

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, May 2019

United Nations Co-Chairs' Summary

Resilience Dividend: Towards sustainable and inclusive societies.

Introduction

1. The sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place from 13 to 17 May 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. It was co-chaired by Mr. Manuel Sager, State Secretary, Government of Switzerland, and Ms. Mami Mizutori, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. Participants attended from 182 countries. The Global Platform built on the Regional and Sub-Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction hosted by the Governments of Armenia, Colombia, Italy, Mongolia, and Tunisia in 2018.
2. The Global Platform's focus on "Resilience Dividend: Toward Sustainable and Inclusive Societies" will provide a critical contribution to the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Climate Action Summit. The Global Platform called for accelerated action in achieving the seven targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and highlighted the importance of disaster risk reduction to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the contribution of the Sendai Framework towards the Paris Agreement, the Agenda for Humanity, the New Urban Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway.
3. The Global Platform was preceded by the Second Multi Hazard Early Warning Conference, the fourth session of the World Reconstruction Conference, the Stakeholder Forum and the Science-Policy Forum.
4. Progress towards gender parity and accessibility was evident throughout the platform, although further work is needed. Half of the panelists were women and forty percent of participants were women; amplifying the voice of women leaders. The 2019 Global Platform was also the most accessible to-date with more than 120 persons with disabilities in attendance.

Stocktaking of progress

5. The 2019 Global Platform took stock of the implementation of the Sendai Framework, based on the data submitted by the Member States to the Sendai Framework Monitor, analysis from the United Nations 2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2019), and other recent reports such as the Global Warming of 1.5°C report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. GAR 2019 was launched on the first day of the Global Platform.
6. Progress has been made in implementing the Sendai Framework. 116 countries are reporting through the Sendai Framework Monitor. This is a crucial step towards a better understanding of risk and the risk-informed implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). New and innovative guidance, tools, and instruments have been developed collaboratively, including in the areas of capacity development, health and displacement.. Commitment to collaboration was evident, as illustrated by the first common Stakeholder Declaration issued at the Global Platform. Countries showed a strong commitment to multilateralism in pursuit of integrated approaches to disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development.
7. The Global Platform made the social, environmental, and economic case for disaster risk reduction. Examples and research-based evidence provided proof of the multiple dividends of risk-informed decision-making to build resilience, and not only to avoid loss. In practice, however, the application of risk-informed investment and development decisions are still the exception rather than the rule.
8. Ninety-one countries have reported the development of disaster risk reduction strategies. However, the current pace of implementation is not fast enough to meet the 2020 deadline for Target (e) and may delay further progress on other targets.



Left to right: Marwa Elmenshawey, Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism, Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Manuel Sager, Secretary of State for Switzerland and Kirsi Madi, Director, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Image: United Nations

9. Disaster mortality globally continues on a downward trend; the bulk of the human cost associated with natural hazards occurred in low and middle-income countries. In absolute terms, disaster-related economic losses, which continue to rise, are mostly attributed to high-income nations. However, the world's most at-risk population, particularly in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States, bear the highest toll relative to their economic capacity.
10. The risk landscape is changing quickly. Diverse risks, ranging from climate and biological to cyber risk have to be accounted for. The addition of new hazards has brought new constituents, including finance, environmental, and private sector actors, to the risk conversation. GAR 2019 stresses that risk is complex and non-linear. Expanded understanding of the full impact and the cascading effects of natural and man-made hazards is critical.
11. Awareness and understanding of imminent, interconnected, and rapidly shifting risks is insufficient across the board. A wealth of essential information from new non-traditional data pools is not fully tapped into. Disaggregated data by sex, age, and disability are still lacking to a large extent.
12. Commitments towards an inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction, recognizing the indispensable role of disproportionately affected at-risk groups, including women, displaced people, persons with disabilities, elderly, and children in disaster risk reduction have not yet sufficiently translated into action.
13. The current pace and scale of action will not achieve the targets of the Sendai Framework, which in turn will jeopardize the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. The Global Platform recognized these challenges and called for greater ambition, commitment, and leadership by all governments and stakeholders.

Taking the Sendai Framework implementation forward

14. A critical, fundamental and urgent re-examination of how we deal with risk is needed. The past is not a sufficient indicator for the future. An interconnected approach is required to address systemic risks supported by multi-hazard and multidisciplinary risk assessment. The Global Risk Assessment Framework will facilitate this approach. Experts from science, the United Nations, and the private sector launched a new technical working group to develop a definitions' list for the Sendai Framework hazards. These, among others, will contribute to enhancing understanding of the new dimensions of disaster risk. Such efforts will increase our understanding of risk, inform decision-making, and transform behaviour.
15. Comprehensive and disaggregated data harnessed across time and space is crucial to effectively define exposure and vulnerability, particularly for those most at risk. We need to make better use of existing data for information and action.

16. Availability of and access to data which serves as the basis for risk disclosure and its pricing must be ensured. Countries called for enhanced assistance on developing disaster loss databases, which are indispensable for reporting. Increased collaboration between local and central governments and stakeholders, including private sector and civil society, can transform risk data into understandable and usable information.
17. Achieving the “Resilience Dividend” will require countries, communities, enterprises, and individuals to increase capacities to participate in preventing and reducing risks. Addressing the capacity needs of governments and stakeholders to advance Sendai Framework implementation in coherence with other global frameworks requires a more strategic approach to capacity development supported by adequate funding.
18. Disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, and programmes, including risk assessments, should target drivers of inequality and exclusion and be informed by a human rights-based approach. Legislation and governance mechanisms should ensure the needs of the most at risk and marginalized groups are prioritized.
19. Voices of women, including at the grassroots, should be reflected at all stages of development and implementation of national and local strategies. Gender-sensitive and responsive approaches contribute to stronger disaster risk reduction interventions, reducing the vulnerability of women in times of disaster. Their leadership role must be strengthened. In order to translate commitments to women’s inclusion into real progress, increased attention and targeted resources are required.
20. Children, youth, and young professionals are leading the way in disaster risk reduction and climate action. Greater efforts are required to institutionalize their engagement and appropriately draw on their capacities.
21. The role of media should be strengthened to effectively contribute to disaster risk reduction by ensuring critical communication infrastructure is in place and functions, providing information to help communities reduce risk and how to seek help in a disaster event. Mechanisms need to be developed for better cooperation between national media organisations and United Nations entities dealing with information crucial for disaster risk reduction.
22. Regional approaches to disaster risk reduction should be promoted not only as a means to address transboundary risks but also to inform national strategies in pursuit of coherent planning and implementation. Regional and sub-regional cooperation and platforms facilitate exchange of experiences and forge networks.
23. Governments should accelerate efforts to develop and implement disaster risk reduction strategies, aligned with the Sendai Framework to achieve Target (e) by 2020, and in coherence with National Adaptation Plans, Nationally Determined Contributions and National Development Plans. Countries must step up systematic reporting to the Sendai Framework Monitor.
24. Local disaster risk reduction strategies and plans are necessary to ensure the implementation of national strategies. National governments should enable the development and implementation of local plans and strategies. In turn, the implementation of these local plans should inform the revision of national strategies. Development and implementation of local strategies and plans should be locally-led, guided by community knowledge, and built upon local solutions, including city-to-city learning. Current urbanization patterns require long-term, integrated urban-rural planning, sustainable financing frameworks and the cooperation of all levels of government and other stakeholders to build resilient cities.
25. Disaster resilient infrastructure is key to achieve the vision of risk-informed development. There is a strong need to capitalize on the co-benefits of ecosystem-based approaches and leverage the complementarity across blue, green and grey infrastructure.
26. Nature- and ecosystem-based approaches should be promoted to achieve the objectives of resilience dividend and integrated in disaster risk reduction strategies at all levels. The stakeholders committed to engage with the nature-based solutions and resilience and adaptation track of the Climate Action Summit.
27. Planning and action to manage biological hazards, including epidemics and pandemics needs to be strengthened, while enhancing investments in resilient health facilities.
28. Governments and the international community must do more to reduce the risk of disaster displacement before disasters strike. Disaster risk reduction strategies and policies should address the drivers and consequences of disaster displacement and contribute to durable solutions. Climate change mitigation policies are necessary towards this end. Climate and disaster risks also need to be considered as factors of migration.
29. Budgetary allocation for disaster risk reduction by all sectors at all levels is needed. This can be supported by aligning integrated national financing frameworks for sustainable development with disaster risk reduction strategies. Participants called for greater devolution of financial resources to local authorities to empower them and identify tailored and community-focused approaches to risk reduction, including through forecast-based financing. Countries also called on donors and international financial institutions to integrate disaster risk reduction in their development assistance, with dedicated mechanisms for vulnerable and exposed countries in debt distress.

30. Disaster risk reduction requires a layered financial strategy bringing to bear all sources of financing. While risk transfer, contingency funds, deferred drawdown options, and debt restructuring play important roles, they are not sufficient to incentivize risk reduction and finance building back better. Fiscal policies should integrate prevention as a core element of disaster risk reduction financing in order to build resilience. Financing mechanisms should break the vicious cycle of poverty, inequality, and elevated risk-exposure, while reducing aid-dependence for disaster prevention, response and reconstruction. Participants called for further exploration and scaling-up of innovative market-driven products for risk financing.
31. Ministries of finance and planning should ensure financial and development strategies and plans are risk-informed. Engaging central banks, regulators, and credit rating agencies for disaster risk-informed financial decisions is essential. The private sector is a strategic partner to achieve resilient economies and communities. Public-private partnerships are essential for the scale of innovations and investments needed. Standards must be developed to define the risk reduction responsibilities of private sector investors in public-private partnerships. Furthermore, engaging medium, small, and micro enterprises in disaster risk reduction is critical. The overarching message of the Global Platform was that resilience pays off.
32. The interplay between disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, and fragility should be recognized, including in the context of water-related risk. The Global Platform underscored the security implications of climate change and disasters and encouraged more context-specific disaster risk reduction and resilience building strategies in conflict-affected countries and fragile contexts based on risk assessments that integrate disaster, climate risks and conflicts.
33. Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States should be the focus of increased technical, capacity building, and financial support to reduce disaster risk and build resilience. Disaster risk reduction should be considered as a priority in the next phase of implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action.
34. "Building Back Better" provides an opportunity to rewrite the story of exclusion and marginalization that often determines people's vulnerability and exposure to disasters. Community participation and risk-informed entrepreneurship should be at the center of recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.
35. Preparedness and reconstruction must be based on disaster loss data, and risk assessments. Implementing multi-hazard early warning systems that lead to early action should be improved as part of disaster risk reduction frameworks.
36. Achieving a more integrated approach to multi-hazard early warning systems requires new ways of thinking about the intergovernmental and cross-sectoral working arrangements and partnerships to deliver end-to-end and people-centred systems.

Final considerations

37. International cooperation and multilateral action remain essential to manage the global and systemic nature of disaster risk and to provide the necessary support to developing countries. At the same time, inclusive local action is the way to success in managing disaster risk and its cascading effects.
38. Participants noted the continued critical role of the Global Platform to review progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework and identify policy recommendations for action, and the need for a midterm review of the Sendai Framework. The work of the United Nations system at all levels is pivotal to ensure impact at country level through the reformed United Nations Development System, Country Teams, and Resident Coordinators.
39. There was a strong understanding that the deliberations of the Global Platform were a critical contribution that ought to be taken into account in the formulation of the political outcomes and the deliberations by States, including key intergovernmental reviews in 2019.
40. The overarching message of the Global Platform was that resilience pays off. A strong call was made to leaders at all levels to ensure resilience dividends for all. Risk-informed investments are essential for sustainable development and inclusive societies.
41. Participants called for the Climate Action Summit 2019 and the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to affirm the catalytic role of disaster risk reduction in scaling up action on climate adaptation and resilience. Participants also reaffirmed that the Sendai Framework is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and called for greater political commitment to fully integrate disaster risk reduction in the implementation of the SDGs.