



Outcome Document: Chair's Summary of the Second Session Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk and the Global Platform

1. The second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place in a context of growing alarm about global climate change and increasing disaster risks. In the opening high-level panel of the Global Platform, political leaders including heads of State and heads of Governments highlighted in stark, unequivocal terms that reducing disaster risk is critical to managing the impacts of climate change and avoiding an erosion of social and economic welfare.
2. Since the first session of the Global Platform in 2007 there has been a dramatic increase in political will in all regions to address disaster risk, across both developed and developing nations and both governments and civil society. This increase has been driven from the bottom up as communities recognize the dangers they face and the need for action. The energy and leadership in disaster risk reduction are now increasingly coming from the South.
3. The Global Platform recognized that significant progress has been achieved since the Hyogo Framework of Action was endorsed by UN member states in 2005, as reported in the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, particularly in terms of life-saving measures such as improved disaster preparedness and response, but that much more needed to be done. Governments, civil society and other partners were united in recognizing that greater urgency is now required to address the factors that are driving the increase in disaster risk, such as rural poverty and vulnerability, unplanned and poorly managed urban growth and declining ecosystems. Such urgent action is necessary not only to reduce disaster risk, but also to maintain momentum in poverty reduction and to adapt to climate change.
4. As the deliberations of the Global Platform progressed it became clear that innovative approaches and tools have been developed and applied in many key areas such as: the management of urban risks; the application of cost benefit analysis; community based and local level strategies; early warning; and ensuring the security of facilities such as schools and hospitals.
5. The Global Platform highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge, including indigenous and traditional knowledge, and ensuring easy and systematic access to best practice and tools and international standards, tailored to specific sectors, as well as the necessity for investment in research and development and the more effective integration of science and technical information into policy and practice.

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6. Risk-prone countries are now giving the highest priority to disaster risk reduction and wish to move ahead quickly in the design and adoption of policies and strategies to address their risks. Increasingly, the urgency for this movement is coming from the vulnerable developing countries, which are likely to bear an increasingly disproportionate share of disaster impacts in times to come. National and regional platforms and organizations are being rapidly developed or strengthened to guide and coordinate this action, and it is incumbent on the international community to support them and facilitate access to the resources, assistance and expertise, as a matter of urgency.
7. The following areas are considered critical to future progress.

Climate change

8. Climate change is already dramatically magnifying the disaster risks threatening developing nations. In the case of some small-island countries, increasing risk levels are undermining their continued social and economic viability as nations. Slow-onset disasters and associated food insecurity are a major concern. At the Global Platform it was recognised that addressing the underlying drivers of disaster risk therefore offers potential for a triple win – for adaptation, disaster risk reduction and poverty reduction.
9. The overwhelming view of the Global Platform is that urgent action is required to harmonise and link the frameworks for both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the broader context of poverty reduction and sustainable development. A core priority is that both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are incorporated as core policy and programmatic objectives in national development plans and supporting poverty reduction strategies and country assistance plans. It was stressed that disaster risk reduction must be a concrete part of the deal on climate change that is sealed at the United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.
10. A number of countries put forward concrete proposals to integrate their efforts in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. One group of countries proposed that a minimum of 30% of the adaptation finance available to developing countries should be applied to weather and climate related risk reduction projects. It was also emphasised that ecosystem management approaches also can provide multiple benefits, including risk reduction, and therefore should also be a central part of such strategies

Reduced risk for all

11. The Global Platform highlighted a plethora of successful experiences in managing and reducing disaster risk at the community and local level and emphasised the key role of women as drivers and leaders in many of these processes. Children were also seen as strong agents for change who should be consulted and involved in the decision making process. At the same time, the Global Platform also highlighted that such experiences and participatory processes were not adequately supported from central or local governments and that the knowledge and tools generated are not being adequately brought into the policy mainstream.
12. The Global Platform emphasised that success in reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change, and in protecting livelihoods, requires the development of innovative partnerships that both recognise and strengthen the mutual dependence of central and

local governments and civil society, and that provide greater resources to the local level, involve civil society in monitoring progress, and increase accountability. Such partnerships should become the standard rather than the exception.

Setting targets for disaster risk reduction

13. The Global Platform highlighted that the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action must now accelerate rapidly from isolated actions and pilot projects to full implementation and that the setting of targets in specific areas can help to achieve momentum. In addition to addressing climate risks, these must cover geological hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions that are responsible for a large proportion of disaster mortality.
14. It was proposed, for example, that by 2011 a global structural evaluation of all schools and hospitals should be undertaken and that by 2015 concrete action plans for safer schools and hospitals should be developed and implemented in all disaster prone countries. Similarly, disaster risk reduction should be included in all school curricula by the same year.
15. It was proposed that by 2015, all major cities in disaster prone areas should include and enforce disaster risk reduction measures in their building and land use codes. Targets were also proposed for such things as national risk assessments, municipal disaster recovery plans, early warning systems, water risks, and the enforcement of building codes. The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon called for a target to halve the losses of lives from disasters by 2015, when the term of the Hyogo Framework concludes.

Financing disaster risk reduction

16. The Global Platform also recognised a drastic mismatch between the resources required to address disaster risk in developing countries and those actually available. A massive scaling up of action is needed. Put bluntly, many countries must dedicate substantially more funds from national budgets – or continue to suffer the consequences. This is also a must for the international community, since some countries suffer from institutional and capacity weaknesses, and unless their capacities are strengthened implementation will not succeed.
17. A variety of innovations, such as incentives for retrofitting, risk transfer tools, risk-sensitive development, private sector involvement, debt swap to finance disaster reduction measures and linkages with adaptation financing were proposed at the Global Platform. More explicit information on the effectiveness and cost of specific measures is needed.
18. There is support by many participants to target the equivalent of 10% of humanitarian relief funds to disaster risk reduction work. Similarly, a 10% figure has been proposed as a target share of post-disaster reconstruction and recovery projects and national preparedness and response plans. Calls also were made for at least 1% of all national development funding and all development assistance funding to be allocated to risk reduction measures. For its part the European Union has recently adopted a Union-wide strategy to support disaster risk reduction in developing countries.

The future

19. The movement to reduce disaster risks is accelerating worldwide. The Global Platform acknowledged the important supporting role of the ISDR system. With the term of the Hyogo Framework approaching the halfway point, a Mid-Term Review is planned to address strategic and fundamental matters concerning its implementation out to 2015 and beyond. This will require leadership from Governments, close involvement of civil society, strengthened regional capacities for coordination and programme support, and support from the UNISDR and ISDR partners.
20. We know how to move ahead. We can close the gaps and engage those who most need it. We can protect livelihoods, make our schools and hospitals safe, and help address the climate change issue. With strong advocacy, and stronger commitment, greater public awareness and support, and appropriate funds, we can substantially reduce the losses from disasters as well as contributing to resilient social and economic development.
21. The Global Platform thus has a clear and simple message – that disaster risk can be readily reduced through practical action. Solutions exist and are being put into action in many countries. We can invest today for a safer tomorrow.

*Geneva, Switzerland,
19 June 2009*