

# **The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction Meetings in support of the implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030**

## ***1. Purpose***

1. This note proposes how the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) respective meetings can best support the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework). It touches upon agendas, outcomes, preparatory process, sequencing and rotation of the EFDRR respective meetings, and format as well as some operational principles.

## ***2. Context***

2. The Sendai Framework recognises that the Global and Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction have a key role in its implementation, building on the pivotal role that they have played in supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Sendai Framework also underscores the need for the Global Platform and Regional Platforms to function as a coherent system of mechanisms in order to fully leverage the potential of collaboration and exchange across stakeholders of all sectors, and thus provide guidance and support in implementation.

3. The function of the Global and Regional Platforms is identified in the Sendai Framework's paragraphs 28 (c) and 49. In particular, they are expected to serve as instruments to:

- Forge partnerships,
- Periodically assess progress on implementation,
- Share practice and knowledge on disaster risk-informed policies, programmes and investments, including on development and climate issues,
- Promote the integration of disaster risk management in other relevant sectors,
- Contribute to the integrated and coordinated follow-up processes to United Nations conferences and summits.

4. Furthermore, the Sendai Framework's paragraphs 28 (c) requests for regional intergovernmental organizations to play an important role in the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction.

## ***3. Background***

5. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Global Platform), as recognised by the UN General Assembly, is the main forum at the global level for strategic advice, coordination, partnership development and the review of progress in the implementation of international agreements on disaster risk reduction. It was established in 2006.

6. It holds biennial sessions and to date there have been four sessions, namely in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013, all in Geneva, Switzerland. The 2015 session did not take place, due to the holding of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. The next Global Platform will take place in Cancun, Mexico on 22-26 May 2017 and then every second Global Platform in Geneva. The Global Platform will be continued to be organized in biennial sessions.

7. The Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction (Regional Platforms) are multi-stakeholder forums and were developed incrementally after the 2nd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Kobe, Japan in 2005. While they have varying characteristics, they all share the same traits as dynamic forums for policy-makers, partners, experts and practitioners to pursue initiatives, launch new initiatives, share information, promote campaigns, monitor progress and provide evidence about disaster risk reduction. Most of Regional Platforms features a high level ministerial segment.

8. Regional Platforms have been hosted and chaired by a number of different countries in each respective region of Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia, Central Asia, Pacific, and Europe. The Regional Platforms meet every two years, except Europe and Pacific which meet annually. The European meeting is called European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction. The rotation of Regional Platforms has fostered political leadership and ownership of disaster risk reduction across regions. It has also created the opportunity to mobilize a broader and deeper engagement of civil society, media, private sector, and science and academia.

#### ***4. European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction***

9. The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) encourages a bottom-up and participatory approach by building on existing institutions and organizations, avoiding the creation of bureaucratic layers and rigid structures. The conclusions and recommendations made by the EFDRR are non-binding.

10. The EFDRR consists of the National Focal Points for Disaster Risk Reduction and representatives of National Platforms in the European region, UNISDR Europe, Council of Europe (EUR-OPA), European Commission, and sub-regional organizations/institutions as agreed by the forum.

11. Since 2009, the EFDRR has succeeded in stimulating and facilitating exchanges. It support activities amongst National Disaster Risk Reduction Focal Points and National Platforms on a regular basis and reviewed and identified challenges in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and since 2015 of the Sendai Framework at the regional level. The EFDRR has also been instrumental in creating innovative ways to address challenges: i.e. the PEER Review. Finally, the EFDRR has triggered stronger collaboration and coherence between the work of the EU/EC, Council of Europe and UNISDR and strong links with UNISDR/Global agenda on disaster risk reduction.

12. Since 2010, the EFDRR has been meeting on an annual basis and nominates a Chair and a Co-Chair who lead the annual meeting and promote the forum's prioritized topics. The EFDRR Friends of the Chair Meeting has been hosted at the beginning of the year, provides necessary guidance on the EFDRR Annual Meeting agenda and strategic developments. The EFDRR Annual Meeting has been a meeting exclusively for National Disaster Risk Reduction Focal Points and National Platform Coordinators (including up to four national platform members members/experts based on the topic discussed per country) and the EFDRR secretariat members' meeting. The EFDRR Secretariat (UNISDR Europe, Council of Europe, European Commission) collaborates with the Chair and Co-Chair as the Steering Committee in organizing annual meeting and events, with the advice of a Friends of the Chair Group. Working groups addressing identified areas related to disaster risk reduction are engaged within the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction.

13. In 2014, the EFDRR hosted its first European Ministerial Meeting with European ministers from 40 countries meeting to voice their engagement in building resilience to disasters and to provide views towards the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The ministerial session was organised back to back with the European Union Informal

Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, allowing for EU and non-EU countries part of the EFDRR to also capture voluntary commitments from 13 countries and the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA) to implement the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

14. In 2014, following a “fit for purpose” review, the EFDRR agreed to hold an open forum meeting biennially to allow for the participation of multi-stakeholder actors and major groups. This enables multi stakeholders’ to exchange views, advances and progress in disaster risk management, in preparation for the UNISDR Global Platforms sessions on disaster risk reduction. The EFDRR Open Forum meeting shall be formed by multi stakeholders groups. The EFDRR secretariat coordinates the organization of this event as part of the contribution towards the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

## **5. Considerations**

### **a. Agenda**

15. The Sendai Framework’s guidance concerning the function of the Global and Regional Platforms identified in paragraphs 28 (c) and 49 has a direct bearing on their agendas. Moreover, guidance can also be derived from “Global and regional levels” parts of the Sendai Framework’s priorities for action, as well as from Section VI on international cooperation and global partnership.

16. Further guidance derives from the global targets. In particular, the 2020 global target “e” regarding the establishment of national and local strategies requires certain measures be undertaken to understand the existing levels of disaster risk and trends. Such measures, including the establishment or enhancement of systems to record disaster losses, the definition of risk baselines, hazard mapping and disaster risk assessments, will be instrumental to the adoption of risk-informed strategies.

17. Furthermore, it is to be expected that country reports on the implementation of the Sendai Framework will highlight specific issues for consideration at the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction Open Forum.

18. It is important that there will be synergy and shared focus between the agendas of the Global Platform and those of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction preceding the Global Platform. Such synergy and shared focus would support the coherent implementation of the Sendai Framework across regions. It would also allow to identify and develop focused guidance for implementation, sharing of knowledge, enhance coherence in applying disaster risk management across sectors in different contexts, and provide the necessary elements upon which the formal deliberations of the UN governance bodies may be taken when necessary. It would also ensure that regional concerns and perspective find due consideration within global discussions.

19. Against this background, the EFDRR Open Forum agenda will need to encompass a number of areas including: monitoring and reviewing progress in implementation, together with stakeholders’ voluntary commitments; opportunities for learning and exchange of experiences; advancement of the evidence-base and knowledge; successes, challenges and opportunities in applying disaster risk management across sectors; development of national policies, strategies and plans for disaster risk reduction; definition of risk baselines, hazard mapping and disaster risk assessments; progress on campaigns, such as resilient cities, and safe schools; progress on preparedness, recovery and reconstruction under the ‘build-back-better’ approach.

20. It remains important that the agenda of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction Annual Meeting, EFDRR Open Forum and EFDRR Ministerial Meetings will maintain a regional cut (e.g. linked to the EFDRR Road Map and its associated actions).

**a. Outcomes**

21. The outcomes of the EFDRR Open Forum Meeting, albeit not negotiated texts, shall be the expression of consensus, political leadership and guidance, and include a vision for further action. This informal formula fosters the expression of focused, coherent and convergent views of leaders across sectors and stakeholders.

22. The outcomes of the EFDRR Ministerial Meetings will be a high-level communiqué.

23. It is important to ensure that outcomes be tailored to needs in order to drive implementation further, i.e. draw attention to questions which require cooperation, be specific, practical, and aim at providing guidance to overcome key challenges in implementation.

**b. Preparatory Process**

24. The preparatory process, characterised by close consultations with countries and a broad engagement of stakeholders will be key for the success of the EFDRR Open Forum Meetings. The EFDRR Friends of the Chair acts as an advisory group to the Chair and Co-Chair. The overall, consultations have been instrumental in determining agenda, expected outcomes and format of events, including the identification of speakers and presenters.

25. Broad and close consultations with all actors will need to be a key feature in the preparation of EFDRR Open Forum Meetings. There will be a need to broaden the engagement of stakeholders across all sectors further in order to ensure that all competencies are represented.

26. Experience has indicated that following some principles in the organisation of Global and Regional Platforms is key to success. These include:

- "green" approach;
- fully inclusive and accessible;
- regional and gender balance for attendance, panellists and speakers of all the events in a Platform;
- early identification and invitation of speakers and panellists from diverse backgrounds;
- online visibility with a dedicated website, which include practical information, details about the substantive aspects, and a call for contributions is developed and launched well in advance;
- media visibility;
- support attendance of lower income countries; and,
- close and early engagement with the respective host country on all aspects of preparations.

**c. Sequencing and rotation of the European Forum for Disaster Reduction Annual and Open Forum Meetings, Ministerial Meetings**

27. In the past, the multi-stakeholder Regional Platforms were held over a course of a biennium, sometimes in the same year as a Global Platform. Currently, in order to provide direct substantive inputs into a Global Platform, Regional Platforms are scheduled in each region for every second non-Global Platform year. Global Platforms are scheduled for 2017, 2019, 2021 etc., and the Regional Platforms are envisioned to take place 2016, 2018, 2020, etc.

28. Since 2010, the EFDRR Annual meeting took place on an annual basis. Based on the rotational principal and the inclusion of the EFDRR Open Forum meeting, the now EFDRR Annual meetings are taking place on a biennial basis (2017, 2019, 2021 etc.) and will be the strategic body of the EFDRR, preparing for the EFDRR Open Forum Meeting and provide in depth advice in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Europe.

29. Ministerial consensus will be required throughout the implementation of the Sendai Framework and it is recommended to organize biennial ministerial level meetings starting 2016. Ministerial meetings can take place as separate meetings or following the model of the European Union informal ministerial meetings as it was done under Italian Presidency.

**d. Format**

30. Future European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction Open Forum Meeting shall be structured around:

- ***An official segment***, including opening and closing ceremonies, statements on progress in plenary, a high level meeting and plenary sessions.
- ***A collaborative segment***, including working sessions on the implementation of the Sendai Framework; award ceremonies; side events, a market place, ignite stage, simulations, field visits to show disaster risk reduction in practice.
- ***Specific events and receptions*** organised by hosting country.