

FINAL VERSION

Joint UN Statement – 1st Preparatory Committee Meeting (PREPCOM) for the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, 14-15 July 2014, Geneva

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues,

I am pleased to read this statement on behalf of the United Nations system, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank that are working in support of regions, countries, and communities to reduce disaster risk and build resilience under the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

Disasters devastate families, communities, and nations, and undermine development gains. They are a growing threat to people's lives and livelihoods. In the past decade, about 1.2 million human lives were lost, while economic losses are projected to rise to US\$400 billion annually.

Development cannot be sustained unless disaster risk reduction is fully integrated into risk-informed development planning and investments within and across sectors. A comprehensive approach to reducing the health, social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters requires action to prevent and mitigate risks, combined with effective preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction measures, thus contributing to the resilience of nations and communities.

The development of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction comes at a unique point in time, when the post-2015 global frameworks for sustainable development and climate change, are also being negotiated, and will be followed by the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. This represents a crucial opportunity for alignment of these global policy agenda and a critical moment for bringing change across all levels. It is local realities that drive the need for coherence and integrated solutions to these interlinked challenges.

The UN General Assembly has called for disaster risk reduction to be an institutional priority for the UN whose Specialized Agencies, Funds, and Programmes are present at the country, regional, and global levels. The *UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience*, endorsed by the Executive Heads of 29 UN entities in April 2013, is a testament to the UN's commitment to make disaster risk reduction a priority for the UN system and its agencies, and to strengthen its support to Member States in their efforts to prevent and reduce disaster losses. UN organizations have also endorsed the *Common Framework for Preparedness* that aims to provide support for the development of national and local preparedness capacity across all sectors.

The strength of the UN system comes through the diversity of its work in many sectors of society, its capacity to convene stakeholders and facilitate collective action, and its ability to support change at a national and local level.

Through its expertise in areas such as health, education, agriculture, water, meteorology, food security, and the environment, UN organizations are able to work directly with sectoral ministries and national and local partners. Examples of disaster risk reduction expertise available in UN institutions include sector-specific capacity development, risk governance, employment generation, child-centred disaster risk reduction, climate and weather services, preparedness, response and recovery to all types of hazards; information, communication and space technologies, ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction; urban resilience; risk-sensitive tourism; migration and refugees; basic social services; civil works and physical infrastructure development; and the full and equal participation of women and girls in disaster risk reduction in all sectors. The UN system works to strengthen national and local capacities across a wide spectrum of activities, from risk legislation, risk assessment and loss databases to national and transboundary mechanisms for coordination of disaster risk reduction; as well the construction of safer schools and hospitals, emergency preparedness, hazard-resilient agriculture, livelihood programming, risk research and educational programmes on disaster risk reduction.

The UN system has enshrined its commitment to the reduction of disaster risk through its country development assistance frameworks, through which it aligns its assistance to a country's development efforts. Since 2009, over 50 such frameworks have identified disaster and climate risk, as a development concern. In each of these countries, the UN system has joint programmes and activities to address disaster risk, as part of ongoing efforts to support national capacities and achieve sustainable development. The UN system also brings nations together at a regional level, such as helping manage transboundary risks, by setting regional policies and promoting the integration of disaster into the multisectoral development programming, including through the UN Regional Commissions.

UN organizations have actively contributed to the consultations on the future of disaster risk reduction through the Global Platforms and regional Ministerial Meetings and Platforms on Disaster Risk Reduction. It has collected evidence on effective approaches and practices in disaster risk reduction and has contributed to the review of progress in the implementation of the HFA. As Member States discuss the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction at this First Session of the Preparatory Committee leading to the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the UN stands ready to assist.

The UN system has a responsibility to observe and report trends, to forge consensus among countries and experts on international standards, to assume leading roles consistent with the mandates of its agencies, and be proactive in addressing the changing nature of risk, knowledge, attitudes, and practice. A range of themes have emerged during the consultations and are central to the negotiations on the future of global efforts in disaster

risk reduction. In this respect, the UN system would like to convey the following views on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction:

1. It is essential that the new framework is coherent with the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and any future agreement on climate change action, in order to achieve integrated, cost-effective, and efficient solutions in countries. This should be reinforced by the alignment and cross-referral of indicators and targets for the respective frameworks and by a shared approach to monitoring and reporting of the loss and damages associated with all types of hazards.
2. The new framework should address all types of hazards which could result in disasters, including geological, hydro-meteorological, technological and biological hazards such as epidemics and pandemics. The link to societal hazards, such as conflict, social unrest and financial crises should also be considered because there are some commonalities in the approaches to managing the respective risks.
3. The future framework should recognize that the management of disaster risk requires prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction measures, all of which should be informed by risk assessments.
4. Key sectors and associated sector agencies that play vital roles in implementing DRR should be central to the new framework.
5. Risk assessment, including analyses of hazards, exposures, vulnerabilities and capacities, and effective risk communication are fundamental for risk-informed development planning across all sectors.
6. Risk governance should be promoted at the community, country, regional, and global levels to address the causes and consequences of disasters. In particular, the new framework should focus attention on support for implementation of measures to reduce disaster risks at local level. It should ensure sustainable and risk-sensitive land-use planning, infrastructure development, including critical facilities such as schools, hospitals and public utilities, safety of industrial hazards, and water, land and ecosystem management.
7. Existing and new national, regional and global international standards, guidelines, and good practices in risk management should become a foundation in the future framework. Compliance with standards and application of good practice should drive the setting of goals, targets and indicators, and day-to-day decision-making and action within and across all sectors.
8. Vulnerable and marginalised groups need to be engaged as partners in taking action, because they are disproportionately affected by disasters. This calls for inclusive policies and actions that empower and protect children, youth, women, elderly people, people with disabilities, migrants, and displaced and refugee populations and the full implementation of the relevant international conventions.
9. The importance of the role of women as leaders in disaster risk reduction and resilience-building are considered integral to the future framework.

10. Disaster recovery frameworks at all levels should promote increased preparedness for disaster recovery and aim to integrate disaster risk reduction into post-disaster reconstruction to strengthen community and country resilience.
11. Accountability for disaster risk reduction should be well-defined with clear roles and responsibilities identified, including the role of the international community and the UN system.

As we move towards a new framework for disaster risk reduction, the UN system is committed to support Member States. Areas where the UN organizations have a comparative advantage and where Member States can draw on its expertise include the following:

1. Assessing and communicating risk that informs national and local development policies, programming and actions across sectors, and that maximize information available from the development, climate change and disaster risk management communities.
2. Developing norms and standards, including sector-specific standards, which should guide the setting of targets and indicators, policy and good practice by all actors;
3. Building of institutional capacity to govern risk and implement disaster risk reduction measures throughout government, including sector-by-sector and ministry-by-ministry, and with the private sector and civil society including volunteers.
4. Applying a risk-based approach to disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and establishing a basis for integrating all aspects of disaster risk management, including action taken by the humanitarian community, to strengthen the resilience of nations and communities.
5. Supporting disaster preparedness to facilitate rapid, appropriate and cost-effective response and recovery, including the strengthening of early warning systems, emergency response and recovery planning, and the protection of human rights of populations at-risk and affected by disasters.
6. Strengthening capacities and systems for disaster risk reduction in all key sectors, such as in agriculture, water, education, health, ecosystems management, and urban and rural development, as well as through partnerships with the private sector.
7. Providing effective use of information and communication technologies, and promoting technology transfer, to advance efforts for risk-informed development and improved emergency preparedness, response and recovery.
8. Promoting social and financial protection schemes alongside other international financial institutions to assist countries to manage residual disaster risks, such as the social and economic consequences of disasters.
9. Strengthening science and research that informs disaster risk reduction policy and practice. In this regard, the UN system supports the proposed creation of an international science advisory mechanism to strengthen the evidence base for the implementation and monitoring of the new framework.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the UN system, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank remains at the disposal of Member States, as they elaborate the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Once agreement on this new framework is reached, UN organizations will work together and provide the necessary support to enable countries and communities to achieve resilient and sustainable development.

Thank you.

The Joint Statement by the UN System delivered at the First Preparatory Committee Meeting of the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was prepared under the aegis of the UN High Level Programmes Committee Senior Managers Group on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience (HLCP/SMG). The HLCP/SMG oversees the implementation of the *UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience*. Members are FAO, IAEA, IFAD, IFRC, ILO, IMO, IOM, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCCD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNHCHR, UNICEF, UNISDR, UNOCHA, UNOPS, UNOOSA, UNWOMEN, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO, WMO and the World Bank.