



UN Major Group for
Children and Youth
the space for children and youth in the United Nations



Voluntary Action Statement of The Major Group for Arab Children and Youth

To be presented at the Africa-Arab Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, 9th - 13th October, 2018

Dear chair and distinguished delegates,

My name is Tareq Hassan, I am here representing the Disaster Risk Reduction Working group of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY) for participation in the follow up and review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab Region. MGCY DRR WG of Arab Region was created following to the former regional platform, and is the regional subset of the global engagement mechanism of children and youth in the implementation, follow up and review of the Sendai Framework. It is an open constituency for any young person, and we are here to show that children and youth are not just part of the vulnerable groups; we are part of the solution in driving the behavioural change we need in order to ensure the resilient and sustainable society we want.

The recent Secretary General's report indicates that we are far from being on track of actually achieving the 2030 Agenda by 2030, which includes the Sendai Framework. Worse than that, we have only 2 years ahead of us until 2020, when many targets and indicators are supposed to be achieved. The current discourse, approach, and paradigms continue to be proven inadequate to the current "changing world". This is a negative picture, but there are solutions. We just need to be open and to listen.

In order to create a resilient society, it is imperative to address explicit, implicit, and underlying economic, social, and environmental risks. These underlying risk factors create obstacles. These obstacles prevent us from progressing towards effective and inclusive resilient and sustainable development. These obstacles will create new challenges for stability and prosperity. It is a negative trend we all want to avoid. The solution is to address the underlying risks. Addressing these risk factors requires us to see beyond economic growth. The economic system needs to view the economy as a subset of the environment and society, not the other way around.

Just as we hold you all accountable, we also hold ourselves accountable to the same standards. The Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction states that "children and youth are agents of change". Children and youth represent more than one third of the population in our region, and we are the inheritor of the society and agenda we create here

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The stakeholder group for children and youth within the Africa and Arab region of ISDR is facilitated by the UN MGCY DRR Working group. If you have any questions you are welcome to reach out to drripf-mena@unmgcy.org for Arab youth engagement and for drripf-africa@unmgcy.org for African youth engagement.



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today. But we also have a role to play in the implementation. The effectiveness of the Sendai Framework will depend on the meaningful participation and action of local people in the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant policies, standards and plans. This will require a supportive institutional and political environment to facilitate the engagement of local people and actors, together with access to adequate means of implementation for local actions.

We hereby commit to the following actions in support of the Arab Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework:

1. Facilitate awareness campaigns of and for arab children and youth on DRR, and mobilise a growing network of arab children and youth for DRR;
2. Provide children and youth with easy to access and easy to understand knowledge on DRR and the Sendai Framework, as well as on emerging disaster trends, impacts of climate change and risks in the region;
3. Facilitate an online and offline inter-professional regional and global dialogue among young experts in DRR on evidence based good and best practices and emerging trends in DRR;
4. Facilitate online and in-person development and progress report of youth-led action plans on local DRR actions;
5. Facilitate children and youth led monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Sendai Framework;
6. Facilitate the participation of youth as equal stakeholders in the regions formal and informal avenues of DRR policy design, implementation, monitoring and follow up, and review.

To support stakeholders to deliver on our commitments, we call on Governments and other partners to:

1. Further recognize children and youth as equal stakeholders in the policy and planning processes and ensure that their rights of participation are upheld through legally mandated and well resourced spaces with robust modalities at all stages and levels, including in intergovernmental proceedings. Provide them with dedicated avenues and capacities to monitor the implementation of the Sendai Framework.
2. Invest in strengthening building capacities of children and youth on DRR so that they can become peer educators for disaster risk and climate change awareness and education, and influence friends and families to reduce disasters risks at home and in school. Recognize their role and contributions to substantive thematic issues beyond factors specific to their demographic.
3. Establish a mechanism to allocate more resources for children and youth-led projects on DRR.
4. Disaster preparedness should be strengthened at province, district and village level: Communities should pre-position stocks, through government support, to ensure a



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quick response after a disaster (i.e. rubber boats for evacuation, fire extinguishers, first aid etc.)

5. Ensure education continuity during emergencies and implementing the three pillars of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (i) safe learning facilities, (ii) school disaster management, (iii) risk reduction and resilience education.

In addition to above stated commitments following are our long term strategy and actions to implement the Sendai Framework.

Risk Prevention

- Develop material to provide children and youth with easy to access and easy to understand knowledge on DRR and the Sendai Framework, as well as on emerging disaster trends and risks in the region.
- Facilitate an online and offline inter-professional regional and global dialogue among young experts in DRR on evidence based good and best practices and emerging trends in DRR.
- Enhance capacities for children and youth to use peer-to-peer informal approaches to ensure knowledge and information sharing on disaster risk and resilience.

Risk Reduction

- Facilitate children and youth led monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Sendai Framework.
- Facilitate a mentoring process for children and youth in order for them to coordinate regional activities as part of the implementation, follow up and review aspects of the SFDRR.
- Coordinate expert and peer-to- peer training on DRR for children and youth.

Strengthen Resilience

- Provide First Aid training to children and youth engaged in informal and formal education in program target areas.
- Engage children and youth in the design and implementation of early warning and preparedness actions at both local and national levels.