THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

A three year outlook (2016-2018) at a global shift

February 2016
KEY POINTS IN THE FORECAST PERIOD:

1. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) is a continuation of a four-decade old process led by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) that now adopts a multisectorial approach (health, food security and livelihoods notably).

2. Global disaster management policies are shifting focus from relief assistance to prevention, and therefore become more political. The SFDRR embodies that shift, but also emphasizes the important role non-State stakeholders play in it as enablers.

3. While Asia is spearheading DRR implementation, and progressively increasing regional cooperation with a multipolar leadership, the SFDRR cross-sectoral targets will be unevenly addressed at national and local levels in ACFIN countries of operation.

4. The SFDRR core principles (i.e. Build Back Better and Mainstream DRR in an all-encompassing approach) represent opportunities for INGOs to engage with DRR global policies, as these adopt a people-centred approach that will require stakeholders to work more and better with networks of implementing, community-based partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Asia region has traditionally been at the forefront of Disaster Response, Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). National agencies have already been established in many countries of the region, and seem ready to embrace the new global agreement signed in March 2015, in Japan. The roll-out of the Sendai Framework (SFDRR) will nevertheless be a long process, which will require time and significant structural changes to achieve its ambitious goals by 2030. In Asia, the first three years of implementation (2016-2018) will mainly be dedicated to review existing national and local plans and set indicators to measure targets’ achievement. Considering the UN overall approach that is governmental-led in essence and now more preventive in purpose, the extent to which leader countries in the region might take concrete action to enforce DRR holistic practices is the biggest uncertainty by 2018.

From an operational perspective, the SFDRR states international guidelines to strengthen existing DRR programs and their legitimacy. Besides, INGOs could play a greater role in the outlook in the institutionalisation of DRR in the countries where they operate, often hindered by a lack of resources and means. Ultimately, the SFDRR roll-out is an opportunity to contribute to the debate about the place of DRR in strategic programming (following SFDRR guiding principle that DRR policies should be cross-sectoral, inclusive, and sustainable), especially at times when the cost of non-prevention and the need to anticipate second-order risks are discussed in the humanitarian sector. In any case, DRR will have to be considered together with the SDGs and CC topics.
INTRODUCTION

A new global framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Japan, on March 2015. The Sendai framework will last for the next 15 years (2015-2030), and attracted a high level of political interest, which can be partly explained by a current converging dynamic between DRR, the Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change issues.

Almost a year after its adoption many questions remain, and an analysis has been requested to document the potentialities of the new agreement as compared to prior schemes, in particular to its predecessor the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). This analysis is meant to support ACFIN missions’ strategic decision-making, looking for opportunities in the field of nutrition-sensitive multisectoral programming coming along with the Sendai rollout in the Asia region.

PART 1 - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Representing a step forward in the importance given to DRR in global politics, the Sendai Framework is technically built on former agreements. It is also essentially driven from – and reflecting - an increasingly all-encompassing risk paradigm.

Past DRR Frameworks

1989 The International Framework for Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (annex of res. 44/236)
Call for concerted international action for natural disaster reduction, technical & scientific buy-in

1994 The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action
First blueprint for disaster reduction policy guidance (inclusion of a socio-economic perspective), enlarging the initial concept of disasters to include environmental and technological disasters Emphasis on community-based approaches to vulnerability (introduction of resilience)

1999 The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Developed new mechanisms and pushed for further commitments from policy-makers. The General Secretary urged: “We must, above all, shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.” Focus on risk assessment and management

Integrated disaster risk reduction into policies, plans and programmes of sustainable development and poverty reduction, focusing on national implementation, through bi-lateral, multi-lateral, regional and international cooperation
It is known as the first plan to explain, describe and detail the work that is required from all different sectors and actors to reduce disaster losses

Over time, the UN disaster risk approach has built a consistent and more explicitly detailed set of recommendations for action in which the notions of early-warning, preparedness, resilience, innovation, and
risks are at the very heart since the 1990’s. In detail, the SFDRR also includes some evolutions as compared to the HFA:

- Considering their respective **expected outcome**, the focus shifted from disaster losses only to reducing disaster risks and losses. In other words, this means putting as much efforts to preventively limit the size, or scale, of a disaster as in trying to contain its impact.

- While the HFA covered a ten-year **period** to achieve its objectives, the SFDRR has an extended fifteen-year period of time (2015-2030) to achieve its own, aligning in that respect its timeframe to the other UN global frameworks (SDGs in the first place).

- Considering their goals and **priorities**, the SFDRR clearly follows the HFA tracks (about a quarter to half of the priorities for action are similar), but it emphasizes the means of implementation (the “how” over the “what”).

- In terms of considered **types of disaster**, the scope of the SFDRR now also includes biological hazards (only mentioned in a footnote in the HFA).

- The **section** recording the biggest changes - with only about 20% of the same content - is the Priority 4 (HFA Prior. 5): “Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to ‘Build Back Better’ (BBB) in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction”, introducing the BBB motto.

- As UN DRR frameworks gradually become more **people-centred**, the SFDRR now focuses on women, children, people with chronic diseases and disabilities, and indigenous people, while sites of historical, cultural heritage and religious interest are expressly mentioned.

- Finally, the SFDRR - unlike its predecessor - contains **seven targets** intended to drive forward progress on protecting people and assets from extreme weather and other natural and manmade hazards. Three are defined in a way that makes them quantitatively measurable.

The SFDRR is complemented by the **Global Platform**, a biannual forum established in 2007 and organized by the UNISDR to serve as the main space for devising international cooperation in this field and discuss achievements of UN DRR frameworks. The Global Platform opened widely the representation and outreach of the consultation process, while also promoting national, sub-regional and regional networks. The next session is due to happen in May 2017, in Geneva.

In addition, the UNISDR is in charge of preparing a comprehensive review and analysis of disaster risk and risk management, which is published every two years: the **Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR)**. The GAR 2015 evaluates the social and economic costs of past and coming disasters.

---

1 The International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR, on October 13) celebrated in 2015 indigenous knowledge for DRR.
2 (a) Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower the average % global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015. (b) Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure % in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015. (c) Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.
3 Practitioners and stakeholders repeatedly called since the 1980’s for a mechanism through which they could exchange their experiences and access information from other countries. The Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction was created in 2000 to serve that purpose. (Resolution 54/219) It was chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and was composed of up to 14 representatives of agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system; up to 8 representatives from regional entities, and up to 8 representatives of civil society and relevant professional sectors. **UNISDR**
4 See the **GAR 2015 website**
(future annual losses estimated at US$314 billion in the built environment alone), stressing in particular the existential threat posed to the Small-Islands Developing States.

Besides establishing more precise objectives and defining clearer paths to reach those, one of the main achievements of the overall UN DRR process is undoubtedly to have gain global attention.

A Convergence with the SDGs and CC Issues in a UN Global Approach

2015 has been a determinant year for international development policies. The adoption of the Sendai Framework in March was followed by two other major negotiations: the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (in New York, September 2015)\(^5\), and the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (in Paris, in November-December 2015) to discuss a new climate agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol\(^6\).

Synergies between the three events have been widely acknowledged. To a certain extent their outcomes are building on each other’s achievements\(^7\). Concurrently, the Sendai Framework established a considerable success of the DRR approach\(^8\): in 2005, the HFA noted that 2 billion people had been affected by disasters over the last 10 years\(^9\). The SFDRR, on its part, indicates that more than 1.5 billion people have been affected by disasters between 2005 and 2015\(^10\). This means a 25% reduction of the number of people affected, despite the fact that over the same period, the world population increased by more than 1 billion people and disasters’ frequency accelerated. This can be seen as a testament to the success of the HFA, and more broadly to DRR. However, while indicators are to be defined for each global agreement (SFDRR, SDGs and COP21) experts work apart in separated working sessions. The risk of establishing various, potentially inconsistent indicators, terminologies, and disharmonized timeframes is therefore high.

There is a societal pattern which concurrently supports and results from the UN global approach. This pattern relies on the fact that risks are at the same time real and socially constructed. While stating that framing uncertainty has become the major governmental challenge, sociological risk theories\(^11\) invite us to question the importance given to risk reduction in globalized societies. Some of the key findings of this literature can be summarized as follows:

- Risk analysis is increasingly related to complex contexts, in which divergent rationalities are interactive and complement each other situationally rather than systematically.
- The perceptions of risk and risk-taking dynamics, especially in the everyday life, vary in time and space, and a qualitative perspective is required to analyse the different responses to risk.

---

\(^5\) Which formally validated 17 new sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030
\(^6\) Or COP 21, which resulted in the first universal climate agreement ever adopted to combat climate change
\(^7\) See the UNISDR Concept Note on mutual coherence and reinforcement.
\(^8\) See the analysis by Jerry Velasquez (above mentioned)
\(^9\) “In the past two decades, an average more than 200 million people have been affected by disaster every year”, HFA (Preamble, article 2)
\(^10\) The SFDRR Preamble, article 4
\(^11\) Cf. U. Beck’s milestone work on the Risk Society and the numerous researches conducted afterwards (for a review)
Managing uncertainty, as a fundamental modern experience, can no longer be viewed as an attempt to turn disorder into order, but needs also to consider “second order dangers”, or the unwished consequences of protective actions or security measures.

Managing risk, as a modern imperative of governance, can be understood as a way to shape and control populations and maintain a certain social order.\(^\text{12}\)

At times when DRR tends to become a new rationale for global interventionism, this raises a number of practical issues when defining programing options to reduce disaster risks. The multidimensional nature of risks (perceived as well as experienced, social as well as political, local as well as global) needs to be taken into account when focusing on how managing best uncertainties (as ultimately a process of managing unpreventable uncertainties).

**PART 2 - THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DRR (2015-2030): POTENTIALITIES AND LIMITS**

Over the last three decades, disaster risk reduction has moved from a narrowly perceived technical discipline, to a transversal, broad-based, global movement focused on sustainable development. Opportunities and challenges coming along the SFDRR are enshrined in that shift.

The Sendai Framework is a 15-year voluntary, non-binding agreement which aims for the following outcome:

“The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”

Through four priorities\(^\text{13}\), the SFDRR proposes an all-inclusive approach (multi-hazards, ante- and post-disasters, regard for human rights and development issues) for an all-encompassing strategy (across all sectors, involving all stakeholders, at all levels).

\(^{12}\) Cf. M. Foucault’s works, articulated around the idea that government deals now with population instead of persons.

\(^{13}\) Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk “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. Such knowledge can be used for risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response” // Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk “Disaster risk governance at the national, regional and global levels is very important for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation. It fosters collaboration and partnership” // Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience “Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through
Key Stakeholders

(a) Each State has the primary responsibility to prevent and reduce disaster risk, including through international, regional, subregional, transboundary and bilateral cooperation.

(SFDRR, Guiding Principles, article 19)

Adopted by 187 UN member states, the SFDRR is a culmination of international efforts to build a global agreement on disaster risk reduction, but it rests upon the State as a main, central actor. Other stakeholders (from the civil society as well as from the private sector, including business and academia) are called to act in a concerted way and shared responsibility so as to support governments in their role and duties when addressing DRR challenges.

The “Role of stakeholders” section (V) is the part among all that has changed least between the HFA and the SFDRR (83% similar). However, three noticeable changes can be highlighted:

- The HFA acknowledged the DRR primary responsibility of State for its own socio-economic development, while the SFDRR acknowledges it to prevent and reduce disaster risks. To a certain extent, this makes the State more accountable than before.
- The shared responsibility between States and other stakeholders that the SFDRR now establishes inflects the governance issue (Priority 2), which is supposed to cover prevention, preparedness, and mitigation, response, recovery and rehabilitation activities.
- The SFDRR finally attributes specific tasking to the UN, World Bank and the UNISDR, and calls for further engagement and support from namely the UN Global Compact, Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Cities and Local Governments.

Underneath the text, the 3rd UN World Conference Program itself is instructive. Three High-Level Partnership Dialogues were organized in Sendai, shedding light on three key ways the UNISDR conceives stakeholders’ involvement. The first one was dedicated to Women’s leadership in DRR, the second to Public-Private Partnerships (with a focus on risk-sensitive investment), and the third one to governments, communities and groups acting together.

Reaffirming the need for governmental-led actions and partnerships, the SFDRR, however, also consolidates a people-centred approach focused on minorities and communities, and gives a greater weight to other stakeholders (in particular the private sector) in an inclusive dynamic.

Potentialities of the SFDRR for ACFIN Action

Formulated as one sole goal, the scope of the SFDRR is actually threefold: 1. preventing the creation of risks, 2. reducing the existing risks, and 3. strengthening resilience to residual risks. ACFIN mandate certainly

---

14 UNISDR Concept Note about Mobilizing Women’s Leadership in DRR
15 UNISDR Concept Note about Risk-Sensitive Investment: Public-Private Partnerships
16 UNISDR Concept Note about Inclusive DRM: Governments, Communities and Groups acting together
overlaps with this overall goal, and concrete potentialities for action exist for each of the four established priorities in the text\textsuperscript{17}.

### Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

- **National & local government levels:** Risk analysis in EPRP (Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan)
- **Community level:** Risk analysis in PCVA (Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis) + SIG
- **Resilience analysis (capacity framework)**
- **Improve disaster risk information systems** (incl. risk mapping in PCVA in compliance with nat. formats)
- **Document disaster losses and impact** (with a focus on nutrition)
- **Strengthen education and awareness in DRR**

### Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance

- **Fact base advocacy for national and local DRR policy and regulation**
- **Support and participate in DRR multi-stakeholders and multi-levels coordination platforms**
- **DRR mainstreaming into local sectoral (agriculture, water, health…) development plan & funding**
- **Attention to cross sectoral coherence** (multiple use of water, do no harm…)
- **Link DRR mainstreaming with natural resource, land and urban planning and funding** (work on governance and right based approach)

### Priority 3: Investing in DRR for resilience

- **Hazard proofing livelihood and basic services (WASH and health)**
- **Livelihood diversification** (lesser risk sensitivity)
- **Promote disaster risk transfer** (predictable safety net, insurance…)
- **Link safety net integrated with livelihood enhancement & access to basic services** (graduation models, and more broadly link DRR and health sector, e.g. biological hazards)
- **Support supply chain resilience & ensure continuity of services** (for instance, market resilience & preparedness)
- **Support integrated natural resource management approaches integrating DRR**

### Priority 4: Enhancing disasters preparedness

- **Support Community Disaster Committees**
- **Support & update stakeholder disaster preparedness and contingency plans** (regular coordination activity)
- **Support participatory multi-hazard forecasting and EWS (Early Warning Systems)**
- **Support regular disaster simulation exercises and train disaster response volunteers**
- **Support evacuation and first response capacity for rapid onset disasters** (routes, shelters, basic services…)
- **Integrate DRM into post disaster recovery** (after emergency phase conduct risk analysis before rehabilitation for build back better)
- **Enhance provision of psychosocial support.**

\textsuperscript{17} These propositions for programming action were elaborated by DRM-Resilience Technical Advisors (NYC & Paris HQ).
Many of these activities are already implemented throughout existing ACFIN DRR projects. The SFDRR represents an opportunity to strengthen and potentially scale up ACFIN action, while being overall in line with its technical policy guidelines\(^{18}\) which consider disasters as an underlying structural factor leading to undernutrition.

Finally, beside a common focus on the most vulnerable communities in developing countries, two new converging elements can be flagged:

**Migrations** - The SFDRR notes that 144 million people were forced from their homes over the preceding 10 years by disasters, and urges effective policies to address their situation, including the provision of safe shelter.

**Livestock** - The SFDRR now includes the need to keep livestock and working animals safe in disasters, while more than 1 billion of the world’s poorest people rely on animals for food, transport and their livelihoods.

**Challenges and Limits**

Three main challenges (technical, political and funding-related) have been identified. First, despite the positive achievement of establishing seven targets, the SFDRR set those only in vague terms expressed through the adverb “substantially”. Three targets are to “substantially reduce” (global disaster mortality, the number of affected people, and disaster damage to infrastructure). Three others are to “substantially increase/enhance” (the number of countries, international cooperation, and the availability and access to EWS). Interestingly, the seventh target does not follow the same model, making the absence of the adverb all the more noticeable. On the matter some commentators not only underlined that its relativeness to global gross domestic product (GDP) was controversial, but also that it might support a circular reasoning\(^{19}\).

An expert working group\(^{20}\) will define indicators by end 2016 to measure progress on the targets.

In addition, despite that the Global Assessment Report 2015 provided convincing empirical evidence of the role of conflict in disaster equation (demonstrating that erosion of institutions, population displacement and loss of livelihoods in on-going conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and Afghanistan, for example, exacerbated disaster causation), the reference to conflict was not included in the SFDRR. Nor was it in the previous UN DRR frameworks. While some countries advocate for its inclusion (from Middle East notably) during the Sendai talks, States tended to maintain conflict issues within their national interest and prerogatives.

Disasters and conflicts are often correlated\(^{21}\). The absence of mention of conflict throughout the SFDRR is political rather than technical, and also results from siloed policies and practices that continuously approach separately (‘natural’) disasters- and conflicts-related vulnerabilities.

\(^{18}\) Cf. Disaster Risk Management for Communities, ACFIN Policy Document, 2011

\(^{19}\) As long as the ratio of global GDP remains greater than the direct disaster economic loss, the target would be achieved, while economic growth – directly correlated to the GDP – can be seen as a key generator of disasters (through the exacerbated exploitation of natural resources notably).

\(^{20}\) See [Inter-governmental Experts Working Group on Indicators and Terminology](https://www.inter-agencyregionanalystsnetwork.org/)

\(^{21}\) From 2005-2009, more than 50% of people impacted by ‘natural’ disasters lived in fragile and conflict-affected states (Kellett and Sparks, 2012: 31), ODI report 2013
Eventually, even if it was not expected that rich nations would be lining up in Sendai to make major new funding announcements for DRR, the final deal remains a simple call upon increasing financial aid and upon “substantially enhancing international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support.” Obvious conflicting interests (between vulnerable countries willing to include measurable additional funding actions, and wealthy governments careful not to commit to any) easily explain this omission and the grey zone that surrounds the DRR funding issue as it is formulated in the Sendai Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disaster prevention and preparedness</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD DAC donors’ bilateral humanitarian assistance by expenditure type, 2009–2013 ($ billion)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While expenditures on DPP continue to represent the smallest share of bilateral humanitarian assistance, the SFDRR will still rely on voluntary contributions to finance DRR policies and programs, and to ensure its full and proper implementation.

Considering altogether the global DRR shift, the broad attention that was given to the SFDRR, and the potentialities that the text represents for concrete actions in coherence with ACFIN internal policies, the Sendai framework provides the institutional space that legitimizes DRR integrated and multisectoral interventions. However, the challenges raised here, mainly correlated to the fact that DRR policies go less technical and more political, need to be continually considered. Moreover, they need to be considered against what will be the real challenge ahead: the worldwide roll-out of the new agreement.

PART 3 - SENDAI ROLL-OUT IN ASIA: A TREND ANALYSIS (2016-2018)

Despite its limits the SFDRR represents a step forward in making DRR a global issue that needs to be politically implemented. Its all-inclusive and all-encompassing approach tends to prove how DRR is more and more presented as a relay, or trigger, for broader action in particular towards poverty eradication (poverty being identified as one of the underlying disaster risk drivers).

UNISDR Implementation Roadmap of the SFDRR

During the consultations and negotiations that led to the final SFDRR, strong calls were made to develop practical guidance to support implementation, ensure engagement and ownership of action by all stakeholders, and strengthen accountability in disaster risk reduction. The paragraph 48 (c) makes the UNISDR the agency responsible “to support the implementation, follow-up and review of this framework through […] generating evidence-based and practical guidance for implementation in close collaboration with

---

22 “including financial support and loans from international financial institutions” (SFDRR, Foreword)
23 There is no comprehensive global data on how much is spent either within or outside humanitarian assistance on DRR or DPP either by international donors or by national governments. GHA, 2015
24 A lesson learned from the HFA: “More dedicated action needs to be focused on tackling underlying disaster risk drivers, such as the consequences of poverty and inequality” (article 6).
States, and through mobilization of experts; and reinforcing a culture of prevention in relevant stakeholders [...]". Targeted Sendai Framework implementation guides shall support the process, and working groups were appointed in October 2015 to develop "Words into Action" thematic guides. These guides are under preparation; first drafts are expected to be released end of 2016.

In addition, a UNISDR Science and Technology Conference on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR was organized in Geneva beginning of 2016 (January 27-29). Gathered to discuss how science and technology (S&T) can best support the new agreement implementation, practitioners, researchers and policy makers launched at that occasion a UNISDR S&T Partnership and endorsed the UNISDR S&T Road map. The emphasis given to S&T in the SFDRR translates a perception of mutual reinforcement between political will and scientific knowledge. It also underlines the need to move from risk information to risk knowledge, which has been widely discussed in the Asia region in particular.

Concurrently, a number of initiatives are taking place to link research, education, and action in order to support the SFDRR implementation. Many promote an all-hazard approach with the ambition to find solutions calibrated to local contexts. Generating, consolidating, sharing and disseminating scientific knowledge is undoubtedly a key dimension of DRR global policies. In particular, the need for systematic data collection is crucial to address some of the challenges of disaster risk reduction (such as reducing the gender gap in the disasters’ impact), as well as to monitor the very progress of DRR policies (starting with the implementation of the SFDRR itself).

Asia has a very dense network of regional and national DRR research and monitoring institutions, issuing a significant number of publications and delivering a number of trainings and workshops. Building an action-centred approach, training and mobilising wide networks of experts, disseminating lessons learned and good practices from the Asian continent, these initiatives are central in DRR policies’ design and implementation at the global, regional, national, and local levels and attest of a certain DRR institutional culture already shared throughout the continent.

Asia’s lead in the fields of DRM and DRR has every reason to be maintained, if not being further consolidated in the outlook considering the importance given to knowledge production and sharing in the Sendai Framework and in UNISDR policies in general.

---

25 Sendai Framework “Word into Actions” Implementation Guides
26 UNISDR, Science and Technology Conference on the Implementation of the SFDRR
27 See for instance the report from the 1st ISDR Asia Partnership Meeting of 2015 (organised in Bangkok)
28 Such as ANDROID, the Academic Network for Disaster Resilience to Optimise Educational Development (EU funding)
29 Cf. UNISDR Concept note: Addressing Gender Inequality of Disaster Risk
30 Such as the leading ADPC, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, based in Bangkok. Regular meetings are organized since the late 1990’s, e.g. the “Practitioners’ Workshop on DRR and Resilience in Asia”, gathering every 2 years, and regional platforms (the Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management, for instance) have been established.
31 For instance when discussing the ins and outs of the “Build Back Better” motto, presented as a key aspect in the Asia-Pacific input document for the SFDRR, but which often merely refer to the speed in which reconstruction takes place or to the degree of coordination of actors, rather than focusing really on decreasing underlying vulnerabilities.
This driving force can be explained by the combination of Asia’s exposure to all kinds of disaster (think alone of the 2004 tsunami, the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, or the 2015 earthquake in Nepal), with overall high levels of education and a majority of stable political regimes.

Disaster-prone developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries, as well as middle-income countries facing specific challenges, warrant particular attention in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels, which often greatly exceed their capacity to respond to and recover from disasters. (SFDRR, Article 41)

All ACFIN countries of operation in the region (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines) can be included -in a way or another- in article 41. Considering also that future ACFIN DRR projects could fit and be strengthened within the SFDRR framework, the implementation of the new agreement is therefore an opportunity to support and enhance ACFIN Asia DRR approach. On one hand, this rather means continuity than change. The SFDRR, even if it includes innovative elements, will not radically change the DRR structures and mechanisms already in place in the various countries ACFIN operates in. The two-sided global shift the agreement calls upon (from disaster risk management to disaster risk reduction, from technical to political) will need time to take effect, more than the three-year outlook considered here. From this perspective, aligning with the new guidelines to be issued, supporting further institutionalisation of DRR practices, and continually contributing to the empowerment of local communities within DRR global policies seem at first what can be expected from and achieved through the SFDRR roll-out in the region.

On the other hand, some internal dynamics to the organization tend to echo the SFDRR guiding principle to mainstream DRR in a multisectoral programming approach. Ways can therefore be looked at to rather actively participate in the SFDRR implementation process in the Asia region. In that perspective, we identified the factors impacting most the SFDRR roll-out (either as necessary components to its success or

---

32 Asia experiences 45 percent of all disasters, as well as 42 percent economic losses, 83 percent of mortalities and 86 percent of people affected in terms of disasters.

33 Through a structural analysis that has been conducted, mobilizing the internal expert knowledge in AAH NYC HQ and Islamabad (AAH Pakistan was the requester of this project)
anticipated barriers) and determined their respective underlying trends to support strategic decision-making related to the deployment of the new UN framework the countries ACFIN works in.

**Preliminary Remarks**

Among the identified determinant drivers, one is a heavy trend and another one can be turned into an assumption for it has a significant influence on the system, but stakeholders have limited or none control over it:

**Climate Change** is unsurprisingly a determinant driver of our system (impacting many other variables related to Sendai roll-out). The inertia of this driver, though, especially in a three-year outlook, makes it unlikely to change (heavy trend) and we can assume that its impact will remain steady as well as the international attention given to it.

**Political Stability** also appears as a determinant driver. This can be explained by the fact that the Sendai roll-out heavily relies on governments’ ability to implement the new agreement, which in turns partly depends on their stability. We assume that, despite signals of evolution\(^34\), there is no major political disruption in the eight countries in ACFIN program portfolio in the region.

For the purpose of this analysis, we will therefore focus on three key closely inter-related trends (legal, political and economic), driven by a constellation of the remaining seven determinant drivers. A last one (Disasters) will ultimately be considered as a major factor for uncertainty.

**Trend 1: Building a Multi-scale, Coherent DRR Jurisdiction**

The most influential driver for the SFDRR implementation (resulting from the structural analysis\(^35\)) is “Laws and Regulations”\(^36\). In other words, the roll-out of the new agreement critically depends on it, meaning that it is also a determinant trigger for an impactful action.

The SFDRR demands to be consistent with both international agreements and domestic laws. The SFDRR is closely interconnected to other UN agreements. Some are namely identified: the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1994), the WHO International Health Regulations (2005), and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway\(^37\) (2014). In addition, the SFDRR states that its implementation should also be consistent with domestic laws (Guiding Principles, article 19).

The SFDRR is part of a global, auto-referential system of UN Conventions and Agreements, but also strongly calls upon its embedment within national and regional laws and regulations.

The HFA recognized legislation as key for establishing disaster risk reduction as a national and local priority. Considering individual and collective choices are determinant as to whether or not a hazard will turn into a...
disaster, there is widespread agreement that legal frameworks are a critical tool for governments to shape those choices, both for themselves and for others. The Asia region seems again to play a leading role in developing regional DRR legal frameworks. The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) was signed in July 2009 by the ten ASEAN Member states and entered into force on December 2010. This Agreement affirmed ASEAN’s commitment to the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) and was the first legally-binding HFA-related instrument in the world.

However, records of various incidents in the past decade showed gaps between jurisdictions or in the implementation of existing DRR laws and regulations in particular at the community level. The weight given to compliance with existing national legislations in the Sendai Framework certainly is an attempt to address that problem. Yet, legal frameworks should also include institutional mandates, allocate dedicated resources, and establish responsibility and accountability of relevant actors to be efficient. In addition, there are still significant gaps in the regulatory frameworks for safety in building and construction, as well as land use and spatial planning, which are essential forms of regulation to reduce underlying risk and avoid creating new risks in human settlements. Urban informal settlements represent one of the most challenging dimensions of that problem (being, by nature, out of legal frameworks and regulations). Finally, beside the allocation of the necessary means and the needed political will, implementation requires a compliance culture that proved to be insufficient in many countries, or coming along with deeply rooted corruption practices.

Despite the relative consistent existence of DRR laws and regulations in Asia countries, there is obviously certain variability among them. While the Philippines is playing a leading role in promoting a holistic, comprehensive, integrated and proactive DRR approach, India, for instance, as a federal union of 28 states and 7 territories with a total population close to 1.3 billion, faces serious challenges in implementing harmoniously DRR at a national scale.

Ultimately, the absence of financing mechanisms for DRR policies jeopardizes the extent to which these legal frameworks can really be (efficiently) implemented, an element that is unlikely to critically change in the outlook.

In summary, the process of building DRR consistent and comprehensive legal frameworks is comparatively well engaged in Asia, with some countries being particularly at the forefront of it. However, correlated requirements such as the allocation of financial resources and the inclusion of DRR in other legal frameworks (e.g. land use) will remain key challenges in the outlook. Considering the connections with country development planning objectives, education and awareness in particular, there certainly is room for DRR stakeholders to play a role in the process.

Trend 2: Making DRR Everyone’s Business

---

38 A proactive regional framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management
39 Mentioned eight times in the text, although relatively few attention was given to that addition as compared to HFA
41 Terminology is not standardized yet, which make it difficult to assess and compare.
42 Quote from the 8th Practitioners’ Workshop on Risk Reduction & Resilience in Asia, Bangkok, 23-25 November 2015. This meeting was dedicated to translating the Sendai commitments into practice.
The structural analysis also shows the major influence of government-related drivers, namely: Capacity strengthening and government’s commitment to infuse DRR, Government effectiveness, and Registered stakeholders. Lessons from the HFA in the Asia region established that the promotion of cross-sectoral coordination and multi-sectoral partnership proved to be particularly challenging. The SFDRR core principle is that government-led dynamics should encompass DRR in all legal, social, cultural, educational, environmental, political and economic aspects of society with appropriate measures. ‘Making DRR everyone’s business’ is a two-fold ambition: gathering and involving a widening range of governments into DRR regional cooperation, and building an inclusive cross-sectoral successful approach at national level.

There is a strong DRR political buy-in across the Asia region, with an interesting multipolar distribution among its key players. India tends to host more and more regional events as PM Narendra Modi progressively put an Asia-centric foreign policy on the country’s agenda. The eight Ministers of China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Mongolia and India thus participated in a meeting on 17th November, 2015 in New Delhi to prepare a regional road map for disaster risk reduction for the Asian region. It was followed shortly after by the second Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction (IAP) meeting of delegates, sponsored by the UNISDR and Government of India. More importantly, the next Asia Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) will be held in New Delhi on November 14-17 2017. As often, Thailand constitutes an effective regional hub (hosting notably the UNISDR and ADPC regional representations). Japan - who hosted the last two UN world conferences (in Kobe in 2005, and in Sendai in 2015) – also plays a specific role in this regional constellation. The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) was established in 1998 in a part of Kobe that is considered as an international symbol for recovery and the BBB policy, and Japan (with a dire experience to share) is one of the few countries pushing for man-made technological disasters to be taken into account. Among others (Malaysia, Korea and Indonesia notably), The Philippines is also a pro-active country on the matter, with its milestone Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. Even Myanmar, which could at first appear in the background of regional DRR cooperation, will host the 15th ASEAN regional Forum on Disaster Relief in February 2016 in Nay Pyi Taw. The event is themed “Building Back a Better Response” and will notably promote, in the particular context of the

---

1 Source: IFs (University of Denver) – N.B.: Asia region = ACFIN 8 countries of intervention in the region
country, “the importance of civil-military coordination”.

Nevertheless, trans-boundary risk assessment proved to be particularly challenging with insufficient data collection network, weak transmission systems, and a protective attitude from States and their specialized agencies towards data sharing, including with regional organizations. This is particularly true in the South Asia sub-region where for instance micro level seismic and hydrological data, when available, are invariably not shared\(^{50}\) which makes it extremely difficult to conduct detailed trans-boundary risk assessments of flood, earthquakes and landslides.

Asian countries are likely to continue embracing politically the DRR approach, also as an opportunity to move from a relief-centred approach to disasters to one that focuses on reducing and preventing disaster risk, in compliance with national government prerogatives.

The shift from stand-alone DRR to more holistic risk resilient development practice, however, will constitute one of the major challenges of the SFDRR implementation. As part of the SFDRR roll-out first steps, the UNISDR is supporting countries in reviewing existing national and local frameworks and producing a Country Disaster Risk Management Status Report\(^{51}\), which will mainly reflect on the status of DRM in the country during the period 2005-2015 and will also integrate the SFDRR priorities. Governments from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines all have said they started the process, which is due to take place over the course of 2016 and 2017. Promoting DRR national plans is a SFDRR target, but the problem is often their quality and the lack of public investment to back them up. One related factor is certainly governance effectiveness.

India, the Philippines and Indonesia rank relatively high on the index (in a regional comparison). Noticeably, the indicator is expected to increase for all the countries by 2020\(^{52}\), a trend that can be interpreted as a trigger for greater DRR efficiency at national level in the outlook. However, the great variability within the eight countries where ACFIN operates, the scarcity of dedicated DRR funding to support a holistic shift and conversely the important investments in the region’s economic development that come along with the reinforcement and/or creation of environmental and technological risks, balance this projection, especially if one considers the long-term temporality of institutional changes.

The key to effective local institutional DRM structures is that they have clear authority combined with mandated resources and capacity. While the political will is widely expressed throughout the region (notably in the form of voluntary commitments collected by the UNISDR\(^{53}\)), the successful combination of mandate, means and accountability of national and local dedicated bodies will hardly be achieved in the outlook. INGOs can however influence the process, as demonstrated by the experience of the Myanmar Consortium of Community Resilience\(^{54}\).

\(^{50}\) Cf. SAARC Sub-Regional report for HFA (2011-2013)
\(^{51}\) Based on a template proposed by the UNISDR
\(^{52}\) Based on 2013 World Bank last available data
\(^{53}\) See Government announcements
\(^{54}\) See Institutionalizing Inclusive Community Based DRR and Strengthening Urban DRR in Myanmar in line with the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, Recommendations from the experience of the Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience (2016)
**Trend 3: Sharing the Cost of DRR**

Finally, a last group of determinant drivers fall under economic-related considerations, namely: Aid inflows\(^{55}\), Poverty\(^{56}\) and DRR Funding mechanisms\(^{57}\). Resource allocation for DRR is a recurring issue in implementation of government responsibilities under DRM laws, especially at the local level. It was already a key concern voiced throughout the HFA consultation process. Outcomes from monitoring and evaluating the HFA progress highlighted two funding constraints: a) Most funding agencies were found to favour immediate results and outputs that were highly visible, hindering longer-term collaborative approach (while prevention requires long-term commitment and funding); b) Due to scare and scattered funding mechanisms, DRR activities were often conducted sporadically, and not been sufficiently institutionalized. And yet, donors don’t seem ready to change their approach (e.g. DIPECHO/HIP timeline in SE Asia is reduced to 12 months).

Trained manpower, political will, and adequate financial resources are *sine qua none* conditions for the Sendai implementation, and more generally, for a better DRR integration into all sectors. The SFDRR calls upon maintaining and increasing the financial support directed at at-risk developing countries. It is however an acknowledged necessity to find complementary ways to sustainably and more broadly mainstream DRR into society.

This trend is not driven by the sole need for more financial support, but also by a shift in measuring the costs of disasters and evaluating preparedness investments\(^{58}\). In the humanitarian sector, loss and damages are usually considered in terms of affected and displaced households. The past progress in DRR resulted in fewer casualties related to the occurrence of a disaster, but more economic and non-economic damages, especially as countries economically develop. At the international level, the evaluation of loss and damage is the focus of increasing attention predominantly looking at measuring and calculating monetary losses, but also trying to take into account non-economic losses for which market values cannot be assigned (e.g. loss of schooling months/years, health impacts, ecosystem impacts, loss of indigenous practices). The role that can play risk transfer instruments, such as insurance, has also entered the debate.

The financial cost of DRR inaction in the face of growing disaster risk is an emerging indicator. Promoting risk-sensitive investment and strengthening public-private partnerships are presented as triggers for innovation and possible accelerators of change.

Little is known about DRR finance (scale, opportunities, and allocation of resources). Bilateral assistance is one element that can be tracked. Interestingly, while an increasing number of countries have a national disaster management authority (NDMA), it seems like the existence of a NDMA is associated with high level of bilateral ODA that is not necessarily proportionate to the country’s overall environmental vulnerability.

\(^{55}\) International and regional, financial and non-financial support for aid that is delivered in and to a country and which might increase or decrease in the outlook or shift recipients.

\(^{56}\) A state or condition in which a person or a community lacks the resources to enjoy a minimum standard of life, acknowledging the difference between absolute poverty (when needs to support a minimum level of physical health are not met) and relative poverty (considering the living standards of a majority or as determined by a government).

\(^{57}\) National and international funding mechanisms and processes for disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, relief assistance, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction (e.g. the UN Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction).

\(^{58}\) World Bank and DG ECHO estimate that spending $12 on DRR spares $7 in response costs.
The five countries that receive the highest annual average of bilateral assistance specifically dedicated to DPP\(^\text{59}\) are located in Asia, Bangladesh by far. Three of them are considered not environmentally vulnerable (based on the INFORM Risk Index\(^\text{60}\)), despite high levels of hazard exposure. Considering these five countries, it also seems that the amount of received aid tends to decrease as government expenditures increase.

The correlation between the existence of pro-active and efficient DRR authorities and more international funding to implement DRR policies is not surprising as such. However, while the SFDRR roll-out is clearly to be government-led, this questions the extent to which countries with weaker institutions and greater environmental vulnerability will be supported. Poverty has long been identified as a worsening factor of vulnerability. While the number and frequency of disasters are increasing, disaster mortality is concentrated in poor, developing countries. Among those in which ACFIN operates, India, Bangladesh and Nepal have over fifty percent of their population living with less than 2 dollars per day.

In that context global initiatives, such as RISE (the UNISDR-led ambitious alliance to promote a public-private joint effort towards disaster risk reduction and make all investment risk-sensitive), are interesting innovations in the development field. Besides, the growing investment capacity of Asian regional institutions is also to be monitored. An Integrated Disaster Risk Management Fund (IDRMF)\(^\text{61}\) was established in 2013 by the Asian Development Fund to support prioritized countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam) with a regional approach. Small grants seem to have been attributed so far (maximum $75,000 for 2016) but confirm a trend in Asia to create regional funding opportunities. Nevertheless, as long as the massive investments made in the development of infrastructure will not integrate a DRR dimension\(^\text{62}\), and as long as DRR will receive a smaller fraction of international aid finance, ensuring disaster risk reduction in poor, developing countries in Asia will remain challenging.

\(^{59}\) Disaster Preparedness and Prevention

\(^{60}\) “We define environmentally vulnerable countries using information from the Index for Risk Management (INFORM). Countries that are ‘very high’ and ‘high’ risk on the human hazard, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity sub-indexes are classified as environmentally vulnerable.” GHA (2015)

\(^{61}\) See ADB

\(^{62}\) The creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2016 is also an interesting initiative to monitor.
Disasters – Of Certainties and Uncertainties

Lastly and as one could expect, disaster is an extremely influential driver in the system. The impact of disasters in the outlook could be double: hinder the SFDRR roll-out in the region, as well as accelerate its deployment by political entities. Managing the uncertainties coming along with disasters is usually to accept that the exact time and extent of a catastrophe can rarely be anticipated. Preparedness therefore appears as an unconditional part of the solution. What could be further discussed, though, is the strong perception of disasters as being unpreventable. Taking into account the multiple dimensions of risks (notably the second-order risks induced by compensating measures), and the causality chains in which disasters are embedded, this perception needs to be continuously challenged. In addition, the need for disaster-related disaggregated data, particularly in terms of gender, strongly resonated throughout Asia as a priority area for DRR improvement.

CONCLUSION

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction calls upon a shift from standalone disaster management or risk management to holistic risk resilient development practices. As such, it embodies an approach that addresses all three elements of disaster risk – hazard, vulnerability and capacity – in a continuum to manage risks inherent to socio-economic development. Non-State stakeholders are given a particular responsibility in providing support to the State. This approach necessitates greater support of regional and international cooperation, along with government’s efficient leadership and all society involvement. This will require time to be successfully achieved in the Asia region, despite its early positioning in the DRM and DRR fields.

2016-2018 is a critical period for the rhetoric-to-action phase of the three landmark UN roadmaps established in 2015 on climate change, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. The first steps taken for the SFDRR implementation will be determinant for the achievement of its seven targets. An Asian Regional Implementation Plan for SFDRR will be adopted in the outlook, providing a shared vision of the region to achieve SFDRR outcome and goals and establishing doable and inclusive action plans for every 4-5 years in line with monitoring indicators (which will be agreed upon by the expert working group in the meanwhile).

As women, children, displaced and marginalized communities are continuously disproportionately affected by disaster, and evidence indicates that exposure of persons and assets in all countries has increased faster than vulnerability has decreased, the attention given to the most vulnerable in this implementation plan will be critical. Action Against Hunger, a leading NGO in disaster response was present in Sendai, and already advocates for empowering local communities, and enhancing DRR government accountability.
REFERENCES TO DRR

ADPC (2015), Risk-sensitive development in Asia, 12th Meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) on disaster management

ASEAN, ISDR (2014), Regional HFA monitoring and review in support of regional and national disaster risk reduction 2011-2013

DG ECHO (2013), Increasing resilience by reducing disaster risk in humanitarian action, Thematic Policy Document n°5

IFRC (2015), World Disasters Report 2015, Focus on local actors, the key to humanitarian effectiveness

IFRC, UNDP (2014), Effective law and regulation for disaster risk reduction: a multi-country report

ODI, UNDP (2015), Finance for reducing disaster risk: 10 things to know

ODI (2013), Disaster risk management in post-2015 development goals, Potential targets and indicators

ODI (2013), When disasters and conflicts collide, Improving links between disaster resilience and conflict prevention

ODI, UNDP (2014), Disaster Risk Governance, Unlocking progress and reducing risk

OECD (2015), Disaster Risk Financing, A global survey of practices and challenges. Private disaster risk financing tools and markets and the need for financial preparedness (Chapter 3)


UNDP (2014), Disaster risk reduction, A call for action

UNDP (2014), The future of disaster risk reduction, UNDP’s Vision for the Successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action

UNDP (2013), A comparative review of country-level and regional disaster loss and damage databases


UNISDR (2015), Disaster risk reduction and resilience in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development


UNISDR, RISE (2015), Point of View on the SFDRR

UNISDR, RISE (2014), RISE: Disaster risk-sensitive investment, Program summary


Asia Report:
THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

A three year outlook (2016-2018) at a global shift

BY THE INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL ANALYSTS NETWORK
@InteragencyRAN

FEBRUARY 2016

© INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL ANALYSTS NETWORK
All rights reserved

An initiative of:

INSTITUT DE RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES ET STRATÉGIQUES (IRIS)
2 bis rue Mercoeur - 75011 PARIS / France
T. + 33 (0) 1 53 27 60 60
contact@iris-france.org
@InstitutRIS
www.iris-france.org

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER (ACF UK)
First Floor, Rear Premises, 161-163 Greenwich High Road, London, SE10 8JA
T. + 44 (0)20 8293 6190
@ACF_UK
www.actionagainsthunger.org.uk