

Official Statement

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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The importance of investing in disaster risk reduction (DRR) to ensure the sustainability of global development efforts has received growing recognition. Many governments have adopted policies and strategies to enhance the resilience of nations and communities to hazards. This at a time when the frequency and severity of disasters are projected to increase. Despite concerted efforts by the international community and national governments to intensify the focus on DRR, policies have not always translated into actions on the ground – leaving a significant implementation gap. Accelerated action is needed to reach the goals set out in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). We must scale-up efforts in the post-2015 framework (HFA2) paying particular attention to implementation at the local level. The challenge in achieving this requires coordinated action by all stakeholders.

Efforts to improve and strengthen infrastructure are critical to disaster risk reduction and resilience, as poorly built infrastructure increases vulnerability to hazards. Pre-emptive measures can prevent the destruction of infrastructure and help avoid severe social, health and economic consequences. Investing in infrastructure is also vital to enhancing the resilience of growing urban areas. Rapid unplanned urbanization creates large peri-urban areas with inadequate infrastructure, intensifying the risk of disasters. With our mandate as a central resource of the United Nations in civil works and physical infrastructure development, UNOPS is committed to making a significant contribution to reducing disaster risk. We have developed a systematic approach to prioritize our efforts globally, based on exposure and vulnerability to hazards. We are extending our work in cooperation with stakeholders to ensure systems are in place that enhance the resilience of existing and new infrastructure. We are setting out to assist governments in developing a baseline of infrastructure data and analytical capacity to help plan, prioritize and manage, infrastructure works for greater resilience and disaster preparedness.

Further steps are needed to achieve a resilient and sustainable future. This involves enhancing the capacity of governments to conduct risk and vulnerability assessments, and define and deliver prioritised action. To ensure the sustainability of efforts, analytical and implementation capacity must be developed and reside within national entities. Moreover, we need to find ways to finance solutions to increase investment in disaster risk reduction. This means using innovative funding mechanisms. The UN and other actors must monitor, advocate and provide advisory and implementation support to ensure risk reduction. By doing so, the resilience of exposed nations and communities will be enhanced.