



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-EHS**

Institute for Environment  
and Human Security

Statement

By

**United Nations University**

Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction

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Cancun, Mexico

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past four days senior government officials, experts and stakeholders from the public and private sector were able to engage in dialogue and exchanges about instruments and implementation of measures that can effectively reduce the risk of environmental disasters. The United Nations University is conducting research on a wide range of themes related to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. A particularly important aspect is the relation between disaster risk reduction and ecosystem services.

As was recognized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) , the Paris Agreement as well as in the Sustainable Development Goals, ecosystems play a crucial role when it comes to reducing the risk of environmental disasters, adapting to climate change, and achieving sustainable development. Ecosystems actively contribute to lowering risks, by reducing the magnitude and frequency of some hazards, reducing exposure of populations and reducing their vulnerability.

Much has been done to integrate ecosystems effectively in disaster risk reduction (DRR). Ecosystems are referred to in the Sendai Framework

Indicators where green infrastructure are recognized as critical infrastructure that can be affected by hazards.

There is mounting evidence pointing to the effectiveness of ecosystem-based approaches in the fields of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and much progress has been made in incorporating this new thinking into decision-making processes.

Moreover, this evidence is already being transformed into action, whether at a national level or at a more local level by a wide range of actors. The challenge now is to scale-up the successes, learning from the outcomes of the existing approaches. In this context, we need to be bolder and more proactive in sharing examples of where ecosystems are helping build resilience and offering multiple benefits, particularly from countries where there is already a widespread use of ecosystem based DRR. Results cannot only be shared in the scientific community by way of academic journals; we must use new opportunities provided by web platforms and social media to work together, pool our knowledge and expertise, but also to communicate to people outside the scientific community. Such knowledge sharing can also help us address one other key challenge, namely the capacity gap that is present at both the individual and the institutional levels.

Our research can help identify solutions as well as potential obstacles that might prevent ecosystem-based approaches from being adopted; in quantifying the multiple benefits ecosystems provide in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; and in developing innovative educational and capacity development programmes in this field.

To summarize, much has been achieved in terms of ecosystem-based approaches for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, but many challenges still lie ahead of us. It is up to us to use forums like the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction to come together and take a step in the right direction.

Looking ahead to COP 24 in November and the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction 2019, it has to be our aspiration to work hand in hand to further reduce the risk of damage caused by environmental disasters to vulnerable populations and to embrace ecosystems as a vital part of the solution.

Thank you.