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Sustainable development: disaster risk reduction

Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of progress in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [73/231](#). In accordance with Assembly resolution [73/230](#), the report also includes a section on an effective global response to address the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon. The report draws on the data provided by countries through the Sendai Framework monitor; the deliberations and outcomes of the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, jointly organized by the Government of Switzerland and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2019 under the theme “Resilience dividend: towards sustainable and inclusive societies”; the 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*; and the collective work of the United Nations system. It provides an early overview of progress towards achieving the seven global targets and the four priorities for action under the Sendai Framework.

Progress has been observed in reducing disaster risk through the implementation of the Sendai Framework; and there are concrete examples which show that investing in risk reduction pays off. However, the pace of disaster risk creation is exceeding that of risk reduction efforts. At the same time, insufficiencies in the understanding of the systemic nature of risk is limiting the impact of disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and actions. As a result, each year, disasters erase decades of hard-earned development progress. This being the case, for the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved and the ambitions reflected in the Paris Agreement to be fulfilled, disaster risk reduction must be mainstreamed across all relevant policies and sectors.

* [A/74/150](#).



I. The current state of disaster risk¹

1. Today's risk landscape is rapidly changing. Unsustainable economic growth and development are driving changes in planetary, ecological, social and economic systems which are altering patterns of hazards, exposure and vulnerability. With the increasing complexity of, and interaction among, these systems, risk has become progressively more systemic. New correlations – including between natural, environmental, technological and biological risks – are emerging in ways that were not anticipated; and one hazard can trigger another with cascading impacts across sectors and geographies. Global warming and extreme weather events resulting from climate change continue to amplify risk and drive disaster losses.

2. Given the challenges associated with the systemic nature of risk, short-term hazard-by-hazard approaches to risk reduction are not fit for purpose. First and foremost, our understanding of risk needs to be fundamentally re-examined. The interrelation of risks across multiple dimensions and scales, the levels of risk differentiated by income, sex, age and disability and the potential unintended negative consequences across sectors are factors that must inform policies, practices and investments.

3. Although awareness of disaster risk has risen globally, the world has yet to exit the vicious cycle of disaster, response, rehabilitation and reconstruction. While global resource requirements necessary for confronting disaster losses continue to grow beyond what can feasibly be afforded, at the same time, policies, institutions and financing are, by and large, established to prepare for and respond to disasters, rather than reduce losses by reducing risk. This reactive approach fosters the perpetuation of disaster risk which is one of the greatest threats to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030² is the agreed global policy blueprint for managing and reducing disaster risk and building resilience through a whole-of-society and all-of-State-institutions approach. The capacity, knowledge, data and technology needed to significantly reduce disaster risk and the devastating human and economic consequences of disasters already exist; and many countries have made considerable progress in reducing disaster risk. However, full preparedness and willingness to act collectively on our shared responsibility to manage disaster risk have not yet been achieved. A much greater degree of leadership and commitment needs to be provided by governments, both national and local, the private sector, the scientific community and civil society across sectors and at all levels if a global situation of recurring disasters is to change to one of lasting sustainability.

II. Progress in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

A. Seven global targets³

5. The 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, launched at the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2019,

¹ For information on the impact of and response to recent disasters, see the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

² General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

³ Data in the present section are derived from the 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* (Geneva, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2019).

provides an early indication of emerging progress towards achieving the seven global targets under the Sendai Framework (para. 18) and the shared disaster risk reduction targets under Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13. The findings presented therein are based on data submitted by countries through the Sendai Framework monitor and are complemented with data derived from other sources, including national disaster loss and damage databases. As of May 2019, 116 countries were reporting through the Sendai Framework monitor. To develop a comprehensive analysis of progress, gaps and challenges in disaster risk reduction, countries must fulfil their commitment to input data to the Sendai Framework monitor. International partners should increase their support to those countries facing capacity and technical constraints.

6. Progress is being made. Target (a) under the Sendai Framework – to substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030 – is on track. Globally, disaster mortality continues to decrease. The yearly average per 100,000 people has dropped from 1.56 between 1977 and 1996 to 1.08 between 1997 and 2017. Between 1997 and 2017, geophysical hazards took the highest toll on human lives, accounting for 38.9 per cent of disaster mortality, followed by cyclones, at 19.2 per cent; and floods, at 9.8 per cent. The data clearly show that since 1990, 92 per cent of disaster mortality has occurred in low- and middle-income countries, and mainly in Africa and Asia and the Pacific.

7. There have also been decreases related to target (d) under the Sendai Framework – to substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services. While large-scale infrequent disasters cause massive damage and human suffering, the total damage to critical infrastructure and the disruptions of basic services are exceeded by the cumulative impact of smaller-scale frequent disasters. However, examination of smaller-scale disasters between 2005 and 2017 reveals that the number of destroyed or damaged health and education facilities and roads has been decreasing. Disruptions to basic services has also exhibited a downward trend.

8. Despite the fact that disasters exacerbated by climate change are increasing in frequency and intensity,⁴ these emerging positive trends demonstrate that disaster risk reduction pays off and can be attributed to the active work of countries in managing disaster risk. There is concrete evidence that when disaster risk reduction is applied, it works and can be scaled up. Yet, too little is being done too late. Countries are not on track to achieve the other five targets under the Sendai Framework.

9. Target (b) under the Sendai Framework is to substantially reduce the number of people affected globally. Yet, based on the calculation of injuries, damaged or destroyed dwellings, and disruption of livelihoods, the number of people affected by disasters is increasing. Notably, disasters are becoming a main cause of displacement. Indeed, an average of 23.9 million people were displaced each year during the last decade as a result of disasters arising from natural hazards.

10. Owing to the rising tide of disaster economic losses, countries are far from the achievement of target (c) under the Sendai Framework, which is to reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP). Between 1980 and 2017, weather-related hazards caused most disaster economic loss. Floods were the costliest hazard, generating 30.5 per cent of all losses, followed by multi-hazard events (14.4 per cent) and earthquakes (12.5 per cent). The highest losses occurred in the agriculture and housing sectors. Sixty-two per cent of disaster economic losses occurred in the housing sector, with damage dominated by floods, earthquakes and cyclones. Thirty-one per cent of losses were agricultural, driven mostly by floods,

⁴ See para. 4 of the Sendai Framework.

droughts and biological hazards. Sixty-eight per cent of disaster economic losses between 2005 and 2017 were caused by small and medium, localized and frequent disasters, which continue to be vastly underestimated. Those losses are often absorbed by low-income households, particularly in low-income countries. Furthermore, the challenge to low-income countries of overcoming the disaster economic losses that they incur – 32 per cent of the global total – is far greater than that confronted by higher-income countries where the percentages are similar. A concerted focus on the poorest countries and communities, in particular in terms of housing, is essential to bringing disaster losses down. Analysis of disaster loss data against poverty and inequality data can facilitate direct interventions for reducing poverty and disaster risk that are mutually reinforcing as well as more efficient and more effective.

11. Target (e) under the Sendai Framework – to substantially increase the number of countries that will have developed national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020 – lays the foundation for progress on achieving the other six global targets. As of May 2019, a total of 91 countries had reported the development of national disaster risk reduction strategies. It is critical that these strategies be in line with the Framework. In this regard, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction has developed a set of 10 key elements to enable countries to conduct a self-assessment for determining whether their strategies are indeed aligned with the Framework. Only six countries, however, have reported that their strategies are fully aligned. In terms of local disaster risk reduction strategies, 35 countries have reported on the status of those strategies, 17 of which reported that all local government bodies have local strategies in line with national strategies. Governments should prioritize efforts to develop and implement national and local disaster risk reduction strategies that are aligned with the Sendai Framework. The deadline is fast approaching, and owing to the current pace, the achievement of the other targets under the Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals may be jeopardized.

12. Moreover, a substantial enhancement of international cooperation among developing countries on implementing the Sendai Framework, pursuant to target (f), is yet to materialize. Data provided by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) show that development assistance for disaster risk reduction has been woefully undercommitted, at 3.8 per cent of total international aid between 2005 and 2017.⁵

13. Early warning systems are a significant contributor to falling disaster mortality rates. However, reporting against target (g) under the Framework – to substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessment to people – has been a challenge and the results reveal that there is room for improvement. More countries need to take action to substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments. There are lessons to be learned and efficiency improvements to be made with respect to multi-hazard early warning systems in the areas of data collection and analysis and subsequent action.

14. Data gathered through the Sendai Framework monitor is essential for guiding risk-informed policy decisions and for allocating resources to prevention accordingly. Through global, regional and national workshops over the past 12 months, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction has trained national Sendai Framework focal points, national statistics offices, government personnel across sectors and civil society representatives from over 100 countries on the use of the monitor and the collection and interpretation of disaster risk data. Furthermore, during the reporting period, 1,480 national and local government officials and other relevant stakeholders

⁵ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Assessing the Real Cost of Disasters: The Need for Better Evidence, OECD Reviews of Risk Management Policies* (Paris, 2018).

from 107 countries were trained in person or online through the Office's Global Education and Training Institute in Incheon, Republic of Korea. Training of trainers and e-learning modalities have also been developed. To complement this work, a strategic approach to capacity development for implementation of the Sendai Framework has been launched.

15. Monitoring the Sendai Framework is instrumental to the effective monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. In its resolutions [73/231](#) (para. 26) and [73/228](#) (para. 17), the General Assembly recognized the data and analysis from the Sendai Framework monitor as contributions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and the midterm review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway),⁶ respectively. The national validation of data is critical for support to the integration of disaster risk data into both official national statistics and development policy decisions and investments.

16. In addition to the support that has been provided to countries by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, sector-specific support is also being provided across the United Nations system. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed a methodology for evaluating damage and loss from disasters across the agricultural sector with a capacity development component for the institutionalization of data collection related to target (c) under the Sendai Framework. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed technical guidance notes to facilitate reporting against the health-related targets under the Sendai Framework.

B. Four priorities for action

Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

17. While progress is being made, awareness and understanding of imminent, interconnected and rapidly shifting risks, including disaster risk, are insufficient across the board. The establishment and strengthening of national disaster loss databases with baselines to 2005 remain the cornerstone of efforts to build an understanding of disaster risk and contribute to the monitoring of progress in achieving the goals under the Sendai Framework. Many countries have made progress in establishing baselines for monitoring progress in reducing disaster risk. DesInventar, the disaster loss database system developed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, is used by 109 countries and territories. Fifty-nine of those countries have updated their system to DesInventar Sendai, through which data can be imported directly into the Sendai Framework monitor across environmental, biological, and technological hazards indicators with options for disaggregation by income, sex, age, disability and economic status.

18. Risk data are often disseminated without having undergone sufficient evaluation and analysis and without an adequate understanding of how the information is to be interpreted and used. Dissemination of disaster risk information through common standards and formats, including though interoperable open-source formats, needs to be prioritized to facilitate the transformation of disaster risk data into risk information that is easily accessible, understandable and usable by the public and private sectors and by communities and individuals.

19. Limited interoperability of disaster risk data across sectors and limited inter-institutional coordination on data collection and integrated analysis constitute an ongoing challenge. National statistical and planning offices must be engaged in the collection and analysis of disaster risk data. This can help institutionalize the use of

⁶ General Assembly resolution [69/15](#), annex.

disaster risk data in decision-making processes across sectors and can bring together data that exist across ministries. The absence of standardized definitions of hazards affects their assessment and analysis and limits cross-disciplinary collaboration. In 2019, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the International Science Council established a technical working group to review and define common terminology for the broad scope of hazards covered in the Sendai Framework.

20. Regional bodies are supporting countries in the enhancement of their understanding of disaster risk. Under the European Union Civil Protection legislation, 34 countries submit summaries of national risk assessments to the European Commission which are then compiled into a regional risk overview.⁷ In October 2018, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Committee on Statistics endorsed a disaster-related statistics framework. At its fiftieth session, held from 5 to 8 March 2019, the Statistical Commission requested various bodies to consider options and modalities for the establishment and coordination of a formal mechanism to advance a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics, drawing on the work conducted by ESCAP and partners.⁸ A working group on disaster-related statistics has also been established at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

21. The meeting of the Science and Policy Forum for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – convened in Geneva on 13 and 14 May 2019 preparatory to the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva from 13 to 17 May 2019 – showcased progress in using of integrated and applied science to better understand disaster risk, including the risk of technological disasters, and in strengthening the science-policy interface for risk-informed decision-making. Pursuant to the recommendation of the 2018 Africa-Arab Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (Tunis Declaration, para. 16), jointly organized by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the African Union and hosted by the Government of Tunisia in Tunis from 9 to 13 October 2018, the African Union Commission is in the process of establishing an African science and technology advisory group on disaster risk reduction. The United Nations Office and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have supported the Institute of Sciences of Indonesia in launching U-INSPIRE, a platform designed to accelerate the implementation of disaster risk reduction through a harnessing of the potential of young scientists.

22. Recognizing the importance of leaving no one behind, least developed and developing countries have made good progress in building their understanding of disaster risk over the past 12 months. Twenty-five countries of sub-Saharan Africa currently have online disaster loss databases,⁹ and 16 have developed country-level probabilistic risk profiles¹⁰ which have been used to develop national strategies for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and to conduct risk-sensitive reviews of national budgets. Several countries have replicated the process at the subnational level.

23. A deeper understanding of how poverty and marginalization create and compound risk is needed to ensure that policies and interventions target those that are furthest behind and most vulnerable. Data that are sufficiently disaggregated by

⁷ See European Commission, “Overview of natural and man-made disaster risks the European Union may face”, Commission Staff Working Document (SWD(2017) 176 final) (Brussels, 23 May 2017). Available at https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/swd_2017_176_overview_of_risks_2.pdf.

⁸ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 4 (E/2019/24)*, chap. I.B, decision 50/116, para. (f).

⁹ See www.desinventar.net/DesInventar/.

¹⁰ See <http://africa.cimafoundation.org/documents/?limit=20&offset=0>.

income, sex, age and disability are still lacking in many countries. To address this lack, in 2018, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) provided technical support for gender-responsive disaster risk and impact assessments in 16 countries and supported the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age in 9 countries.

24. The United Nations system has developed and applied new analytical tools and sectoral technical guidance enabling countries to make investment and policy decisions with a deeper understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions. In July 2019, UNESCO published guidelines for assessing learning facilities in the context of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to help build national and local government and community capacity to better understand the risks to school infrastructure. In 2018, WHO and partners supported countries through risk and capacity assessments in health and related sectors to facilitate prevention, detection and response to public-health events. Nineteen countries were assisted in carrying out multi-hazard strategic health emergency risk assessments; and national action plans for health security were completed in 27 countries. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) finalized guidance on risk informed programming and has since supported partners in 12 countries in assessing and analysing risks to children and women as related to disasters, climate change and epidemics. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat convened the West and Central Africa Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group and the Regional Resilience Group with a view to development of a comprehensive cross-border risk and vulnerability assessment tool.

25. Advancements have been achieved in geospatial information management and the use of satellite technology. Taking advantage of the increasing availability of free geospatial tools and widely available satellite images, FAO is developing an Earth map with Google Earth Engine. This will enable any user to run environmental and climatic analyses. The Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is currently working with national disaster management agencies to process satellite imagery in order to generate maps of areas exposed to natural hazards. The World Food Programme (WFP) Vulnerability Analysis Monitoring Platform for the Impact of Regional Events in South-East Asia is currently able to automatically integrate Earth observation with on-the-ground hazard and vulnerability data to estimate the risk and impact of droughts and floods. In May 2019, States members of ESCAP endorsed the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030), with disaster risk reduction as a priority action.

26. A coordinated and integrated approach is required to address systemic risks through multi-hazard and multidisciplinary assessment and understanding of risk. The aim of the Global Risk Assessment Framework, presented at the sixth session (2019) of the Global Platform, is to serve as an innovative network for integrated assessment of systemic risk and to facilitate partnerships for the generation and sharing of data across disciplines and geographies as a basis for the development of policies and actions.

Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

27. The year 2020 must be viewed as a turning point for disaster risk governance at global, regional, national and local levels. Effective risk governance for managing disaster risk requires strengthened commitment by Governments and stakeholders to assuring greater coherence among the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement

adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change¹¹ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

28. The development and strengthening of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework by the end of 2020, pursuant to target (e) under the Framework, remain the backbone of disaster risk governance. National and local disaster risk governance mechanisms are critical to integrating disaster risk reduction into planning and budgeting across sectors and to establishing whole-of-government inter-institutional coordination mechanisms so that risk management can be spread across sectors. Disaster risk reduction strategies and planning processes must recognize the synergies and trade-offs between different risk reduction actions and identify actions that impact several national development priorities at once.

29. Efforts are under way, and should be strengthened, to draw appropriately on the capacities of children, youth and young professionals. The United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth continues to be a strong advocate; and disaster risk reduction is included in the United Nations Youth Strategy launched in 2018. The African Union Commission is establishing a youth advisory Board on disaster risk reduction. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction launched a youth action plan at the sixth session (2019) of the Global Platform in support of national, regional and global action to amplify youth voices and their participation in the implementation of the Sendai Framework. Links between youth-led initiatives and mechanisms for developing, implementing and monitoring national and local disaster risk reduction strategies should be established and institutionalized

30. The Global Platform reaffirmed that women, including at the grass-roots level, should be actively involved at all stages of development and implementation of national and local strategies. Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches contribute to more effective disaster risk reduction interventions and reduce the vulnerability of women in times of disaster. In 2018, gender focal points were appointed to national disaster risk reduction platforms in eight countries. Increased attention and targeted resources are required, however, to translate commitments to women's inclusion into real progress. Their leadership role must be strengthened.

31. Reducing disaster risk is essential to achieving inclusion and equality. National and local disaster risk reduction strategies must be developed, implemented and monitored through an inclusive and participatory human rights-based approach. Human rights treaty bodies are increasingly considering disaster risk reduction, including in recent conclusions and recommendations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,¹² the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹³ and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹⁴ The Stakeholder Declaration, entitled "The means necessary", issued by the Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction before the sixth session (2019) of the Global Platform, calls for open avenues of cooperation, communication and capacity-building for inclusive disaster risk reduction, with the full inclusion of those disproportionately affected by disasters.

32. Implementation of the Sendai Framework to achieve disaster risk reduction remains among the most tangible and immediate steps towards strengthening resilience and climate change adaptation. In the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-third session, the Commission urged Governments at all levels to develop and adopt gender-sensitive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change by ensuring the integration of the specific

¹¹ See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, No. 1249, No. 20378.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

needs of women and girls into the planning, implementing and monitoring of disaster risk reduction policies (para. 47 (bbb)).¹⁵ The Climate Action Summit in September 2019 and the annual sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change offer opportunities to step up ambition on adaptation and resilience and to establish and strengthen institutional, technical and policy links between the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partners have launched a new initiative which aims at scaling up resilience and adaptation by 2020 through strengthening and development of leadership capacities and technical skills in least developed countries and small island developing States to ensure coherence and integration of efforts under the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

33. Guided by the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, Pacific small island developing States have been pioneers in the area of coherence. Through the Joint National Action Plans on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management, Pacific small island developing States have integrated disaster risk reduction with climate change and development strategies. Coherence in the Pacific has been strengthened through the establishment of the Pacific Resilience Meeting which convened for the first time in Fiji from 1 to 3 May 2019. The Pacific Resilience Meeting encompasses regional meetings focused on disaster risk management, climate change, low carbon development and humanitarian preparedness and response.

34. The 2019 regional forums for sustainable development have called for greater coherence and integration between climate change, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development policy, planning, implementation and financing at all levels. In operative paragraph 23 of draft resolution III, adopted by the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-seventh session, held on 7 and from 11 to 21 February 2019, and recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, the Commission invited Member States, in the context of their national sustainable development frameworks and associated integrated financing frameworks, to formulate and implement national strategies that, inter alia, would have a focus on those furthest below the poverty line and negatively affected by climate change and natural and human-made disasters.¹⁶ At the sixth session (2019) of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, it was reiterated that the Sendai Framework is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and much greater political commitment and leadership by all stakeholders was called for so that disaster risk reduction could be fully integrated with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It will be important to deliver on this political commitment to ensure that disaster risk reduction is integrated into the implementation and follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals over the next 10 years.

35. Building on the establishment of disaster risk reduction strategies by regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, among others, more subregional bodies are developing strategies to guide countries in implementing the Sendai Framework. A common agenda for disaster risk reduction in South America was agreed by the Southern Common Market and the Andean Community of Nations, and a disaster risk reduction plan was developed by the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic. The Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African

¹⁵ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 7 (E/2019/27)*, chap. I.A.

¹⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 6 (E/2019/26)*, chap. I.A.

States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have developed subregional disaster risk reduction plans. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa has initiated the development of a regional resilience framework and work is under way on establishing a regional cooperation mechanism for combating sand and dust storms in South and South-West Asia.

36. Urgent action is needed to build national and local capacity for cross-sectoral disaster risk governance. National Sendai Framework focal points and national platforms for disaster risk reduction can play a leading role in strengthening cross-sectoral disaster risk governance. Attesting to the need to address this issue, strengthening inclusive disaster risk governance became a cross-cutting theme at the 2018 European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction, jointly organized by the Government of Italy and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in Rome in November 2018. Moreover, the Office's Global Training and Education Institute provided training to participants from 64 countries on multisectoral approaches to developing disaster risk reduction strategies and establishing institutional arrangements needed for Sendai Framework implementation and monitoring in coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. In November 2018, ESCAP issued a toolkit entitled "Policy coherence for disaster risk reduction and resilience: from evidence to implementation" to guide countries in efforts to ensure coherence between the Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework.

37. Legal and regulatory disaster risk reduction frameworks are fundamental enablers of plans and strategies. Reducing disaster risk needs to be a clear legal obligation under national law; and enshrining disaster risk reduction in national and subnational legislation is necessary to operationalize the Sendai Framework and the institutional mandates and systems of accountability required to translate disaster risk reduction strategies into concrete, financed risk management actions across sectors. The application of the UNDP/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Handbook and Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction has been an effective tool in supporting the development and revision of legislative frameworks at national and subnational levels and the integration of disaster risk reduction into national sectoral laws and regulations. Further, in Europe, the revised European Union Civil Protection legislation, finalized in March 2019, strengthens risk assessment, planning and reporting requirements. Parliamentarians have a central role to play in advancing the development and oversight of the implementation of national disaster risk reduction strategies, various types of legislation and budgetary allocation. In February 2019, ParlAmericas and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction launched a Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

38. Economic losses due to disasters continue to undermine the financing available for investment in sustainable development and stimulation of economic growth. At the sixth session (2019) of the Global Platform, it was emphasized that investing in disaster risk reduction and prevention is financially prudent, yielding dividends across economic, social and environmental spheres. While it is recognized that there are national fiscal space constraints and competing priorities, the fact remains that annual budgetary allocation for disaster risk reduction is needed by all sectors at all levels.

39. National disaster risk financing strategies tend to regard disasters as "natural" shocks rather than as the consequence of policy decisions and public and private investment flows. Financing continues to focus on ex ante agreements on disbursement of ex post financing to cover the cost of recovery and reconstruction rather than ex ante financing for resilience, risk reduction and prevention. This

imbalance must be corrected if exposed and vulnerable countries and communities are to develop sustainably.

40. In the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations issuing from the fourth Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development,¹⁷ it is acknowledged that integrating disaster risk reduction considerations into financing strategies may reduce losses caused by disasters. Ministries of finance and economic planning should be engaged in ensuring that all financial and development strategies and plans are risk-informed and that dedicated budgetary allocations are made across sectors to finance risk reduction and resilience. Integrated national financing frameworks for sustainable development should be aligned with national disaster risk reduction strategies. To this end, disaster risk reduction must be included in the support provided by the United Nations to countries for the development of integrated national financing frameworks for the Sustainable Development Goals. Engaging central banks, regulators and credit rating agencies to build their knowledge and capacity with respect to developing disaster risk-informed strategies is also essential.

41. Disaster risk reduction financing strategies, nascent in some countries, must pursue the optimal mix of financing from all available sources, including insurance, catastrophe bonds, deferred drawdown options, sovereign debt restructuring and contingency funds as well as forecast-based financing and innovative financing for risk reduction and resilience. The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, a partnership between the World Food Programme (WFP) and Oxfam America, in support of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe, offers an example of a layered approach to disaster risk reduction financing. Risk reduction, pursued through investments in natural resource management and improved agricultural practices, is accompanied by risk transfer in the form of microinsurance, along with savings schemes to provide risk reserves. Much greater collective efforts are needed to scale up disaster risk reduction financing and to develop new and innovative market-driven products which generate revenue and facilitate investments for disaster risk reduction and the building of resilience. Initial work on a variety of mechanisms and products ranging from distributed ledger and blockchain technology to social impact bonds and tax incentives, among others, needs to be further developed and scaled up.

42. Standards, regulations and financing for resilient infrastructure, including leveraging the co-benefits of nature-based solutions, are essential for investment in disaster risk reduction. Infrastructure plans and pipeline projects should also be aligned to disaster risk reduction strategies and risk assessments. In March 2019, the Government of India hosted the second International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure where participants discussed ways to conduct infrastructure risk assessments, set standards and regulations and establish financial, governance and institutional arrangements. At the second Caribbean Safe Schools Ministerial Forum, convened in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in April 2019, progress was reviewed and the Caribbean Regional Road Map on School Safety was updated, with a view to building the resilience of the Caribbean education sector for protecting students and safeguarding their education. The Caribbean Smart Hospitals Initiative is currently being implemented to strengthen the resilience of hospital infrastructure and operations in seven countries.

43. Public-private partnerships are essential to leveraging the scale of financing and infrastructure investments needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To ensure that public-private partnerships reduce rather than create disaster risk and that the public sector does not disproportionately bear the risks, standards, including financial regulations, should be developed to define the risk reduction responsibilities of private sector investors in those partnerships. It is also important to create

¹⁷ E/FFDF/2019/3, sect. I.

incentives for businesses to invest in longer-term risk reduction and resilience. The Private Sector Alliance for Disaster-resilient Societies (ARISE) – which is growing steadily worldwide, with over 250 members in 25 countries – is well positioned to promote criteria for risk-informed investments and business management strategies, as well as enabling business environments. The need to ensure the resilience of medium-sized, small and microenterprises was a key message associated with the observance of Private Sector Day during the 2019 session of the Global Platform.

44. It is critical to engage institutional investors, as most global investments do not take disaster and climate-related risk into account. The need for greater accountability and transparency in respect of hidden contingent liabilities featured in discussions at the World Economic Forum on ASEAN in September 2018 and at the Davos annual meeting in January 2019. To facilitate the reorientation of capital flows, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience should be integrated into the assessments of credit rating agencies and into the decisions and financial risk disclosures of institutional investors, asset managers and chief executive and financial officers. There has been an early emergence of examples in this regard. In May 2019, Kommunal Landspensjonskasse, Norway's largest pension fund, announced that it will geotag the fund's financial investments against vulnerability to disaster and climate risk. In June 2019, the European Commission technical expert group on sustainable finance added disaster-related climate risk to its taxonomy of economic activities that are considered environmentally sustainable for investment. The Commission also published guidelines on the reporting of climate-related information, which provide about 6,000 European Union-listed companies and banks with practical recommendations on how to better report on the climate impacts of their activities in Europe and beyond.

45. Trade flows must be resilient to the physical and economic impacts of disasters if the potential of trade as an engine for economic growth and sustainable development is to be realized. Capitalizing on the catalytic role of trade for disaster risk reduction requires a greater understanding of the role that trade can play in prevention of, and building of resilience to, disasters; an examination of impacts of disaster on trade, including through trade policy reviews; and the design of national trade and investment policies that are disaster risk-informed and create incentives for risk reduction.

46. For many smaller economies and highly indebted and exposed countries, such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, official development assistance, both technical and financial, is needed to foster resilient societies and economies. Donors and international financial institutions can – and must – do more to integrate disaster risk reduction in their development assistance, with dedicated mechanisms for vulnerable and exposed countries in debt distress.

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

47. Commendable commitments to resilient reconstruction have been made in the wake of recent disasters. Without adequate preparation and support, however, many countries struggle to “Build Back Better”. At the special meeting on pathways to resilience in climate-affected small island developing States convened by the Economic and Social Council on 13 November 2018, countries recognized the need to include the objective of preparing to build back better in their disaster risk reduction strategies. Effectively building back better requires that the necessary participatory and inclusive governance and coordination mechanisms, legislation and regulations, land-use plans and risk assessments, metrics and benchmarks to monitor effectiveness, and human resources and capacities be in place before a disaster strikes. Establishing quick-

disbursing financing mechanisms and pre-negotiated access to international financing are also important. Without such preparations, there is a significant likelihood of recreating the risk that led to the disaster through recovery and reconstruction.

48. Building back better provides an opportunity to rewrite the story of exclusion and marginalization which often determines people's vulnerability and exposure to disasters. This was the focus of the fourth World Reconstruction Conference, an event convened during the preparatory period leading up to the 2019 session of the Global Platform, which built on the discussions held at the International Recovery Forum, held in Kobe, Japan, on 18 January 2019. The World Reconstruction Conferences underscored the importance of putting vulnerable and marginalized groups at the centre of planning, implementation and monitoring so as to ensure that the benefits of building back better are equitably shared. The International Recovery Forum stressed, inter alia, that inclusive reconstruction requires the establishment of institutional systems and financing that engender inclusion before a disaster strikes. The joint European Union/United Nations/World Bank Local Disaster Recovery Framework Guide was launched at the 2019 session of the Global Platform as a tool to be used pre- and post-disaster to strengthen local capacity for assessing impacts; developing policies, institutions and flexible action plans; and financing and implementing activities that can enable quicker and resilient recovery.

49. Innovative products and services delivered by national metrological and hydrologic services are essential to building resilience and are continuously being improved. During the reporting period, the United Nations system continued to provide support to countries for the strengthening of early warning systems. In 2018, FAO launched 11 new early warning, early action projects which demonstrated how, in cases where \$1 was invested in early action, returns of up to \$7 could be achieved. UN-Women supported 10 countries in mobilizing and empowering women to enable them to lead the development and implementation of preparedness action plans and gender-responsive early warning in their communities. In September 2018, the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian Countries launched a project aimed at strengthening tsunami early warning in the north-west Indian Ocean region implemented by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

50. There remains an urgent need to strengthen national multi-hazard early warning capacity and fill technical and human resource gaps, particularly in least developed countries and small island developing States. The Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative, representing a collaboration between the World Meteorological Organization), the World Bank and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, is currently investing \$42 million through 11 projects covering 44 least developed countries and small island developing States. For example, with support from the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative, regional stakeholders in the Caribbean conducted a first-ever post-disaster assessment of early warning systems following the 2017 hurricane season. The findings and recommendations have been incorporated in a regional initiative supported by the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative aimed at strengthening impact-based forecasting which can enable early action for disasters.

51. The second Multi-Hazard Early Warning Conference, held during the preparatory period leading up to the 2019 session of the Global Platform, highlighted the need to ensure that advances in impact-based forecasting reached all decision makers as well as communities, households and individuals. During deliberations at the 2019 session of the Global Platform, it was emphasized that implementing multi-hazard early warning systems that led to early action should be improved as part of disaster risk reduction strategies and that stronger cross-sectoral and intergovernmental working arrangements were needed to deliver effective multi-hazard early warning systems.

III. Disaster risk reduction in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries

52. Under the Sendai Framework (para. 41), it is recognized that the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries have special needs in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels, which often greatly exceed their capacity to respond to and recover from disasters. The fact that economies of many least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States are characterized by a reliance on a single primary commodity which is often impacted by disasters poses challenges to structural transformation of the economy and leads to an exacerbation of debt distress. In addition, many countries lack economies of scale to make the necessary capital investments in disaster risk reduction. The Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries can be leveraged to support countries in efforts to reduce their disaster risk.

53. Disaster risk, as well as the impacts of disasters, should be considered across the graduation process for the least developed countries, including in the triennial review of the criteria for graduation from least developed country status, the recommendations of the Committee for Development Policy, the impact assessment of the likely consequences of graduation and the vulnerability profiles. Disaster risk reduction support through the implementation of the Sendai Framework should also be included in the smooth transition strategies of graduating countries and in the support provided by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Graduation.

54. In paragraph 33 of its resolution [73/242](#), the General Assembly called for disaster risk reduction to be considered in the review of and successor instrument to the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020.¹⁸ It will be important to consider disaster risk reduction and alignment with the Sendai Framework in the preparations for and outcome of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. To this end, national Sendai Framework focal points and national disaster risk reduction platforms should be engaged in the national and regional reviews of the Istanbul Programme of Action. A dedicated thematic event should be organized on disaster risk reduction, resilience and adaptation as part of the preparatory process for the fifth conference.

55. The impacts of disasters undermine the structural and economic transformation measures needed to implement the Vienna Programme for Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.¹⁹ Owing to their dependency on neighbouring countries for transit, trade and telecommunication connectivity, landlocked developing countries are also vulnerable to the impacts of disasters beyond their borders. The high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, to be held in December 2019, will offer a crucial opportunity to identify strategic and mutually reinforcing links between the priorities of the Sendai Framework and the Vienna Programme of Action and to promote coherence with disaster risk reduction strategies. Achieving priority two of the Vienna Programme of Action (infrastructure development and maintenance) is contingent on a better understanding of disaster risk and disaster risk-informed and resilient investments. Effective transboundary disaster risk governance is also critical for

¹⁸ *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011 (A/CONF.219/7)*, chap. II.

¹⁹ General Assembly resolution [69/137](#), annex II.

reduction and management of disaster risk along transit corridors and for promotion of the resilient trade of landlocked developing countries.

56. Disaster risk reduction featured prominently in the outcome of the interregional preparatory meeting held in Apia, Samoa, from 29 October to 1 November 2018, for the midterm review of the Samoa Pathway. Countries committed to addressing climate change, disaster risk reduction and building resilience as key priority areas in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway over the next five years. The midterm review of progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, to be held in September 2019, will provide an important opportunity to assess how alignment with the Sendai Framework can support the achievement of the Samoa Pathway and accelerate progress in reducing disaster risk and building resilience in small island developing States.

57. Reducing disaster risk can contribute significantly to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in middle-income countries. With the right policy and financing mix, middle-income countries can meet their infrastructure needs and tackle the challenge presented by the unprecedented pace of urbanization while also reducing disaster risk. Moreover, as income inequality in many middle-income countries continues to escalate, reduction of disaster risk can contribute to the empowerment of the poorest and most marginalized communities and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that expose the poor disproportionately to disasters. It is therefore critical that middle-income countries further integrate disaster risk reduction within development policies, strategies and legislation across all supported sectors. Middle-income countries also require special consideration with regard to access to the finance and resources needed to build resilience.

IV. Disaster risk reduction in countries affected by conflict and fragility

58. The impacts of disasters and climate change can heighten tensions and competition over scarce resources, including land and water. Conflicts damage and destroy critical infrastructure and exacerbate many drivers of disaster risk, including poverty and inequality. Moreover, conflicts force communities to adopt coping strategies that degrade the environment and increase their disaster risk while limiting the ability of national and local governments to establish disaster risk governance mechanisms and enforce legislation and regulation.

59. Since 2007, the Security Council has increasingly recognized climate change and related disasters as a threat multiplier which can trigger and aggravate conflict. For example, in its resolution [2448 \(2018\)](#) on the Central African Republic, the Security Council recognized the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters and stressed the need for adequate risk assessment; in its resolution [2350 \(2017\)](#) on Haiti, the Council emphasized the need for efforts in risk reduction and preparedness that addressed Haiti's extreme vulnerability to natural disasters, in which the government would play a leading role, with the assistance of the United Nations Country Team; in its resolution [2423 \(2018\)](#) on Mali, the Council recognized the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters and emphasized the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the government of Mali and the United Nations; and in its resolution [2429 \(2018\)](#) on the Sudan, the Council recognized the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters and requested the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan to consider those adverse effects in their programmes, including by undertaking risk assessments and risk management strategies related to those factors. In this regard, the Council also requested the Secretary-General to provide information on such assessments in

mandated reporting. UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat have initiated the United Nations climate security mechanism to improve the availability to the Council of information on climate-related security risks. It will be essential to include disaster risks in risk assessments, management strategies and reports to the Council, which will entail, inter alia, drawing on disaster risk profiles and national disaster loss databases, and strengthening those instruments, where necessary.

60. In the above-mentioned Tunis Declaration on accelerating the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted on 13 October 2018 on the occasion of the Africa-Arab Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, African States were urged to develop innovative ways to ensure that disaster risk reduction would be effectively implemented in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The 2019 session of the Global Platform encouraged more context-specific disaster risk reduction and resilience-building strategies in conflict-affected countries and fragile contexts based on risk assessments that integrated disaster, climate and conflict risks. For example, Afghanistan’s national strategy for disaster risk reduction, adopted in December 2018, includes conflict as an underlying risk driver which affects the country’s coping capacity. The strategy places a specific focus on strengthening coherence and integration between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem management, implementation of disaster risk reduction in situations of conflict and fragility, and other development imperatives that will need to be achieved if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be attained.

61. Countries can do more to develop innovative ways to ensure that disaster risk reduction is effectively implemented in conflict-affected contexts. It is critical to ensure that post-conflict reconstruction is resilient and informed by disaster risk assessments. When the environmental impacts of peacekeeping missions are being considered, it is also important that their impacts on disaster risk be considered, as related to the operations of the mission itself and the communities in which they operate. With its inclusive and whole-of-society approach, disaster risk reduction, through a conflict-sensitive approach, can serve as a collaborative instrument through which to support conflict prevention and sustain peace.

62. The United Nations system is working to support countries in achieving a better understanding of the relationship among climate change, disasters, environmental degradation and conflict and in developing targeted and more effective solutions. For example, in Yemen, the ongoing conflict had led to cycles of flooding and limited access to water which intensified competition over resources among already vulnerable population groups. FAO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) initiated a programme through which local water user associations were re-established, water canal systems were rehabilitated and women were trained on natural resource management, which strengthened their role in conflict resolution.

V. Reducing the risk of disaster displacement

63. Displacement is one of the most common and immediate impacts of disasters, and disasters stemming from natural hazards are the main trigger of displacement worldwide. It is estimated that people in least developed countries are on average six times more likely to be displaced or evacuated than those in high-income countries.²⁰ While there is rarely a single factor that compels people to move, it is anticipated that

²⁰ 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* (Geneva, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2019).

human mobility patterns will change in response to extreme weather events and climate variability, including slow-onset events which gradually erode people's resilience and thereby influence their decision to move.²¹ Mobility can save lives, strengthen resilience and reduce risk. Conversely, disaster-driven displacement can have severe humanitarian impacts and long-lasting social, economic, environmental, administrative and legal consequences, particularly when it becomes protracted.

64. Disaster risk reduction strategies and policies should strive to facilitate a better understanding of the drivers and consequences of disaster displacement and to address them, as well as contribute to durable solutions. Countries should collect disaggregated data on disaster displacement and on the risk of disaster displacement. To this end, the Platform for Disaster Displacement, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and partners launched a set of "Words into action" guidelines on disaster displacement which provides practical guidance on integrating displacement concerns into disaster risk reduction strategies.

65. The United Nations system is supporting countries in efforts to reduce the risk of disaster displacement. In Myanmar, the risk assessments of the International Organization for Migration informed the development of local risk maps, evacuation plans, scenario-based emergency response contingency plans and local infrastructure development plans in areas with high concentrations of internal and cross-border migrants. The International Labour Organization and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development conducted a joint study on the links between climate change and labour-market trends in East Africa and the Horn of Africa as a means of providing evidence for use in the development of national migration management and labour-market policies.

VI. Coordination of disaster risk reduction across the United Nations system

66. Entities of the United Nations system continue to make progress in integrating disaster risk reduction across their strategies and programmes, guided by the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards a Risk-informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development and the Senior Leadership Group on Disaster Risk Reduction convened by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. The reform of the United Nations development system provides renewed opportunities to inject disaster risk reduction into the work of United Nations country teams and into the support that they receive at the regional level.

67. The focus on a risk-informed approach in the new internal guidance for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the requirement that common country assessments include disaster risk within a multidimensional assessment of risks and risk drivers will serve to embed disaster risk in the integrated analysis and programming of country teams. A coordinated approach to capacity-building by the United Nations system, aligned to the Strategic Approach to Capacity Development for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: A Vision of Risk-informed Sustainable Development by 2030, is important for maximization of impact. An inter-agency team coordinated by UNDP completed a draft United Nations common guidance on helping build resilient societies which incorporates a resilience lens into inter-agency analysis and programming at country

²¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Global Warning of 1.5°C: An IPCC Special Report*, V. Masson-Delmotte and others, eds. (2019).

level, bringing together the development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian spheres. The guidelines are currently being field-tested by country teams.

VII. Global disaster risk reduction advocacy campaigns

68. As of July 2019, a total of 4,270 cities were part of the Making Cities Resilient campaign and had endorsed the Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient. Within the last 12 months, 214 cities completed resilience self-assessment reports; and 23 cities developed climate and disaster risk reduction action plans, with many initiating implementation as well. Urban authorities need to institutionalize and take full ownership of the campaign if long-term sustainability is to be achieved.

69. An online platform for Sendai Framework Voluntary Commitments was launched in December 2018 as a tool for monitoring progress and sharing the good practices of all stakeholders. It is also expected to contribute to an enhancement of coordination among stakeholders and an increased accountability and sharing of responsibility among them as a means of implementing the Sendai Framework. The first synthesis and analysis report on the voluntary commitments was launched at the 2019 session of the Global Platform.

70. For the 2018 observance of the International Day for Disaster Reduction (13 October), events focused on target (c) under the Sendai Framework (to reduce direct disaster economic loss) were held world-wide. The Governments of Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Turkey and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction organized a seminar at the United Nations Office at Geneva on strengthening the role of national and local governments in reducing economic losses and building disaster risk reduction capacity. Preparations are already under way for the 2019 observance of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, which will focus on target (d) under the Sendai Framework (to substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services).

71. World Tsunami Awareness Day (5 November) continued to gain traction. Events were held around the world to raise awareness of the threat posed by tsunamis and the importance of a comprehensive and multi-hazard approach to tackling underlying vulnerabilities and exposure to disasters and to strengthening preparedness. These events included the third High School Students Summit on World Tsunami Awareness Day, held in Wakayama, Japan; and the second World Tsunami Museum Conference, which was organized in Tokyo. At the United Nations in New York, a panel discussion focused on inclusive disaster risk governance through the meaningful and active participation of all relevant stakeholders. A special dialogue was also organized between youth and a tsunami survivor.

VIII. Addressing the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon through an effective global response

72. Guided by the blueprint for action on preventing El Niño/Southern Oscillation episodes from becoming disasters and the inter-agency standard operating procedures for early action in response to El Niño/La Niña episodes, the United Nations system is scaling up support to countries in addressing the impacts of El Niño/Southern Oscillation events. In September 2018, following the warning of a possible El Niño/Southern Oscillation event, an El Niño watch was triggered by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and an El Niño/Southern Oscillation analysis cell was activated. The analysis cell identified 25 high-risk countries, where regional and country-level

preparedness and early action measures were undertaken. By late 2018, regional structures had convened in anticipation of the impending event and humanitarian and development organizations had developed or revised preparedness and response plans; secured pre-committed funding; and implemented early actions in at-risk countries.

73. For over a decade, the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with the International Research Institute for Climate and Society, has monitored the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon in order to provide regular assessments of the current situation and an outlook for the coming months. To build on the success of this initiative, the Sixteenth World Meteorological Congress (Geneva, May/June 2011) endorsed the development of a broader Global Seasonal Climate Update including the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon, which will be active before the end of 2019. Further work is required to strengthen regionally and locally applicable seasonal forecasts and the development of associated products tailored to support decision-making and effectively communicate information to end users. The World Meteorological Organization is currently piloting the development and institutionalization of regional seasonal forecasting schemes in South and South-East Asia, the Horn of Africa, the Pacific islands and western South America.

74. Since the first Multi-Hazard Early Warning Conference held in Mexico in May 2017, significant progress has been made in the development of the El Niño/Southern Oscillation information system. Building on existing efforts, the system improves monitoring of the ocean and atmosphere to enable meteorologists and hydrologists to predict and interpret the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon and other ocean oscillations and thus weather, climate and hydrological events and their likely physical and socioeconomic impacts. The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response has developed – and provided to national disaster management agencies in 13 countries – relevant information, compiled using Earth observation technologies, on impacts of droughts triggered by the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon on crops and vegetation. The World Food Programme is investing in anticipatory actions through its work with partners on forecast-based financing in countries repeatedly affected by El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon-related drought events.

75. The devastating impact of extreme weather events driven by the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon must not be forgotten during years characterized by a low probability of El Niño/Southern Oscillation conditions. It is important to include the potential impacts of the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon within multi-hazard risk assessments and risk profiles, so as to strengthen early warning capacities and to consider the impacts of the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon in national and local disaster risk reduction strategies. For example, FAO has organized active multi-stakeholder projects in Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, the Philippines, Zambia and Zimbabwe for the development of preparedness measures, the establishment of an information sharing mechanism and the design of early action interventions to mitigate the impacts of the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

76. Disaster risk is becoming increasingly systemic. The impacts of interactions among economic, social, environmental, technological and biological risks cascade across sectors and levels in ways that could not have been imagined, let alone prepared for. Even while hazards cross international boundaries and threaten our collective well-being, risk-informed policies and investments remain the exception

rather than the norm. Indeed, the unintended consequences of economic, social and environmental policies continue to create disaster risk. International cooperation and multilateral action are therefore critical to collectively reducing disaster risk and strengthening the resilience of countries and communities.

77. An unprecedented opportunity to change course does in fact exist. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, this being the case, greater political commitment is needed to fully integrate disaster risk reduction in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries should ensure that development strategies and integrated national financing frameworks for achievement of the Goals are aligned with disaster risk reduction strategies. There is also an urgent need for the development of disaster risk reduction financing strategies.

78. Investing in disaster risk reduction and resilience pays off. Dedicated financing is imperative for preventing the creation of new risk and reducing existing risk. Financing, however, remains focused on preparedness, recovery and reconstruction. To ensure that plans and investment are risk-informed and also ensure budget allocation and the raising of capital for disaster risk reduction, ministries of finance and economic planning, central banks, regulators, credit rating agencies and institutional investors must be part of the conversation on defining the solutions and the applicable measures and means. Furthermore, legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines are urgently needed to guide public and private investments including by small and medium-sized enterprises and microenterprises, while also generating the creation of incentives for long-term investments in disaster risk reduction.

79. Coherence in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement is crucial. Establishing policy and programmatic coherence between disaster risk reduction strategies and national climate change adaptation plans by 2020 and establishing links with sustainable development strategies and nationally determined contributions can mark a turning point with regard to building resilient and sustainable societies and economies before 2030. Much stronger political commitment and leadership of all stakeholders is required to integrate disaster risk reduction into policy, development and investment decisions and to create a culture of prevention across all of society and all State institutions.

80. What works is currently well known and the knowledge needed to implement the Sendai Framework already exists. Indeed, at the 2019 session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, it was affirmed that disaster risk reduction is having a positive impact. However, the pace of implementation is not nearly fast enough. The Sendai Framework monitor demonstrates that the impact is uneven across the seven global targets under the Sendai Framework.

81. Failure to achieve target (e) under the Sendai Framework by 2020 will jeopardize the achievement of all other targets under the Framework and the overall achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Poor, vulnerable and marginalized people will have been left further behind by 2030 if disaster risk is not reduced with the utmost urgency. Disaster risk reduction is an effective means of empowering communities and reducing inequality. It is therefore essential that national and local disaster risk reduction strategies be developed, implemented and monitored in an inclusive and participatory manner, with the focus on those most at risk; this entails capitalizing on women's leadership, involving historically marginalized groups and empowering children and youth. More space needs to be created to allow stakeholders to act as enablers of disaster risk reduction and discharge their shared responsibility, as outlined in the Sendai Framework.

82. Progress is being made in the collection of disaster risk data by many national disaster risk management authorities and substantial quantities of disaster data

already exist. However, the availability of data does not always translate into their utilization for risk-informed investments and policies and decisions across sectors. Greater engagement, capacity and leadership of national statistical offices is needed to institutionalize the systematic collection and validation of disaster risk data across sectors; and the presentation of those data must be such as to enable them to be easily accessed, understood and used by the public and private sectors and by communities and individuals.

83. Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries require special and tailored support. Policy coherence and programmatic integration between the Sendai Framework and the next phase of the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, including in monitoring frameworks, as well as the outcome of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, will be critical in meeting this need. There is also space for further consideration of disaster risk in the criteria for graduation from the least developed country category, and for inclusion of disaster risk reduction in the international support provided to countries before, during and after graduation. Moreover, the international community needs to enhance international cooperation and do more to support the development of disaster risk reduction policies and programmes in countries affected by conflict and in fragile contexts, building on promising examples of integrated disaster, climate and conflict risk assessments, which will also yield broader benefits for sustaining peace.

84. The United Nations system has made significant progress in integrating disaster risk reduction in the support that it provides to countries; and the reform of the United Nations development system provides a new opportunity to institutionalize this approach. Disaster risk must be systematically integrated in analysis and programming. Guided by the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, further work is needed to strengthen system-wide coherence and build capacity for coordinated risk-informed programming at the regional and country levels.

85. An intergovernmental midterm review of the Sendai Framework, benefiting from broad consultation with stakeholders in all regions, will be important in providing an understanding of the progress, gaps and challenges associated with reducing disaster risk. The midterm review should provide further guidance on the implementation of the Sendai Framework; augment policy coherence and integrated action; and strengthen political drive for the adoption of a risk-informed approach to sustainable development and climate action.

86. **It is recommended that:**

(a) **States accelerate progress and allocate necessary resources towards the development of inclusive and participatory national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, in line with the Sendai Framework, and promote coherence and integration with climate change adaptation and sustainable development strategies and, where appropriate, incorporate considerations regarding the risk of disaster displacement;**

(b) **States strengthen or consider creating participatory, inclusive, cross-sectoral national and local disaster risk governance mechanisms and consider making disaster risk reduction a clear legal obligation under national law;**

(c) **States use the online Sendai Framework monitor to track progress against all indicators for the global targets under the Sendai Framework and the disaster risk reduction targets under Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13 and augment efforts to create or enhance systems for recording disaster losses**

and establishing baselines, underpinned by data that are disaggregated by income, sex, age and disability, and mobilize national statistics offices in the systematic collection and validation of disaster risk data across sectors;

(d) States, including ministries of finance, economic planning and central banks, increase domestic investments in disaster risk reduction, including resilient infrastructure; integrate disaster risk reduction in integrated national financing frameworks for the Sustainable Development Goals; and, with the support of international financial institutions, regional development banks and the United Nations system, develop comprehensive disaster risk reduction financing strategies and incentivize investments in resilience and prevention;

(e) States enhance international cooperation, global partnerships and the provision of means of implementation, with North-South cooperation complemented by South-South and triangular cooperation, as a means of supporting the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as middle-income countries facing specific challenges, in the implementation of the Sendai Framework and, in that context, ensure that bilateral and multilateral development assistance is risk-informed;

(f) Stakeholders, including parliamentarians, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and the media, proactively engage at the national, subnational and local levels in the implementation of the Sendai Framework and integrate disaster risk reduction into their work and foster coherence across the dimensions of disaster risk reduction, climate action and sustainable development;

(g) All entities of the United Nations system continue to integrate disaster risk reduction and the implementation of the Sendai Framework into their work at the national level, under the leadership of the new generation of resident coordinators, guided by the Senior Leadership Group on Disaster Risk Reduction, and in line with commitments made under the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, including integration of disaster risk reduction into United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, common country assessments and other integrated analysis tools, and into entity-specific national strategies;

(h) States consider augmenting financial contributions to the United Nations trust fund for disaster reduction and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in support of the efforts of countries to manage and reduce their disaster risk and implement the Sendai Framework.
