publication of a regular flow of stories on [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org) and PreventionWeb highlighting how hazard-exposed communities are implementing the priorities for action in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction e.g. how they contribute to: risk knowledge and information, investment in DRR, early warning systems and building back better post-disaster.

### ***IDDR Statement on Local Knowledge and the Sendai Framework***

In consultation with representatives of local communities and indigenous groups, a statement of appreciation and support will be drafted for use on International Day, recognizing the contribution made at community level towards early warnings, protecting the environment and eco-systems, agriculture and food security, cultural heritage and monitoring climate change, weather patterns and other natural phenomena.

## **2. Objective**

The main objectives of this seminar are in line with the targeted outcomes of the IDDR global project which aim to:

- Create greater awareness of the importance of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices to disaster risk reduction;
- Advocate for inclusion of indigenous people/ local communities in the design and implementation of national DRR programmes;
- Public discourse to promote attitudinal and behavioral change towards inclusion of indigenous peoples and consultation at community level;

## **3. Speakers**

- Ms. Ruci Soko, SEO Basic Science, Ministry of Education
- Ms. Lucille Apis-Overhoff, the University of South Pacific
- Mr. Timothy Wilcox, Sub-regional Office for the Pacific, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

## **4. Participants**

The seminar is open to the public. 50-100 participants are expected to attend.

## **5. Agenda (Tentative)**

Opening		Chair: Mr. Timothy Wilcox
12:00 - 12:05	Opening remarks	
12:05 – 12:15	Introduction by UNISDR on background/overview of IDDR	

<b>Presentations</b>		<b>Chair: Mr. Timothy Wilcox</b>
<b>12:15 – 12:30</b>	Presentation on new curriculum for traditional knowledge on DRR and climate change (Ms. Ruci Soko, Ministry of Education)	
<b>12:30 – 12:45</b>	Presentation on traditional food preservation methods in the Pacific (Ms. Lucille Apis-Overhoff, USP)	
<b>12:45 – 13:15</b>	Discussion from the floor	
<b>Closing</b>		<b>Chair: Mr. Timothy Wilcox</b>
<b>13:15 – 13:30</b>	Announcement of Pacific champion, introduction of activities, and award ceremony by UNISDR	
<b>13:30 – 13:35</b>	Closing remarks	
<b>13:35 – 14:00</b>	Food and Drinks provided	