



## **WCDRR HIGHLIGHTS: SUNDAY, 15 MARCH 2015**

The third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) continued its deliberations on Sunday with two ministerial roundtables, several working sessions and Main Committee discussions on the text of a post-2015 framework for DRR. Country delegations delivered statements in a general exchange of views that took place throughout the day. Many other events organized by and for the DRR community occurred in and around the meeting venue, including a presentation of the 2015 Global Assessment Report on DRR.

### **MAIN COMMITTEE**

In the morning, the Main Committee met in an informal session to discuss 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 the "informal informals."

Delegates then discussed, *inter alia*, concerns regarding a reference to "accountability," DRR in countries "under foreign occupation" and language relating to international mechanisms. They agreed to remove the brackets around "SIDS," recognizing their special status.

In the afternoon, the Committee continued informal discussions on the seven proposed global DRR targets, facilitated by 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 a consultation, 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 implement DRR, the Committee adjourned to continue discussions in an exploratory "open-ended informal" session. Facilitator McCook reported, at the end of the day, that some progress had been made on recognizing the need for national efforts and support for such efforts. He requested additional time for open-ended discussions.

The Committee decided to reconvene the informal meeting in the evening to continue discussions on the preamble and international cooperation.

### **GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

Country delegations delivered formal statements to the conference throughout the day. Pakistan commended a proposal to establish a UN Trust Fund for Disaster Risk and advised that technical and financial assistance should be provided based on the "vulnerability index" of the relevant country. The Philippines said its current chairmanship of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) affords an opportunity to advance mainstreaming of the disaster risk reduction and management agenda with the private sector. Sweden called for strengthening protection of ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, mangroves and coral reefs in view of the services they provide humanity as a basis for environmental and climate resilience. New Zealand, citing the experience of the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, said that public awareness, strong business resilience and high levels of insurance cover had supported recovery.

Many delegations highlighted their national actions on DRR and noted the importance of 2015 as a critical year for finalizing several multilateral frameworks.

### **MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLES**

**Reconstructing After Disasters – Build Back Better:** Numan Kurtulmuş, Deputy Prime Minister, Turkey, chaired this morning roundtable, beginning by sharing his country's experience of natural disasters, as well as of providing humanitarian assistance in the ongoing Syrian crisis. Several countries stressed that "building back better" (BBB) is not only about physical construction but also involves social, economic and cultural components of resilience, with Malaysia highlighting traditional knowledge and China the importance of a "human-based approach." Iceland and New Zealand

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emphasized the importance of the insurance sector as a partner, while France stressed that building well from the start is better than post-disaster BBB. Madagascar highlighted regional and South-South collaboration as key to furthering BBB. Malawi, echoed by several participants, stressed “turning tragedy into success” required linking reconstruction programmes with broader development planning. Grenada highlighted the need for pre- and post-event planning, noting that post-event plans require short, medium and long-term recovery goals. Thailand outlined its strengthened national legislation for disaster management following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and advocated locally-based relief and recovery programmes. Many participants emphasized the need for inclusive approaches and stressed the importance of putting in place appropriate institutional arrangements to drive BBB, as well as predictable funding mechanisms via international cooperation.

#### International Cooperation in Support of a Post-2015

**Framework for DRR:** Rajnath Singh, Minister of Home Affairs, India, moderated this afternoon event.

Many speakers called for international cooperation to meet DRR implementation needs, with some developing countries calling for financial and technical assistance. They also called for the inclusion of all stakeholders in DRR discussions, including the private sector and civil society. A number of countries, including Bhutan, Lao PDR, Slovenia, Cook Islands and Peru, provided examples of specific international cooperation required to implement national and regional DRR strategies.

Japan reiterated his country’s contribution of US\$4 billion for DRR efforts from 2015-2018, to be used for non-material assistance, material assistance and global and regional cooperation.

On a new post-2015 framework for DRR, Spain, the World Bank and others stressed the need to include consideration of climate change. Brazil proposed that the post-2015 framework for DRR address the roots of disaster, which he identified as poverty and inequality. Slovenia and Cook Islands said that there is no need for a new framework, calling for strengthening the HFA through enhanced international cooperation.

On linkages between multilateral processes, Fiji called for coherence in discussions on finance, the post-2015 development agenda, DRR and climate change, while the UK proposed making use of the Financing for Development (FfD) process to “integrate finance into DRR.”

#### WORKING SESSIONS

**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 to invest in it.

Ryosei Akazawa, State Minister of the Cabinet Office, Japan, emphasized the value of investing in the “software” of human capacity, as well as the “hardware” of physical infrastructure.

P.K. Mishra, Additional Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India, noted that the increase in housing development is an opportunity to incorporate DRR through building standards and incentives, and to conduct “risk-informed” project planning.

Christiana Freitas, University of Brasilia, proposed addressing the gap between laws “on paper” and their implementation, through the creation of accountability mechanisms and the reinforcing of legal and normative mechanisms to strengthen DRR as a practice.

Other panelists presented country experiences from Lebanon, Turkey and the Pacific.

**Global Risk Trends:** Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, UN Resident Coordinator in Malaysia, chaired the session. Together with Andrew Maskrey, UNISDR, and Professor Omar Dario Cardona, National University of Colombia, she introduced the

Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 (GAR 2015). This report concludes that, while significant progress has been achieved in recent decades on disaster management, little progress has been made in addressing disaster risks. It also finds that some global disaster risks are growing due to climate change. To succeed in dealing with a new paradigm of risk, the report suggests a reinterpretation of disaster risk management, placing it at the core of the development process. Panelists spoke about the need to focus not only on economic costs, but on human lives, and stressed the importance of making global risk studies relevant and accessible to local communities who are most impacted by disasters.

**Applying Science and Technology to DRR Decision-Making:** Carlos Nobre, Centro Nacional de Monitoramento e Alertas de Desastres Naturais, chaired the session and began by noting science and technology’s clearly articulated role throughout the post-2015 framework for DRR.

Jerry Velasquez, UNISDR, on behalf of Margareta Wahlström, stressed science must underpin the cost-benefit analyses the framework will require and introduced Dennis Wenger, UNISDR Scientific and Technical Advisory Group, to outline the findings of its 2015 report, titled *Science Is Used For Disaster Risk Reduction*.

Flavia Schlegel, UNESCO, moderated the session, where panelists outlined DRR science and technology developments in Japan, African countries, the Americas, Arab League countries and the EU. Gordon McBean, International Council for Science, on behalf of the Science and Technology Major Group, noted the Group’s role in improving coordination across the scientific community to deliver more effective products for policymakers.

**Reducing the Risk of Epidemics and Pandemics:** Bruce Aylward, World Health Organization (WHO), moderated the session. He outlined new challenges and risks of epidemics and pandemics that result from climate change, urbanization, deforestation and other global trends. Panelists shared experiences from dealing with epidemics, pandemics and related disaster risks in Thailand, Sweden, and Liberia, with a particular focus on outbreaks of Ebola, SARS, H1N1 and HIV/AIDS in recent years. Discussing strategies to improve the management of pandemic/epidemic risks globally and nationally, panelists identified, *inter alia*, the following as key: intersectoral coordination; a community-based approach; implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR); and enhanced international exchange of information and best practices. Aylward concluded that the recent Ebola outbreak demonstrates that “we are not prepared to deal with pandemics” and that this is a central area that requires attention in a post-2015 framework for DRR.

#### IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates arrived for day two of the Conference prepared to tackle the more contentious issues related to the framework: finance, technology transfer and CBDR in the context of DRR. In discussing the general considerations for international cooperation, familiar lines were drawn in the sand - developing countries favoring additional finance as part of official development assistance and developed countries insisting that any additional finance should come from all sources, including national ones. One delegation was applauded for stressing that “if this discussion is all about national processes we would not have come here but rather would have had a national consultative process on finance for DRR.” Many welcomed moving the discussions into an even more informal session, hoping that some candid conversations would help to thaw the current icy negotiating conditions.