



SUMMARY OF THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: 14-18 MARCH 2015

The third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) took place from 14-18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan. Participants discussed and adopted the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, an internationally agreed plan to make the world safer from natural hazards. In addition to intergovernmental negotiations on the details of the successor agreement, the conference comprised ministerial roundtables, high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues, working sessions and many other events organized in and around the conference venue at the Sendai International Centre.

Negotiations toward the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR), which began in July 2014, progressed at the WCDRR, and took place largely in informal consultations on the sidelines of the conference's Main Committee. Intense discussions culminated in the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in a closing plenary that took place at midnight on the final day.

Approximately 6,500 delegates attended the conference, including representatives of intergovernmental organizations, UN entities, NGOs, and the private sector, leading Margareta Wahlström, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on DRR, to call this "a truly multi-stakeholder conference." Participants included 187 states, 25 Heads of State and Government and 100 ministerial-level delegates, in addition to many other senior leaders. An estimated 40,000 people took part in a range of conference-related events.

During a number of award ceremonies, the WCDRR also recognized the achievements in DRR, documentary film and research. The 2015 Sasakawa Award for DRR went to Allan Lavell, Costa Rica, while four films on DRR won awards in various categories, and the All India Institute of Local Self-Government received a "Risk Award" for their innovative approach involving local communities in planning for risk.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WCDRR

Hazards, such as floods and droughts, and the impacts of extreme events such as earthquakes and tsunamis, are becoming more frequent and intense, with devastating consequences for

people and communities. Compounding the situation, poor planning, poverty and a range of other underlying factors create conditions of vulnerability that result in insufficient capacity to cope with hazards and disasters. Action to reduce risk has grown in importance on the international agenda and many see this as essential to safeguarding sustainable development efforts and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as being a key component of the post-2015 development agenda.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) includes all the policies, strategies and measures that can make people, cities and countries more resilient to hazards and reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters. Recognizing that natural hazards can threaten anyone unexpectedly, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) system builds on partnerships and takes a global approach to disaster reduction, seeking to involve every individual and community in moving towards the goals of reducing the loss of lives, socio-economic setbacks and environmental damage caused by natural hazards.

INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION: An increase in human casualties and property damage caused by disasters in the 1980s motivated the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1989 to declare the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the WCDRR	1
WCDRR report	3
General Exchange of Views	3
Ministerial Roundtables	4
High-Level Partnership Dialogues	4
Working Sessions	5
Main Committee	6
Closing Plenary	8
Outcome Documents	8
A Brief Analysis of the WCDRR	11
Upcoming Meetings	13
Glossary	15

(IDNDR) (resolution 44/236). The aim of the IDNDR was to address disaster prevention in the context of a range of hazards, including: earthquakes, windstorms, tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, wildfires, grasshopper and locust infestations, and drought and desertification.

FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER

REDUCTION: One of the main outcomes of the IDNDR was the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action, adopted in 1994 at the first World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama, Japan. The Yokohama Strategy set guidelines for action on prevention, preparedness and mitigation of disaster risk. These guidelines were based on a set of principles that stress the importance of risk assessment, disaster prevention and preparedness, the capacity to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, and early warning. The principles also stated that the international community should share technology to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, while demonstrating a strong political determination in the field of disaster reduction.

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER

REDUCTION: At its 54th session in 1999, the UNGA decided to continue the activities on disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction carried out during the IDNDR through the establishment of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). An Inter-Agency Secretariat and an Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) for the implementation of the ISDR were also established (resolutions 54/219 and 56/195, respectively). Among its mandated tasks, the IATF/DR was to convene *ad hoc* expert meetings on issues related to disaster reduction.

SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER

REDUCTION: The second World Conference on Disaster Reduction convened from 18-22 January 2005 in Kobe, Japan. The aim of the conference was to increase the international profile of DRR, promote its integration into development planning and practice, and strengthen local and national capacities to address the causes of disasters that hamper development. The 168 states attending the conference adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA) and the Hyogo Declaration. The HFA was endorsed by the UNGA in Resolution 60/195 and committed governments to five priorities for action to: ensure that DRR is a national and local priority, with a strong institutional basis for implementation; identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning; use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; reduce the underlying risk factors; and strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DRR: In 2006, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs launched a consultative process to consider practical ways to strengthen the ISDR system to support governments in meeting their commitments to implement the HFA. As outlined in the UN Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of the ISDR, the main aims were to extend participation of governments and organizations, raise the profile of disaster reduction, and construct a more coherent international effort to support national

disaster reduction activities. A result of the consultations was the proposal to convene the Global Platform for DRR as an expanded and reformed successor to the IATF/DR. The Global Platform was envisaged to serve as the primary multi-stakeholder forum for all parties involved in DRR in order to raise awareness on DRR, share experiences, and guide the ISDR system.

FIRST SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR

DRR: The first session of the Global Platform was held from 5-7 June 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. It included a high-level dialogue on DRR challenges and opportunities, a series of workshops on DRR as a national priority and integrating DRR into sector agendas, and plenary sessions on assessing and implementing the HFA. Discussions resulted in a Chair's Summary that was included in the UN Secretary-General's report to the UNGA on the implementation of the ISDR.

SECOND SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM

FOR DRR: The second session of the Global Platform was held from 16-19 June 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. Participants assessed progress made on DRR since the Global Platform's first session, and discussed increasing investment in DRR, reducing disaster risk in a changing climate, and enabling community resilience through preventive action. The Chair's Summary of the meeting helped set the agenda for the global DRR community's preparations for the UN climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009, as well as for the Mid-term Review of the HFA.

INFORMAL THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE 65TH

SESSION OF THE UNGA ON DRR: This debate took place at UN headquarters in New York, US, on 9 February 2011. Organized under the auspices of the office of the UNGA President, with support from UNISDR, the debate consisted of two panel discussions: the first panel focused on promoting investment in DRR, while the second addressed the challenges of DRR in urban settings and how to build resilience in cities. The outcomes of the debate contributed to the agenda of the third session of the Global Platform for DRR.

MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE HFA 2005-2015: The Mid-term Review, released in March 2011, highlights progress in DRR, critically analyzing the extent to which implementation of the HFA has progressed, as well as identifying ways to assist countries and their institutional partners to increase commitment, resourcing and efforts in its further implementation. According to the Review, progress in DRR is occurring, especially institutionally in the passing of national legislation, establishment of early warning systems, and strengthening of disaster preparedness and response. The review raised concerns about: the lack of systematic multi-hazard risk assessments and early warning systems, factoring in social and economic vulnerabilities; the poor integration of DRR into sustainable development policies and planning at national and international levels; and the insufficient level of implementation of the HFA at the local level.

THIRD SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR

DRR: The third session of the Global Platform was held from 8-13 May 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland, under the theme "Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow – Increased Investment in Local Action." The meeting built on the findings and recommendations of the Global Platform's second session held in 2009, as well

as the results of the Mid-term Review of the HFA and the 2011 Global Assessment Report on DRR. Discussions focused mainly on reconstruction and recovery, the economics of DRR, and synergies with the international climate change and development agendas.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DRR: The fourth session of the Global Platform convened from 19-23 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the status of the HFA and encourage information sharing among decision makers, development partners, experts and practitioners. It also provided tools and methodologies, especially relating to economic analyses of, and investment in DRR. The outcomes of the meeting included a Chair's Summary and the Communiqué of the High-Level Dialogue.

REGIONAL PLATFORMS: Regional intergovernmental organizations have increasingly taken responsibility for follow-up of risk reduction activities and HFA implementation, organizing a series of multi-stakeholder platforms for DRR in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, Europe and the Americas. The regional platforms provide a forum for institutionalizing the exchange of information and knowledge among national stakeholders,

PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR WCDRR: The 68th session of UNGA, in 2013, established an Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee to review organizational and substantive preparations for the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (resolution 68/211). The Preparatory Committee was steered by a 10-member Bureau, co-chaired by Finland and Thailand. The Bureau had two representatives from each region and conference host Japan was an *ex officio* member. The Preparatory Committee met three times, 14-15 July 2014, 17-18 November 2014, and 13 March 2015 to agree on the agenda and rules of procedure, as well as to develop the conference programme of work and a draft post-2015 framework on DRR.

WCDRR REPORT

On Saturday morning, 14 March, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed delegates to Sendai, highlighting their important role in adopting a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Delegates elected, by acclamation, Eriko Yamatani, Minister of State for Disaster Management, Japan, as conference president. Yamatani then received Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan on the podium, where they listened to several of the opening addresses.

Yamatani welcomed progress in the decade since the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), noting its value as a guideline for global action on DRR, and adding that a strengthened post-2015 framework is required to address gaps.

Ban said an ambitious outcome at the WCDRR will put the world on a path to a new sustainable development agenda in 2015, together with the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a meaningful climate change agreement. He expressed the conference's solidarity with the people of Vanuatu

in the face of Cyclone Pam and called on delegates to build true resilience through establishing strong bonds among countries and communities.

Shinzō Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, expressed appreciation for the international community's assistance in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, emphasized the concept of "building back better," and called on participants to share experiences and lessons learned in order to agree on a strong post-2015 framework on DRR.

Stressing the need for new actions to address DRR and climate change concurrently, Laurent Fabius, incoming president of the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 21), launched an appeal to assist the most vulnerable through a "Climate Disaster Warning" mechanism. He expressed hope that COP 21 would result in a "Paris Climate Alliance" comprising a universal and differentiated agreement, national contributions, financial means and a "solutions agenda."

Other speakers called for strengthening of international cooperation and partnerships to enhance resilience, keeping in mind the "bigger picture" of needs at the grassroots level, and using WCDRR and other international processes in 2015 as opportunities to present "concrete deliverables."

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates adopted, by acclamation, the agenda of the conference (A/CONF.224/1/Rev.1), the programme of work (A/CONF.224/2) and its addendum (A/CONF.224/2/Add.1), and the rules of procedure (A/CONF.224/3).

They elected Conference Vice-Presidents by acclamation, including an *ex officio* Vice-President from the host country, Japan, and two Vice-Presidents from each regional group: Bangladesh and Thailand for Asia-Pacific; the Czech Republic and Russian Federation for Eastern Europe; Ecuador and Jamaica for Latin America and the Caribbean; Finland and Switzerland for Western Europe and Others; and Egypt and South Sudan for Africa. They elected Toni Frisch (Switzerland) as Rapporteur-General.

Delegates agreed to form a Main Committee to take forward negotiations of the draft post-2015 framework for DRR. They requested the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee, Päivi Kairamo (Finland) and Thani Thongphakdi (Thailand), to continue to serve in the same roles on the Main Committee.

Delegates elected Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Denmark, Jamaica, Namibia, Senegal, the Russian Federation and the US to serve on the Credentials Committee.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Delegates delivered statements throughout the conference with many highlighting their national actions on DRR, citing their experiences of recovery from disasters and noting the importance of 2015 as a critical year for finalizing several multilateral frameworks.

Shinzō Abe, Prime Minister, Japan, announced funding of US\$4 billion for the Sendai Cooperation Initiative for DRR, focusing on institution-building, material assistance and the promotion of regional cooperation. He said DRR "must evolve" together with the post-2015 development agenda.

In the wake of Cyclone Pam's destruction, Vanuatu President Baldwin Lonsdale informed delegates that up to 260,000 people in his country could be affected and appealed for assistance.

Han Seung-soo, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for DRR and Water, recognized progress on early warning systems and disaster preparedness, but cautioned that lack of capacity in developing countries still limits their ability to cope with disasters. He noted that, in the last 30 years, estimated costs due to disasters amounted to US\$3.5 trillion, and concluded stating, "Sustainability must start in Sendai."

Over the course of the WCDRR, approximately 144 governments, 40 intergovernmental organizations and nine non-governmental Major Groups delivered formal statements in the general exchange of views.

The statements and webcasts can be viewed at: <http://www.wcdr.org/conference/programme/statements>

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLES

Reconstructing After Disasters – Build Back Better:

This roundtable on Sunday, 15 March, chaired by Numan Kutrulmuş, Deputy Prime Minister, Turkey, discussed national experiences of post-disaster rebuilding, with many countries emphasizing the importance of linking reconstruction to long-term development planning. Many participants acknowledged the value of a "human-based" and inclusive approach. The need for international cooperation, predictable funding and partnerships with the insurance sector were also key themes of the discussion.

International Cooperation in Support of a Post-2015

Framework for DRR: Rajnath Singh, Minister of Home Affairs, India, moderated the event, which took place on Sunday, 15 March. Many countries highlighted their need for technical and financial assistance to implement national and regional DRR strategies. The session also featured discussion on underlying drivers of DRR, particularly climate change. Several countries called for enhanced links between DRR and the conferences later in 2015 on Financing for Development, the post-2015 development agenda, and climate change.

A summary of Sunday's ministerial roundtables is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2612e.html>.

Governing Disaster Risk – Overcoming Challenges: The roundtable on Monday, 16 March, chaired by María del Pilar Cornejo, Minister Secretary for Risk Management, Ecuador, featured the sharing of experiences of legislative and policy measures to support disaster preparedness at national and local levels. Countries touched upon issues such as: the need for capacity building at all levels, the importance of religious and cultural traditions for resilience, and the importance of a multi-sectoral approach within governments.

Reducing Disaster Risk in Urban Settings: Pravin Jamnadas Gordhan, Minister, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa, chaired the session, which took place on Monday, 16 March, focusing on urbanization trends and the challenges they pose for DRR. Many spoke on the risks to urban areas posed by climate-related disasters. Others issues mentioned include the particular needs of vulnerable city-dwellers and the need for public-private partnerships in the context of energy and infrastructure solutions.

A summary of Monday's ministerial roundtables is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2613e.html>

Public Investment Strategies for DRR: Raed Arafat, Secretary of State, Department of Emergency Situations, Romania, chaired the event on Tuesday, 17 March, which mainly focused on national funding mechanisms for DRR. Examples mentioned by countries included: making use of tax revenue and incentives; harmonizing climate change and DRR funds; promoting investments in infrastructure; ensuring the involvement of finance ministries in project planning; and addressing corruption in the construction industry. Several countries also noted the importance of international cooperation.

A summary of Tuesday's ministerial roundtable is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2614e.html>

HIGH-LEVEL PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUES

UN High-Level Meeting: Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), moderated the discussion with several UN heads of agencies on Saturday, 14 March. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon underscored the commitments of the UN to implement the outcomes of the Sendai conference. Debates addressed how DRR can be guided by a people-oriented perspective; promote a culture of prevention; and enable the UN to "deliver as one." A summary of this discussion is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2611e.html>

Mobilizing Women's Leadership in DRR: Riz Khan, journalist, moderated the session on Saturday, 14 March. Shinzō Abe, Prime Minister, Japan, underscored how women are often at the frontline of disaster response, illustrating their roles as firefighters, evacuation center operators, and primary disaster response providers in the home. The session emphasized that involving women in decision making before, during and after an emergency, ensures better welfare outcomes for women, children and men; and called for the use of disaggregated data to inform DRR targets. A summary of this discussion is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2611e.html>

Risk Sensitive Investments – Public-Private Partnerships:

This session took place on Monday, 16 March. Fuat Oktay, Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority, Turkey, chaired the event. Keynote speaker Gaëlle Olivier, AXA Asia, noted there is now five times the number of disasters annually compared with 50 years ago, with the costs having increased tenfold. Discussions emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships, prevention, engagement of the insurance sector, and trust-building with multiple stakeholders to "build back better." A summary of this discussion is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2613e.html>

Inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DRM) –

Governments, Communities and Groups Acting Together: On Tuesday, 17 March, Noel Arscott, Minister of Local Government & Community Development, Jamaica, chaired the session and Veronica Pedrosa, media correspondent, moderated it. Anote Tong, President, Kiribati, delivered a keynote speech, highlighting the importance of DRR legislation and the need for improvement in access to finance to address DRR and climate change challenges. Panelists discussed, *inter alia*, the role of local governments and youth in promoting DRR, and the need

to scale up DRR solutions and promote media and academic engagement. A summary of this discussion is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2614e.html>

WORKING SESSIONS

As part of the multi-stakeholder segment, working sessions were held throughout the conference, organized according to four main themes: Progress on Existing HFA priorities, Emerging risks, Commitments to Implementation, and Accelerating Implementation.

SATURDAY, 14 MARCH: Technological Hazards – From Risk Reduction to Recovery: Elhadj As Sy, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, moderated the session, which considered the role and importance of local-level engagement in the management of technological and nuclear disasters as well as hearing lessons learned from various case studies.

Disaster Risk Transfer and Insurance: Arup Chatterjee, Asian Development Bank, moderated this session, in which delegates heard from a panel of senior government and industry representatives that insurance is a critical part of the DRR agenda, and needs greater prominence in the post-2015 framework.

Commitments to Safe Schools: Kim Sung-joo, Head of the Korean Red Cross, moderated this session, which addressed country initiatives on school safety, focusing on: recovery and rehabilitation; preparedness; response; prevention; and mitigation. The event invited participants to join the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools and highlighted the importance of early warning measures.

A summary of Saturday's working sessions is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2611e.html>

SUNDAY, 15 MARCH: Governance and Development Planning at National and Local Levels: Rolf Alter, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), moderated the session, which considered the changing nature of disaster risk governance and opportunities for investment in governance. Measures discussed included incorporating DRR in building standards and incentives, investing in the "software" of human capacity, and reinforcing legal and normative mechanisms to strengthen DRR as a practice.

Global Risk Trends: Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, UN Resident Coordinator in Malaysia, chaired the session, which focused on the presentation of the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 (GAR 2015). The report concluded that while some DRR progress has been made over the past decade, many underlying risks, including climate change, are in fact growing. The report also recommended a stronger link between DRR and long-term development planning.

Applying Science and Technology to DRR Decision Making: Carlos Nobre, Centro Nacional de Monitoramento e Alertas de Desastres Naturais, Brazil, chaired the session on Saturday afternoon, which noted with approbation science and technology's clearly articulated role throughout the post-2015 framework for DRR and the critical role scientific findings would therefore play in the cost-benefit analysis needed to drive effective DRR action.

Reducing the Risk of Epidemics and Pandemics: Bruce Aylward, World Health Organization, moderated the session, which focused on epidemics and pandemics, and related disaster risks. Experiences were shared from Thailand, Sweden, Liberia and the Latin American and Caribbean region. Alluding to the recent Ebola outbreak, several participants recognized that international preparedness remains limited and that health-related risks must be addressed in the post-2015 framework for DRR.

A summary of Sunday's working sessions is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2612e.html>

MONDAY, 16 MARCH: Towards a Resilient Tourism Sector: Veronica Pedrosa, media correspondent, moderated this session, which considered the incorporation of the tourism sector into the post-2015 framework for DRR, the role of the hotel industry during disasters, and the Hotel Resilient Initiative that aims to develop an auditable system to ensure preparedness. Participants raised questions on, *inter alia*, building resilience in the tourism industry in the face of terrorism, and engaging the insurance industry in promoting resilience.

Preparing for Disaster-induced Relocation: Nadeem Ahmed, Lieutenant General and former Chair of the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan, chaired this session, which debated: the need to focus on mobility and relocation in the post-2015 framework for DRR; the importance of providing livelihood support and not creating new socio-economic vulnerabilities in the place of relocation; the need for international guidelines for planned relocation; and experiences of relocation from Pakistan, Latin America and the Caribbean, Syria and other places.

A summary of Monday's working sessions is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2613e.html>

TUESDAY, 17 MARCH: Food Security, Disaster-resilient Agriculture and Nutrition: Amir Abdulla, Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme, moderated the session, which highlighted the need to strengthen DRR planning in agriculture and presented national experiences of resilience building to improve crop diversity, resistance to pests and storage systems, as well as regional efforts to share and deliver climate information services.

Children and Youth – Don't Decide My Future Without Me: Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Special Envoy for Youth, moderated this session. Anthony Lake, Director-General, UNICEF, noted the growing vulnerability of children and youth and, together with several other panelists, emphasized the importance of including children and youth in DRR decision making.

Proactive Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Inclusive DRR: Monthian Buntan, UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, moderated the session, which focused on advancements of policies and measures that could promote inclusiveness of people with disabilities in DRR. Main themes included: role play as means of promoting early warning messages with people with disabilities; the need to communicate with the deaf-blind; and the importance of planning "with" and not "for" communities.

A summary of Tuesday's working sessions is available here: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2614e.html>

MAIN COMMITTEE

The Main Committee convened formally on the afternoon of Saturday, 14 March. Delegates agreed to meet on an informal basis for the rest of the week, in the hope of making rapid progress on the draft post-2015 framework for DRR issued on 28 January. The Committee only convened formally again on the evening of Wednesday, 18 March to recommend adoption of the agreed documents.

Delegates commenced reviewing the draft text, focusing on the preamble. On the toll of disasters from 2005-2015, delegates agreed to replace a reference to “vulnerable groups” with “people in vulnerable situations.” On a reference to underlying disaster risk drivers, they agreed to refer to “weak institutional arrangements,” rather than “weak governance,” and to mention, separately, the need for “strengthened governance” on various levels. On limited access to technology as a driver of risk, one country raised concerns about such language undermining intellectual property regimes, whereas others said the concern was misplaced, as the text was only descriptive. They also discussed a reference to “conflict and foreign occupation situations” as drivers of risk, with some countries saying that conflict is a political issue that should be dealt with in other forums, and others fearing the lack of this reference could make achievement of post-2015 DRR targets more difficult.

See <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2611e.html> for more details on Saturday’s discussions.

On Sunday morning, delegates discussed international cooperation. Delegates’ views diverged with regard to the need for “predictable and additional” finance, with many developing countries stressing that the context of the text is descriptive and does not refer to the source of this finance. Several developed countries disagreed, underscoring that sources of the finance need to be addressed. Various developed countries supported the provision of technology transfer on mutually agreed terms (MAT), while a number of developing countries opposed this, arguing that MAT would place conditionalities on technology transfer. Discussions on the financial and technology transfer aspects of international cooperation were then transferred to “informal informal” discussions.

Delegates also addressed the issue of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). The main source of contention related to the extent to which climate change can be seen as contributing to the need for enhanced DRR action. Several developed countries stressed that the principle of CBDR should not be evoked in the context of DRR. Developing countries said that CBDR is a central pillar of sustainable development and international law. No agreement was reached and discussions on this issue also moved into “informal informals.”

Delegates then discussed, *inter alia*, concerns regarding references to “accountability” and “foreign occupation situations,” as well as language relating to international mechanisms. They agreed to remove the brackets around small island developing states (SIDS), recognizing their special status.

On Sunday afternoon, the Committee continued discussions on the seven proposed global DRR targets, facilitated by Amb. Wayne McCook (Jamaica). On reducing disaster mortality by 2030, some delegates reiterated the importance of focusing

on measurable and concrete targets, while others preferred qualitative language. The term “per capita” became a concern as some cited the risk of imposing an additional burden on developing country citizens, while others noted the possibility of contradictions in the text between national and global goals. After consultations, delegates agreed to “substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015.”

On a possible target for international cooperation to support developing countries in implementing DRR, no agreement was reached and informal discussions continued in the evening.

See <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2612e.html> for more details on Sunday’s discussions.

On Monday, discussions continued until the end of the afternoon, when the full Committee met, aiming to clean up the text as far as possible so as to leave time for a discussion on Tuesday of the proposed political declaration. Several edits to the text were agreed, but the issues of international cooperation, technology transfer, a reference to human rights and the right to development, as well as treatment of occupied territories, and CBDR, remained unresolved by early evening. Detailed textual discussions continued well into the night, with delegates only concluding at 3:00 am.

On Tuesday morning, the host country made an appeal for delegates to show “the spirit of compromise” to enable the post-2015 framework for DRR to be agreed in time for its adoption at the closing plenary session, scheduled for Wednesday morning. Discussions during the morning focused on: the likely need for UNISDR to be significantly “more activist” in implementing a post-2015 DRR framework, especially in relation to interacting with other sustainable development processes; UNISDR’s limited resources compared with many other UN agencies; possible review processes for the post-2015 framework for DRR potentially including the UN General Assembly’s integrated and coordinated follow-up processes; the timing of periodic progress reviews; and establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental expert working group to develop possible indicators to measure progress on DRR.

At midday on Tuesday, the Co-Chairs circulated two non-papers for discussion, capturing discussions of key unresolved issues: the first dealing with those contained in the preambular text, international cooperation, a description of the expected outcome and goal of the framework, and guiding principles; and the second dealing with technology transfer.

In the afternoon, the Committee reconvened and decided to continue “informal informal” negotiations once more but with two small working groups of twelve countries each to focus on the main unresolved issues: one group on climate change and international cooperation, and the other on technology transfer and other issues. The working groups continued discussions throughout the night.

While some countries indicated they did not feel represented by the newly formed drafting groups, the majority seemed willing to fall in line with some delegations’ calls for a greater level of trust and goodwill.

See <http://www.iisd.ca/vol26/enb2614e.html> for more details on Tuesday’s discussions.

On Wednesday morning, the Main Committee continued to work throughout the day. The WCDRR final plenary and closing ceremony, initially scheduled for midday, were postponed several times, awaiting a final outcome document.

Text from the small group discussions was forwarded to the broader group of delegates for agreement, but delegates continued to face difficulties over language referring to technology transfer, MAT, and “conflict and foreign occupation situations.”

In the preamble, delegates discussed whether a reference to “conflict and foreign occupation situations” should be retained in the context of underlying risk drivers. Many developing countries preferred to maintain the reference to foreign occupation situations, but delete the reference to conflict, while a large number of developed countries preferred to accept the Co-Chair’s proposal to delete the references to both conflict and foreign occupation, as a compromise solution. Some countries argued that both conflict and foreign occupation situations are “political issues,” which are not under the mandate of UNISDR, and should be dealt with in other UN forums. During final negotiations, references to conflict and foreign occupation were deleted.

Also in the preamble, delegates agreed to accept a reference to “accountability for disaster risk creation” needed “at all levels.” They accepted language on “addressing climate change as one of the drivers of disaster risk, while respecting the mandate of the UNFCCC,” and on “strengthening disaster risk governance.”

In the context of “Guiding Principles” for the post-2015 framework for DRR, they agreed to mention “the right to development.”

In the section, “Expected Outcome and Goal,” delegates adopted the seven proposed global targets for DRR, following acceptance of a compromise prepared in the “informal informal” drafting groups on a target on international cooperation, to “substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030.”

“In relation to text on “Guiding Principles,” two developed countries continued to oppose a reference to technology transfer, unless MAT was mentioned. Developing countries stressed that the text on technology transfer described a general need, and that it would not be appropriate to include a mention of MAT, which they saw as belonging in the context of specific commercial transactions. Opposing this view, a large developed country stressed that “the rights of private holders of intellectual property must not be undermined” and insisted on a reference to MAT.

On “Priorities For Action,” a developed country concerned about technology transfer accepted the formulation on the sharing and use of non-sensitive data through “international cooperation, including technology transfer,” under Priority 1 on “Understanding Disaster Risk.” In the text on international cooperation, delegates agreed to note that appropriate technology transfer “on concessional and preferential terms as mutually agreed” is a critically important means of reducing disaster risk. They also agreed to text indicating the need for states to have enhanced access to finance and technology through existing international mechanisms.

Discussion of several other references to technology transfer was deferred until small groups had concluded their consideration of the need for and manner of treatment of MAT in relation to technology transfer. Reporting back to the broader group after consultations, developing countries proposed deleting references to MAT and “concessional and preferential terms as mutually agreed,” in order to respond to the concerns both of those favoring MAT and those favoring broader reference to the language agreed in the Rio+20 outcome, “The Future We Want.” One developed country expressed a strong preference for the term “as mutually agreed,” and the paragraph was deferred for discussion at a later stage of the negotiations.

Also on Priority 1 on “Understanding Disaster Risk,” some delegates opposed the inclusion of references to specific geographic areas, such as coastlines and river basins, while others defended the necessity to be specific. Delegates finally agreed to refer to the need to protect “ecosystems.”

On Priority 3, “Investing in DRR for Resilience,” delegates agreed to reference “healthcare services” as opposed to “health services,” and to include “food and nutrition” in text on provision of services in post-disaster situations. They also agreed to encourage the adoption of policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility “as per national laws and circumstances.”

Delegates also discussed and then agreed to text on strengthening inclusive policies and safety net mechanisms, including in relation to community involvement, basic healthcare services, food security and nutrition.

On international cooperation, regarding support from the UN system for DRR, delegates discussed at length whether the text should call for “additional, predictable and adequate voluntary” financial contributions to the UN Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction. Developing country delegates suggested using the phrase “increased, timely, stable and predictable,” referencing paragraph 25 of UN Resolution 68/211. Developed countries rejected this suggestion, saying that language in resolution 68/211 described a need for, rather than advocating for, mobilization of funds.

Delegates then considered the role of stakeholders, in particular migrants and persons displaced by disasters. A developing country stressed the need to address all vulnerable groups, including persons living under foreign occupation, and, in the context of migration, preferred to refer to persons as being “relocated” by disasters, rather than “displaced.” After protracted discussions, the final text recognizes the contribution of migrants, among other stakeholder groups, to DRR, but excludes references to persons “displaced” or “relocated” by disasters.

Co-Chair Kairamo then invited delegates to consider a name for the post-2015 framework on DRR. A large developing country, having consulted previously with the host country, proposed: “Sendai Framework for Action: Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction towards Building Resilience for All.” Many delegates supported this proposal, with some suggesting adding a timeframe of 2015-2030 and others suggesting removing reference to mainstreaming. Co-Chair Kairamo thanked delegates for their suggestions and indicated a final decision on the name would draw on their discussion.

At 4:30 pm, the Co-Chairs announced the appointment of the host country as facilitator, to propose a “Presidency text” to the Main Committee, in an attempt to resolve outstanding issues and enable the already delayed plenary to start by 7:00 pm. The host country pleaded with delegates to find consensus on outstanding issues. Some countries urged the host country to ensure that already agreed text would be maintained in the new draft. Others asked for clarification on which paragraphs remained unresolved, particularly in relation to technology transfer, where divergence existed on whether agreement had been reached. Delegates adjourned at 5:10 pm, planning to reconvene at 5:55 pm for discussion of a new framework proposed by the Presidency and a draft political declaration.

After long delays, host country facilitator Amb. Kenichi Suganuma, Japan, introduced the President’s Draft of the Post-2015 Framework for DRR to the informal session at around 9:00 pm, inviting delegates to agree on the text by consensus and to refrain from further drafting.

One country stressed the importance of mentioning foreign occupation situations, in view of the vulnerability of people living in this condition and the existence of references to foreign occupation in the Rio+20 Outcome Document, but stated that he supported the Presidency’s proposed text, in the spirit of compromise. Delegates agreed to allow the Secretariat to edit for grammar and style, and the draft text was accepted by consensus and submitted for consideration of the Main Committee.

Delegates then deliberated on the second outcome of the conference, the political declaration, facilitated by Amb. Takeshi Osuga, Japan. Osuga provided an overview of the document and explained the background of the four paragraphs, which builds, he said, on the 2005 Hyogo Declaration and 1994 Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. The Sendai Political Declaration was accepted by consensus and submitted to the Main Committee.

Delegates also reviewed and forwarded for adoption a draft resolution welcoming stakeholders’ expression of voluntary commitments to reduce disaster risk, and inviting the creation of partnerships to implement the post-2015 framework for DRR.

The Main Committee reconvened at 10:08 pm, following the Japanese Ambassador’s handing over of the consensually agreed Presidency’s Text to the Co-Chairs at the end of the informal session.

The Main Committee adopted, by consensus, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/CONF/224/CRP.1) at 10:16 pm, and officially submitted it to the conference plenary session.

The political declaration and resolution acknowledging the voluntary commitments of stakeholders were also adopted.

The Co-Chairs thanked all involved, and Margareta Wahlström, UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative on DRR, particularly thanked the Japanese Ambassador for his facilitation.

The US requested an opportunity to place on record his interpretation of specific elements of the Sendai Framework for DRR, including on the right to development, technology transfer, and finance. Several countries expressed their gratitude to the Co-Chairs, the host, and all delegates and stakeholders involved. Egypt expressed his support for the new framework, but noted

that he did not agree with the decision to delete a reference to “foreign occupation situations” in the context of underlying risk drivers. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm to allow the closing plenary to take place.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary began at 11:44 pm, with opening remarks by WCDRR President Yamatani. She invited María del Pilar Cornejo, Minister of the Secretariat of Risk Management, Ecuador, to report back from the ministerial roundtables under Agenda Item 12. Drawing upon the conclusions of the roundtables, she called for DRR to be a pillar of sustainable development in all countries, and emphasized the need for operational indicators to translate the Sendai Framework into action. Subsequently, Amb. Shameem Ahsan (Bangladesh) reported from the Credentials Committee and the plenary adopted the report (A.CONF.224/4).

The plenary then considered adoption of the final outcomes of the conference. Main Committee Co-Chair Thongphakdi presented the work of the Committee, which, upon recommendation of the Main Committee, the plenary adopted by consensus the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 (A/CONF.224/L.1), the Sendai Declaration (A/CONF.224/L.2), and the Resolution on Voluntary Commitments of Stakeholders (A/CONF.224/L.3). The plenary also adopted resolution A/CONF.224/L.4, proposed by the Group of 77 and China, expressing countries’ gratitude to the Government of Japan as host of the conference.

Rapporteur-General Amb. Toni Frisch (Switzerland) presented the draft report of the conference (A/CONF.224/L.5), on the understanding that certain items would be added to the report following the closure of the conference. The report was adopted.

Margareta Wahlström, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative on DRR, gave a closing speech, thanking all delegates for their hard work, the Government and people of Japan for their hospitality, and staff and others who had contributed to the organization of the conference. She also highlighted four major outcomes of the third WCDRR: the strong focus on local actors; the recognition of the importance of different stakeholder groups in implementing DRR; the strong focus on health-related risks, which were largely absent from the HFA; and the prominence of women and the private sector as DRR actors, as reflected in the adopted Sendai Framework. Wahlström reported that 6,500 participants, including 25 Heads of State and Government and more than 100 ministers, had attended the conference, and that the conference had set a new standard among UN meetings for access by persons with disabilities. She noted the challenges that awaited governments and stakeholders in implementing the Sendai Framework, and highlighted the challenge of incorporating DRR and the results of Sendai in the upcoming UN conferences on development and climate change later in 2015. She gavelled the conference to a close at 12:25 am.

OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030: The Sendai Framework underlines states’ commitment to addressing DRR and resilience building with a renewed sense of urgency in the context of sustainable

development and poverty eradication. The preamble reaffirms all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and recognizes that addressing climate change as one of the drivers of disaster risk, while respecting the mandate of the UNFCCC, represents an opportunity to reduce disaster risk in a meaningful and coherent manner.

Expected Outcome and Goal: The Sendai Framework sets seven targets to assess progress at the global level, which aim to:

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, and lower average per 100,000 global mortality between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015;
- Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, and lower the average global figure per 100,000 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015;
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP by 2030;
- Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030;
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies by 2020;
- Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030; and
- Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

Guiding Principles: The Framework draws on principles contained in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, its Plan of Action, and the Hyogo Framework for Action in formulating principles to guide its implementation, taking into account national circumstances and consistency with domestic laws as well as international obligations and commitments.

The 13 principles emphasize:

- Each state has the primary responsibility to prevent and reduce disaster risk, including through international, regional, subregional, transboundary and bilateral cooperation.
- DRR requires that responsibilities be shared by central governments and relevant national authorities, sectors and stakeholders.
- Managing the risk of disasters is aimed at protecting persons and their property, health, livelihoods and productive assets, as well as cultural and environmental assets, while promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development.
- DRR requires all-of-society engagement, empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest; and a gender, age, disability and cultural perspective.
- DRR and management depend on coordination mechanisms within and across sectors and with relevant stakeholders at all levels, including a clear articulation of responsibilities across private and public stakeholder.

- It is necessary to empower local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk.
- DRR requires a multi-hazard approach and inclusive risk-informed decision-making based on the open exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data, including by sex, age and disability, complemented by traditional knowledge.
- DRR is essential to achieve sustainable development.
- While the drivers of disaster risk may be local, national, regional or global in scope, disaster risks have local and specific characteristics that must be understood for the determination of measures to reduce disaster risk.
- Addressing underlying disaster risk factors is more cost-effective than primary reliance on post-disaster response and recovery.
- In the post-disaster phase, it is critical to reduce disaster risk by “Building Back Better” and increasing public education and awareness of disaster risk.
- Further strengthening of international cooperation, including the fulfillment of respective commitments of official development assistance by developed countries, is essential for effective DRM.
- Developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, SIDS, landlocked developing countries and African countries, as well as middle-income and other countries facing specific disaster risk challenges need adequate, sustainable and timely provision of support, including through finance, technology transfer and capacity building from developed countries.

Priorities for Action: The Sendai Framework includes four “Priorities for Action,” each with a set of key activities at national and local as well as at global and regional levels.

On **Understanding disaster risk**, the first priority, the Framework states that policies and practices for disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment.

On a national and local level, the Framework highlights that it is important to, *inter alia*: promote real-time access to reliable data; periodically assess disaster risks, including existing, emerging and new sources of disaster risk and to promote national strategies to strengthen public education and awareness in DRR.

On a global and regional level, the Framework notes the importance of promoting and enhancing, through international cooperation, including technology transfer, access to and the sharing and use of non-sensitive data, information, as appropriate, communications and geospatial and space-based technologies and related services.

On the second priority, **Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk**, the Framework underlines that strengthening disaster risk governance for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation is necessary.

The Framework states that on a national and local level, it is important to, *inter alia*: mainstream and integrate disaster risk reduction within and across all sectors; adopt and implement national and local disaster risk reduction strategies and plans, across different timescales with targets, indicators and time

frames; and establish and strengthen government coordination forums composed of relevant stakeholders at national and local levels, and a designated national focal point for implementing the post-2015 framework.

On a global and regional level, it also highlights, among other things, that it is important to foster collaboration across global and regional mechanisms and institutions for the implementation and coherence of instruments and tools relevant to DRR, and to promote mutual learning and exchange of good practices and information through, *inter alia*, voluntary and self-initiated peer reviews among interested states.

On the third priority, ***Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience***, the Framework states that public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets, as well as the environment.

On a national and local level, the Framework recognizes, among other things, the importance of disaster risk prevention and reduction measures in critical facilities, in particular schools and hospitals and physical infrastructures, and the need to implement integrated environmental and natural resource management approaches that incorporate DRR.

On a global and regional level, the Framework states that it is important to promote the development and strengthening of disaster risk transfer and sharing mechanisms and instruments in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and to promote and support the development of social safety nets as DRR measures linked to and integrated with livelihood enhancement programmes in order to ensure resilience to shocks at the household and community levels.

On the fourth priority, ***Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction***, the Framework states disasters have demonstrated that the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, which needs to be prepared ahead of the disaster, is a critical opportunity to build back better, including through integrating disaster risk reduction into development measures, and making nations and communities resilient to disasters.

On a national and local level, the Framework identifies 16 key activities, including: preparing, reviewing and periodically updating disaster preparedness and contingency policies, plans and programmes; developing people-centered multi-hazard, multisectoral forecasting and early warning systems; and promoting the resilience of new and existing critical infrastructure.

On a global and regional level, it identifies eight key activities, including: developing and strengthening coordinated regional approaches and operational mechanisms to ensure rapid and effective disaster response in situations that exceed national coping capacities; promoting further development and dissemination of instruments, such as standards and other guidance instruments, to support coordinated action in disaster preparedness and response; and promoting further development of and investment in effective, nationally-compatible, regional

multi-hazard early warning mechanisms and facilitating the sharing and exchange of information across all countries.

Role of Stakeholders: The Framework notes that while states have the overall responsibility for reducing disaster risk it is a shared responsibility between governments and relevant stakeholders. The Framework urges states to encourage action by, *inter alia*: civil society, voluntary and community-based organizations, academia, business and the financial sector, philanthropic institutions, and the media. It also encourages stakeholders to identify and publicize their commitments in support of DRR through the UNISDR website.

International Cooperation and Global Partnership: The Framework recognizes developing countries require adequate, sustainable, and timely resources, through continued international support to strengthen their efforts to reduce disaster risk. In particular, it calls for urgent strengthening of international cooperation to support disaster-prone developing countries, noting in particular the need to provide particular support for SIDS through implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

On means of implementation, the Framework states that developing countries need enhanced provision of coordinated, sustained, and adequate international support for DRR through bilateral and multilateral channels, including through enhanced technical and financial support, and technology transfer on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed. It also states that DRR measures should be incorporated into development assistance programmes across all sectors, as appropriate, related to poverty reduction, sustainable development, natural resource management, environment, urban development, and adaptation to climate change.

On support from international organizations, the Framework calls on UN agencies, notably UNISDR, and other international and regional organizations and institutions engaged in DRR to enhance strategic coordination on DRR. It also calls for strengthening the UN system’s overall capacity to assist developing countries on DRR through various funding mechanisms, including increased, timely, stable and predictable contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, and by enhancing the role of the Fund in relation to Framework implementation. It specifically tasks UNISDR to support implementation, follow-up and review of the Framework through a range of actions, including through development of indicators to assess progress in implementing the Framework.

On follow-up actions, the Framework invites the UN General Assembly to consider the possibility of including the review of global progress in implementing the Framework as part of its integrated and coordinated follow-up processes to UN conferences and summits, aligned with the Economic and Social Council, the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycles. It also recommends establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental working group for development of a set of possible indicators to measure progress, in conjunction with the work of the inter-agency expert group on sustainable development indicators. Finally, the Framework recommends that this working group consider the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group on the update of the

2009 UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction by December 2016, and that the outcome of its work be submitted to the UN General Assembly for consideration and adoption.

POLITICAL DECLARATION: The “Sendai Declaration” expresses the commitment of Heads of State and Government to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as their guide to enhancing future DRR efforts, and calls on all stakeholders to make “unceasing and tireless collective efforts” to make the world safer from the risk of disasters for present and future generations. The Declaration thanks the Government of Japan for hosting the conference.

RESOLUTION OF VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS OF STAKEHOLDERS: The resolution (A/CONF.224/L.3) welcomes stakeholders’ expression of voluntary commitments to reduce disaster risk. The resolution invites further expression of such commitments and the creation of partnerships to implement the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE WCDRR

A NEW SENDAI, A NEW FRAMEWORK

In 2011 the Great East Japan Earthquake, with a magnitude of 9.0 on the Richter scale, caused a powerful tsunami to wreak havoc on the Sendai region of Japan, killing thousands of people, destroying infrastructure over a radius of hundreds of kilometers from the epicenter of the earthquake, and triggering the meltdown of three reactors of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, which in turn forced the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from the area. Four years later the city of Sendai, rebuilt, restored and almost fully recovered, opened its doors to host the third UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, showcasing the city’s resilience in the face of tragedy.

At the conference opening, many delegations praised the city and the country as a whole for its response to the disaster. During the opening ceremony Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe described Sendai’s response to the 2011 earthquake, referencing “Build Back Better,” the internationally known concept drawing on lessons learned over the past decade on disaster risk management, which became the unofficial slogan for the conference. Broadly, the WCDRR provided a platform for practitioners to share experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA). It also presented the opportunity to conclude discussions on and adopt the post-2015 framework for DRR. This major task was accomplished, but it was not easy. After protracted negotiations, delegates adopted the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 and the Sendai Declaration, which calls on Heads of State and Government to implement the Framework.

Following some very late nights’ work to complete the Framework, some delegates expressed surprise in face of the deadlock, while others simply acknowledged that, “it was expected.” The duality raised concerns about the over-politicization of the DRR agenda. This analysis takes stock of the negotiations, addresses the hurdles delegates faced in adopting the new Framework, analyzes what the new Framework means for DRR practitioners, comparing it with the HFA, and situates the DRR regime within the broader post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

A TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES

Throughout the conference, two sets of meetings ran in parallel: the “Practitioners Conference” and the “Negotiators Conference,” according to one seasoned observer. The UNISDR and partners organized the conference to ensure sharing experiences and best practice on DRR implementation over the past decade, and drawing on lessons learned for the post-2015 framework for DRR. In order to achieve this goal, much of the conference space was dedicated to ministerial roundtable discussions, high-level partnership dialogues and working sessions. Some of these sessions were devoted to gender equity, people living with disabilities, and children and youth, which provided the conference with a spark of hope that some progress towards greater inclusiveness in DRR was actually underway.

Meanwhile, heated negotiations took place in the Main Committee over the scope and wording of the post-2015 framework for DRR. The intensity and politicization of these negotiations took some seasoned DRR delegates by surprise, with many noting that it felt more like a climate change COP than a DRR meeting. At the practitioner sessions, many participants denounced what one called “fights over language” inside the negotiating rooms, warning that DRR was more than words on paper, especially since at that very moment Cyclone Pam had done extensive damage to Vanuatu, Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands, and that meaningful implementation commitments were critical.

On the other hand, negotiators who came to Sendai, having participated in two Preparatory Committee meetings in Geneva that had failed to agree on the text of the post-2015 framework for DRR, were not surprised, explaining that “it is the year,” in reference to the politically heavy UN agenda in 2015 due to three subsequent and interlinked processes related to the Financing for Development (FFD) process, the post-2015 development agenda (including the SDGs), and climate change.

Against this scenario, negotiations in Sendai cannot be fully understood in isolation. This explains why some of the most polarizing issues under negotiation were closely related to, if not the same as, those under consideration in the UNFCCC and the post-2015 development agenda processes, namely financing, technology transfer, language referring to conflict and occupied territories, migration, CBDR, targets, and monitoring mechanisms.

On CBDR, compromise language proved to be one of the greatest challenges. On the one hand, many developed countries contended that CBDR should not be evoked in the context of DRR, as climate change cannot be regarded as being solely responsible for the need for enhanced DRR action. On the other hand, several developing countries were keen to include CBDR emphasizing the growing number of climate-related disasters. In the end, developed countries prevailed, with the Sendai Framework containing no reference to CBDR, except through an indirect reference to the Rio Declaration.

On finance, some developed country delegates confided that there just was “not enough money in the pot” to meet all the important needs of the large United Nations post-2015 sustainable agenda, and thus were sticking to the now familiar phrase that calls for “all sources of funding, including national and private sources.” Developing countries, on the

contrary, insisted on the terms “additional” and “predictable” resources for DRR, saying this should come from international cooperation additional to official development assistance (ODA). Nevertheless, in open sessions, Japan pointed to the fact that during the disasters its country has experienced, it has received assistance from both developed and developing countries, illustrating the argument that disasters affect all countries and that financial flows do not necessarily need to be constrained to those flowing from North to South. The gridlock, however, proved impossible to break in the informal discussions, and delegates finally agreed to the language offered by the Presidency’s text: “adequate, sustainable and timely” resources.

On technology transfer, much of the discussion centered on how and when technology should be transferred. Many developed countries argued that the transfer of technology is usually controlled by individuals holding intellectual property rights, and thus any transfers must be based upon mutually agreed terms (MAT). This was opposed by developing countries, many of which view “no-strings-attached” technology transfer as a moral responsibility from their developed country partners. In the long drawn out discussions in the Main Committee’s informal sessions, the opposing positions were clear—developed countries were unwilling to accept reference to technology transfer unless on “mutually agreed terms” was added, and developing countries were only willing to consider the inclusion of language around MAT in limited specific instances in the text, but not as a general principle. After over 18 hours of non-stop small group discussions that went through the night, on Wednesday morning, two developed countries insisted that they could not agree to the small group’s proposed language as it did not include the contentious phrase, a situation a number of developing countries described as “revolting,” and which added to mounting tensions during the talks over the Sendai Framework. Ultimately, MAT was only referred to in a few sections of the framework dealing with the provision of technology to developing countries, rather than in the guiding principles. In the closing session, the US delegation was so concerned about the issue that it felt compelled to make a statement, prior to agreeing to adoption of the Sendai Framework, that it would not regard the treatment of technology, nor that of finance, in the Framework as setting a precedent for other negotiations taking place in 2015.

The discussion on the inclusion of “conflict and foreign occupation situations” as underlying drivers of risk was, unsurprisingly, polarized, with developed countries generally supporting an inclusion of “conflict” and many developing countries supporting an inclusion of “foreign occupation situations.” The Co-Chairs proposed the deletion of both references as a compromise. Many delegates were also hesitant to insert language on either issue, deeming these issues “too political,” with some noting that they were outside the mandate of the UNISDR. As many expected, the references were deleted from the Sendai Framework, with some countries warning that the deletion of “conflict” would make it more difficult to achieve the Sendai DRR targets, and others highlighting that vulnerable groups would lack protection due to the deletion of a reference to “foreign occupation situations.”

SENDAI: BUILDING ON HYOGO

In spite of some sharp differences on some issues that remained unresolved, the Conference managed to achieve notable success in creating a more inclusive framework, with people with disabilities, and other vulnerable communities such as migrants, directly addressed as having a role to play in DRR as active participants and not only as passive, vulnerable groups.

Significantly, the Sendai Framework goes beyond the Hyogo Framework for Action in ambition on a number of key issues, *inter alia*: 1) it emphasizes the importance of women as participants and leaders in developing DRR strategies, rather than just as victims of disaster; 2) it stresses the need to ensure access to healthcare services in post-disaster situations and addresses health-related risks in relation to resilience in a more comprehensive way; and 3) it has a stronger explicit focus on local-level action.

The Sendai Framework also reaffirms a growing trend within DRR to place a greater emphasis on building resilience, and to focus less on post-event disaster management and more on the link between DRR, long-term development planning and addressing underlying risks. The lack of progress in addressing underlying risks has been acknowledged as one of the major weaknesses in relation to implementation of the HFA, as recognized also in the most recent Global Assessment Report on DRR 2015, presented at the conference. The Sendai Framework contributes to further positioning the concept of resilience on the global stage, and recognition of the need to tackle underlying risks, but some have questioned whether the Framework and the UNISDR are poised to address such risks in a meaningful way, without stronger targets, mandate, implementation modalities, and financial resources.

In contrast to the HFA, which lacked specific targets, the Sendai Framework agreed to seven substantive (albeit non-binding and aspirational) global targets to guide action on disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management over the next 15 years, including on the: reduction of the global mortality rate and number of people affected due to disasters in the period 2020-2030; reduction of damage to infrastructure and disruption of basic services, including health and education, through the development of resilience by 2030; the increase in the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies; and the enhancement of international cooperation to developing countries. These were the subject of intense negotiations, with many countries demanding quantitative targets with specific percentages mentioned, and others, mainly developed countries, preferring more qualitative and general wording. While some practitioners and NGOs expressed disappointment at the lack of a greater level of detail in the agreed compromise text, the targets nonetheless represent a step forward in relation to the HFA, and, upon approval of the UN General Assembly, will be further supported by indicators to be developed by an open-ended intergovernmental working group suggested by the WCDRR. The Framework also made some progress on agreeing to a review process, although the Conference’s inability to decide which UN body would be responsible for the review was seen by some as a weak point.

Other weak points identified by practitioners were the failure to agree to a more robust financing regime for DRR implementation, and not concretely addressing technology transfer. Many developing countries and NGOs expressed disappointment, noting that the Framework spans 15 years and it will be “local-level actors in vulnerable countries who suffer the most” without guaranteed finance and technology to build resilience in their communities. However, as both of these issues are flashpoints in the financing for development, post-2015 development agenda and climate change negotiations, perhaps it is not surprising that they were also challenging here.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STARTS IN SENDAI: DRR IN THE POST-2015 AGENDA

With this being the first “big” conference of the year (preceding those on financing for development in July, the post-2015 development summit in September, and UNFCCC COP 21 in December), early calls by high-level delegates, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, reflected the need for an ambitious outcome in Sendai to “set the world on a path to a new sustainable development agenda.” Some negotiators were initially hopeful that agreement on finance, technology transfer and CBDR in Sendai would bode well for the other conferences this year.

It is clear, however, that while delegates hoped to focus on the opportunities of establishing positive links across the sustainable development agenda, the complexities of climate and post-2015 politics made reaching an agreement in Sendai more challenging than expected. A few “hardcore DRR practitioners” were caught off guard by this over-politicization, perhaps because negotiations of the HFA had gone more smoothly. In January 2005, at the time the HFA was adopted, however, the world was reeling from the shock of the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami—the deadliest tsunami in recorded history—which left in its wake almost 300,000 casualties in 15 countries, as well as displacing millions and destroying infrastructure in more than five countries. This disaster, many noted, created strong political will for the international community to come together to mitigate future losses on this scale, and enabled a comparatively easy adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

However, the more seasoned negotiators from other processes were not expecting “great things” from negotiations on these issues, with one even suggesting that Sendai “would have had a stronger outcome” had it been negotiated after the December 2015 climate conference. Indeed, during the last session of the Main Committee, the US stressed that the finance, technology transfer and other provisions in the Sendai Framework should not be seen as a “precedent for other negotiating processes” and should “not prejudice the outcome of negotiations under the UNFCCC.”

In some of the informal sessions of the Main Committee, the disconnect between the urgency of addressing disaster risk throughout international, national and local level development plans, and UNISDR’s efforts to engage with global sustainable development processes was brought up. Raising the status of disaster risk reduction and management was on everyone’s mind, and there was some degree of frustration that the UNISDR has not been more active in the post-2015 development agenda

negotiating process. With the post-2015 Summit scheduled for September, one delegate from a rapidly urbanizing middle-income country confided that this may have been an “opportunity missed” by the DRR community to get a firm foothold into the post-2015 development agenda, although there are numerous references to resilience in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals. Having said that, some delegates called for UNISDR to be upgraded from a Strategy to a Programme, thus granting it more visibility on the ground through the establishment of more regional offices. One insider intimated that this proposal may well be under consideration within the UN system, but also noted that implementation could be carried out by other agencies already directly involved with national and local level activities, such as UNDP.

THE SPRING OF HOPE

Delegates left Sendai in the early morning of a rainy Thursday with more than just a new Framework for DRR implementation. They also left with the understanding that DRR is not a stand-alone concept and needs to be implemented as part of international, national and local development efforts, especially as it is now inextricably entwined in a world of potentially dangerous climate change that could undermine long-term global poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Delegates also recognized the role of a wide range of stakeholders—including the private sector, local authorities, parliamentarians, civil society and academia. In fact, their importance as partners in implementing DRR was reflected as a key message in the Sendai Framework. Over 110 voluntary commitments for action on DRR, DRM and building resilience from stakeholders were incorporated in a resolution adopted by the Conference, with many predicting a further multifold increase in the coming years. The contributions of these sectors—including through finance, knowledge, expertise, communication and political will—are as much a part of the Sendai outcome as the Framework document, signaling a true holistic approach to building resilience for all.

However, time will tell whether the new political weight of DRR will be reflected in the creation of stronger institutions and the provision of sufficient financial resources. On these points, progress did not match the speed of the Shinkansen bullet train that brought many participants to the conference, yet there is some hope that the 2015 finance for development, sustainable development, and climate change conferences could further raise the profile of DRR in the international institutional and financial architecture in the coming years.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015

Development Agenda: The intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, which will prepare for the UN Summit, will hold the following sessions: 23-27 March (SDGs and targets); 20-24 April (Means of Implementation and Global Partnership for Sustainable Development); 18-22 May (Follow up and review); and 22-25 June, 20-24 July, and 27-31 July (intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome document). **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **contact:**

UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>

ICLEI World Congress: The ICLEI World Congress 2015 will contribute to the international debate and put forward local governments' proposals on main themes in the global climate agenda. The Congress will reaffirm that local governments are the main actors to achieve global sustainability goals. **dates:** 8-12 April 2015 **location:** Seoul, Republic of Korea **contact:** ICLEI World Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-97-62-99-93 **email:** world.congress@iclei.org **www:** <http://worldcongress2015.iclei.org/>

Africa Climate Resilient Infrastructure Summit (ACRIS): ACRIS will be a forum for catalyzing action to deal with the challenge across the industry sectors of ICT, Energy, Water, Agriculture, Food Security and Transport Infrastructure, across the African continent that will be most affected by climate change, and need resilient infrastructure to deal with the changes. **dates:** 27-29 April 2015 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** African Union Commission **phone:** +251-115 18 24 06 **email:** ma@grvevents.com **www:** <http://ie.au.int/en/content/africa-climate-resilient-infrastructure-summit-acris-addis-ababa-ethiopia>

Oceania 21, Third Annual Pacific Summit on Sustainable Development: As part of the continuing process "Oceania21" initiated in 2012, the government of New Caledonia hosts the Third Annual Pacific Summit on Sustainable Development, bringing together heads of state or representatives from 22 countries. **dates:** 28-30 April 2015 **location:** Noumea, New Caledonia **contact:** Soumynie Kartadiwirja, Government of New Caledonia **email:** soumynie.kartadiwirja@gouv.nc **www:** gouv.nc

EU Civil Protection Forum 2015: The European Civil Protection Forum is the largest recurring public event on European civil protection cooperation. It is organized every two years by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department. The event brings together the European civil protection community to take stock of common achievements in the disaster risk management field, share best practices and ideas, and discuss ways of addressing new challenges together. **dates:** 6-7 May 2015 **location:** Brussels, Belgium **contact:** European Commission, DG ECHO **email:** ECHO-CIVIL-PROTECTION-FORUM@ec.europa.eu **www:** http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/civil-protection-partners/civil-protection-forum-2015_en

Second European Climate Change Adaptation Conference: The European Climate Change Adaptation Conference (ECCA) 2015 is organized by several European research projects and other stakeholders on the theme of "Integrating climate adaptation action in science, policy, practice and business," and will include discussion of topics on risk assessment, climate-proofing of infrastructure, and smart cities. The first ECCA took place in Hamburg, Germany, in 2013. **dates:** 12-14 May 2015 **location:** Copenhagen, Denmark **contact:** Søren Simonsen, Congress Office **phone:** +45-4492-4492 **email:** sls@discongress.com **www:** <http://www.ecca2015.eu/>

17th Session of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Congress: The 17th session of the WMO Congress will include discussion of the strategic plan for 2016-2019, the post-2015 development agenda, aeronautical meteorology, disaster risk reduction and gender mainstreaming. **dates:** 25 May - 12 June 2015 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** WMO Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-7308111 **fax:** +41-22-7308181 **email:** wmo@wmo.int **www:** <http://cg-17.wmo.int/>

UN/Germany International Conference on Earth Observation – Global solutions for the challenges of sustainable development in societies at risk: This conference, organized by the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), aims to bridge the gap between earth observation experts and decision makers through demonstrating existing solutions and identifying future potential to jointly address challenges. The conference will serve as a platform to facilitate coordination among countries in their efforts to institutionalize the use of space-based information for DRR. **dates:** 26-28 May 2015 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** Antje Hecheltjen, UNOOSA **phone:** +49-228-815-0677 **fax:** +49-228-815-0699 **email:** antje.hecheltjen@unoosa.org **www:** <http://www.un-spider.org/post2015>

Environmental Emergencies Forum: Environmental emergencies in a changing climate: Reducing vulnerability and managing risks. The Environmental Emergencies Forum (EEF) is a forum to showcase experiences and innovations in improving prevention, preparedness and response to environmental emergencies, and for advocating the integration of environmental concerns into humanitarian action. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, together with the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection, will host the 2015 Forum. **dates:** 1-3 June 2015 **location:** Oslo, Norway **contact:** Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit **email:** ochaunep@un.org **www:** <https://2015eef.eventbrite.com>

42nd Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies: The 42nd sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies to the UNFCCC and the ninth part of the second session of the ADP (ADP 2-9) will take place in June 2015. **dates:** 1-11 June 2015 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://www.unfccc.int>

Third Meeting of the High-level Political Forum: HLPF 3 will focus on the theme, "Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015." The HLPF is mandated to meet every year under the auspices of ECOSOC and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. **dates:** 26 June - 8 July 2015 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1838>

High-level Event on Climate Change: The President of the UN General Assembly will convene this high-level event, with the aim of giving momentum and adding impetus to efforts to reach a global agreement in 2015 under the UNFCCC. **date:** 29 June 2015 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Office of the President of the UN General Assembly **www:** http://www.un.org/pga/290615_hle-climate-change/

Our Common Future Under Climate Change: Organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Council for Science (ICSU) and Future Earth, in collaboration with a partnership of French organizations, this science-focused conference will examine the latest research around climate change. The event will touch upon: the state of knowledge on climate change; responding to climate change challenges; and collective action and transformative solutions. **dates:** 7-10 July 2015 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** Conference Secretariat **email:** science@commonfuture-paris2015.org **www:** <http://www.commonfuture-paris2015.org/>

Third International Conference on Financing for Development: The Third International Conference on Financing for Development will include Heads of State or Government, ministers for finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation, and other special representatives. The conference will result in an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome, and summaries of the plenary meetings and other deliberations of the Conference. **dates:** 13-16 July 2015 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** UN Financing for Development Office **phone:** +1-212-963-4598 **email:** ffdoffice@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>

Asia-Pacific Resilience Innovation Summits and Expo: The Asia Pacific Resilience Innovation Summit and Expo (APRISE2015) will convene business, technology and policy leadership across the global resilience pillars of energy, agriculture, water and security. These joint events collaboratively seek out new solutions for the vanguard communities facing the impact of climate-change. **dates:** 24-26 August 2015 **location:** Honolulu, Hawai'i **contact:** Sarah Wenning, Vice President, Operations **phone:** +1-512-697-8849 **email:** wenning@techconnect.org **www:** <http://resiliencesummit.com/about/>

ADP 3: The third session of the ADP is expected to convene in late August. **dates:** 31 August - 4 September 2015 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://www.unfccc.int>

Special Summit on Sustainable Development/ United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda: The summit, which takes place during the UN General Assembly, is expected to adopt the post-2015 development agenda, including: a declaration; a set of Sustainable Development Goals, targets, and indicators; their means of implementation and a new Global Partnership for Development; and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. **dates:** 25-27 September 2015 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>

IPCC-42: IPCC-42 is expected to elect a new Chair and Bureau. **dates:** 5-8 October 2015 **location:** Dubrovnik, Croatia **contact:** IPCC Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch>

Eye on Earth Summit 2015: The 2015 summit is organized on the theme of "Informed Decision-Making for Sustainable Development" and seeks to enable greater access to and sharing of environmental, societal and economic data. The first inaugural summit took place in 2011, resulting in a ministerial-level Eye on Earth Declaration on environmental data and information. **dates:** 6-8 October 2015 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Larissa Owen, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi **phone:** +971-2-693-4436 **www:** <http://www.eoesummit.org/summit-2015/>

ADP 4: The fourth session of the ADP is expected to convene in October 2015. **dates:** 19-23 October 2015 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://www.unfccc.int>

UNFCCC COP 21: The 21st session of the COP to the UNFCCC and associated meetings will take place in Paris. **dates:** 30 November - 11 December 2015 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://www.unfccc.int>

For additional meetings, see <http://post2015.iisd.org/> and <http://climate-l.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

CBDR	Common but differentiated responsibilities
COP	Conference of the Parties
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
MAT	Mutually agreed terms
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WCDRR	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction