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**Sustainable development: disaster risk reduction**

## **Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report has been prepared as requested by the General Assembly in resolution [75/216](#) on disaster risk reduction. It contains an overview of progress made towards the goal, global targets and priorities for action of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and serves to identify good practice that can support countries to overcome challenges to effective implementation. The report also contains an overview of the global response to address the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon, pursuant to Assembly decision 74/537 B; an initial assessment of the application of the Sendai Framework in the response to and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); and input for consideration by Member States on the midterm review of the Framework.

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\* [A/76/150](#).



## I. Current state of disaster risk

1. The underlying social, economic and environmental risks driving the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its socioeconomic impacts are not new, yet governments and communities worldwide were not well prepared to address them. The pandemic has reversed decades of progress in human development<sup>1</sup> and had an impact on the effective enjoyment of human rights. In addition, the climate crisis continued to intensify in 2020. Compared with the period 2000 to 2019, 2020 saw a higher-than-average number of recorded disaster events and economic losses.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, disaster risk continues to be created, albeit unintentionally, by public policies, private sector investments and people's everyday decisions that are not risk informed.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis demonstrate the complexity of systemic risk. They show how disaster impacts interconnect and cascade through systems and linger through time. They have exposed entrenched weaknesses and inequalities within the economic, social, environmental and political systems upon which humanity relies for security. Systems are on the brink of tipping points, and the potential consequences could be catastrophic. Disaster impacts are leaving countless communities behind on the path towards sustainable development and increasing humanitarian caseloads to unprecedented levels.

3. Data on progress towards the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 reported to the Sendai Framework monitor reveal a mixed picture of progress and challenges. As of April 2021, the average annual number of dead and missing persons in the event of a disaster per 100,000 people (global target A) has fallen from 1.98 between 2005 and 2014 to 1.32 between 2011 and 2020. However, the number of persons affected by disasters per 100,000 people (global target B) has grown from an average of 1,981 to 3,145 per year for the same periods. Economic losses due to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (global target C) remain stubbornly high, and the number of critical infrastructure units and facilities destroyed or damaged by disasters (global target D) averaged 158,800 per year between 2015 and 2020. These figures will undoubtedly increase as more countries report on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. While 120 countries report having national and/or local disaster risk reduction strategies in place (global target E), only 56 donor and recipient countries have reported on international cooperation to implement the Sendai Framework (global target F). Only 79 countries report having access to multi-hazard early warning systems, and 28 countries report having access to appropriate disaster risk information and assessments (global target G).

4. Decades of risk creation can be reversed through immediate action to implement the Sendai Framework and its prospective, preventative and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction. The implementation of the Framework continues to deliver results at all levels. However, the pace of implementation is still too slow to counter the creation of new risk. In accordance with the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations,<sup>3</sup> the time to act to reduce risks and make systems more resilient is now. The COVID-19 recovery packages and commitments to build back better, the transition to low-carbon and resilient economies and the decade of action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals all present opportunities to align development, climate and environmental policies

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "2020 human development perspectives: COVID-19 and human development: assessing the crisis, envisioning the recovery" (New York, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "2020: the non-COVID year in disasters" (Brussels, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 75/1.

and investments with the goal of the Sendai Framework to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk.

## **II. Applying the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response and recovery efforts**

5. In its resolution 74/306 on the comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly called upon Member States to design recovery strategies that are risk-informed. That call was reinforced in resolution 75/216 on disaster risk reduction, in which the Assembly recognized that the Sendai Framework, including its core provision to build back better, provides guidance relevant to a sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

6. Reviews of national disaster risk reduction strategies through a health lens<sup>4</sup> reveal that in most strategies, insufficient attention is paid to biological hazards that can drive pandemics. The United Nations system is supporting Governments to update their national disaster risk reduction strategies and conduct multi-hazard risk assessments that incorporate pandemic and epidemic risk and apply the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.<sup>5</sup> The work in that regard is also supported by a special addendum on the integration of disease outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics in the guidance on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

7. Several entities of the United Nations system have embedded risk reduction into COVID-19 recovery programmes, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) global COVID-19 programme offer 2.0. Regional commissions and issue-based coalitions offer a suite of tools and information products to promote the integration of risk and resilience into COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Both the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Health Organization (WHO) are supporting countries to report to the Sendai Framework monitor on the impacts of the pandemic and to establish and strengthen collaboration among national focal points for the Framework and the International Health Regulations (2005) to build synergies in the implementation of national action plans for health security and national disaster risk reduction strategies. Moreover, the International Recovery Platform has developed guidance documents to support governments and their development partners to adopt a risk-informed approach to COVID-19 recovery efforts.<sup>6</sup> Regional scientific and technical advisory groups for disaster risk reduction have also produced several knowledge products and reviewed national COVID-19 recovery plans to provide governments with recommendations for reducing disaster risk and building resilience through recovery packages.

8. In partnership with several United Nations entities, the Office conducted a series of webinars and online workshops on integrating disaster risk reduction into

<sup>4</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, “The COVID-19 pandemic: an opportunity for a systemic approach to disaster risk for the Caribbean” (Geneva, 2021); United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, “COVID-19 brief: preliminary evidence from sub-Saharan Africa” (Geneva, 2020); and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, “Review of COVID-19 disaster risk governance in Asia-Pacific: towards multi-hazard and multisectoral disaster risk reduction” (Geneva, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution 73/7.

<sup>6</sup> International Recovery Platform, “Practical lessons for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic: principles for recovery” (Kobe, Japan, 2020).

COVID-19 response and recovery strategies. For example, a dialogue organized by the Office, the regional issue-based coalition on urbanization and WHO brought together city representatives from nine different Arab countries and representatives from five Central Asian countries. These online encounters provided an opportunity for governments facing similar challenges to share best practices and lessons learned and to reflect on what needs to be done to strengthen their capacities to better anticipate future pandemic risks.

9. From these events, it has emerged that countries with multi-hazard disaster risk management strategies in place that include health emergencies appear to be better prepared to respond to and reduce the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that there is an urgent need to strengthen capacities and develop approaches to respond to concurrent hazards and manage the systemic nature of risk. This aim demands greater investment in science and technology, particularly in developing countries, to collect and analyse multi-hazard risk data in order to anticipate future risks and their interrelations and apply the resulting information to policy and investment decisions. The pandemic also highlights the need for countries to develop targeted approaches to reduce risk and build the multi-hazard resilience of their core economic sectors. The importance of establishing or strengthening multisectoral and inter-institutional risk governance mechanisms and promoting coherence among local and national disaster risk reduction policies and programmes also emerged as a priority. The health sector must be integrated into such risk governance mechanisms.

10. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the social and economic inequalities that determine people's exposure and vulnerability to hazards and the need for more in depth qualitative analysis of their interplay. Women and girls, persons with disabilities, racial minorities and other marginalized groups have been disproportionately affected. Without concerted attention to reduce vulnerability and exposure to future crises through COVID-19 recovery strategies, marginalized groups will be left further behind. An inclusive human-rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction is therefore imperative.

11. With the Sendai Framework, governments have an agreed global blueprint to build back better in a manner that reduces risk and builds resilience to future shocks and hazards. While progress has been made over the past 12 months, governments and the United Nations system can do more to systematically integrate disaster risk reduction into COVID-19 response and recovery programming. Greater political commitment and leadership are needed to ensure that the Framework is integrated into COVID-19 recovery packages. Implementing the disaster risk reduction policy options contained in the United Nations menu of options on financing for development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond for the consideration of Heads of State and Government will be a significant step forward. The policy options include the following: adequate financing for national disaster risk reduction strategies; integration of disaster risk reduction into national planning and financing processes; integration of sustainability and of risks, including those related to climate and the environment, into the work of central banks and financial supervisors with regard to financial stability monitoring and macroprudential and microprudential supervision; and strengthened alignment of the strategies and activities of all parts of the international system with the Framework.

### III. Progress in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

#### Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

12. Understanding of disaster risk continues to increase among policymakers and decision makers in many sectors and at all levels. Both historical data on disaster loss and damage and estimations of future disaster risk are needed to understand the impacts of disasters on sustainable development, monitor progress on reducing disaster losses and risks and guide risk-informed policy and investment decisions in all sectors.

13. As of July 2021, 110 Member States and 5 Non-Self-Governing Territories have put in place disaster loss databases using the DesInventar system. Disaster loss databases are an essential source of information for the Sendai Framework monitor, to which 153 countries currently report on at least one of the seven global targets of the Framework and the disaster risk reduction targets of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13. A new module on monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the disaster risk reduction strategies of regional intergovernmental organizations has been developed and is being used by the African Union and the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPRENAC).

14. To maintain continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual training-the-trainers course on Sendai Framework monitoring and disaster loss accounting was reformulated from a four-day in-person course into a six-week self-paced online course. Activities of the Office's Global Education and Training Institute also reached 6,020 participants in training webinars on disaster loss monitoring and risk assessment during the reporting period. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched an e-learning course on the collection and reporting of disaggregated data on disaster damage and loss in the agricultural sector and provided training to 19 countries. In addition, UNDP and the Office are working in partnership to support countries to develop or update national disaster loss databases aligned with the Framework. The partnership has led to the establishment of pools of national experts and trainers-of-trainers and has increased the engagement of key data holders from relevant sectors. A growing number of Governments and United Nations country teams now intend to use the data of the Sendai Framework monitor to inform disaster risk reduction and sustainable development policies and programmes and to monitor their implementation, including within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

15. While the number of countries using the Sendai Framework monitor continues to increase, only 68 countries are reporting on all seven global targets. Remaining challenges include gaps in data entry across all targets and a lack of data submitted by all sectors. The engagement of national statistical offices is essential to the integration of data reported to the Framework monitor into official national data and to the promotion of the reporting and use of the data by all sectors. To date, one third of the countries reporting to the monitor have assigned roles in the monitor to their national statistical offices. Formalizing partnerships among such offices and national disaster management authorities has proved effective in that regard.

16. Several entities of the United Nations system also support countries to collect disaster risk data and conduct risk assessments. To truly understand systemic risk and the cascading effects of disasters beyond their primary impacts, common multi-hazard methodologies and tools that promote interoperability and the sharing of risk data among sectors are needed. The Global Risk Assessment Framework led by the Office supports countries to integrate systemic risk considerations into decision-making and

planning processes by bringing risk experts together from various sectors. Work on the Global Risk Assessment Framework is ongoing in Costa Rica, Eswatini and Pakistan, with the aim of reaching 15 countries by 2022. Improved collaboration and coordination within the United Nations system can support a multi-hazard and multisectoral approach to risk assessment. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics is working on a common framework for disaster-related statistics. In Latin American and the Caribbean, a working group on disaster risk reduction and disaster-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators is taking steps to harmonize methodologies and identify good practices and tools to strengthen disaster statistical capacities at the national level. Common terminology is also essential to the multisectoral interoperability of disaster data collection and risk assessment. The *Hazard Definition and Classification Review: Technical Report*, published in 2020 by the International Science Council and the Office, and the *Glossary of Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Terminology*, published in 2020 by WHO, serve to provide a common set of hazard definitions to support coherence across sectors with regard to risk assessment and monitoring of hazard impacts.

17. Several challenges common to both disaster loss accounting and disaster risk assessment must be addressed so that data can effectively guide risk-informed decision-making. Remaining obstacles include limited national capacity and insufficient resource allocation for regularly updated data collection and analysis. Risk data must be communicated more widely through accessible knowledge products for decision makers and communities. Challenges in coordination and data sharing among sectors and among local, subnational and national actors also persist. There is a need to establish or strengthen coordination mechanisms among ministries to map ongoing activities, identify data gaps and clearly define roles and responsibilities for data collection and risk assessment.

18. Disaster loss databases and risk assessments also tend to be focused on natural hazards and do not include biological, environmental and technological risks and their interactions. Limited disaggregation of data by income, sex, age and disability remains a significant barrier to understanding and analysing differential impacts and formulating gender-responsive and more inclusive disaster risk reduction programmes. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), through its programme on women's resilience to disasters, is developing a knowledge hub to provide consolidated open access to gender-related disaster risk information. Governments can do more to leverage existing private sector data and take advantage of open-source and geographical information systems, especially in developing countries, where cost-effective solutions for multi-hazard risk assessment are urgently needed. The World Food Programme (WFP) Innovation Accelerator and the FAO Collect Earth tool are two innovative examples that use Google's satellite imagery to gather disaster loss and risk data.

19. The understanding of disaster risk must extend beyond policymakers to realize the all-of-society approach advocated in the Sendai Framework. Incorporating disaster risk reduction into formal and non-formal education at all levels is an effective way to increase public knowledge and awareness while building capacity for risk reduction. The U-INSPIRE Alliance, now active in 10 countries in Asia and the Pacific, is bringing young professionals in science, engineering and technology together with governments and the United Nations to build capacity and develop knowledge products for disaster risk reduction. Awareness-raising campaigns, which are also essential to increasing public understanding of and engagement in disaster risk reduction, need to be scaled up at the national and local levels.

## **Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk**

20. National and local disaster risk reduction strategies are the cornerstone of disaster risk governance. A considerable effort was made by Governments towards meeting the 2020 deadline of Sendai Framework global target E to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in place. In 2020, at least 10 United Nations entities supported countries to develop or update national, local and sectoral disaster risk reduction strategies in 85 countries.<sup>7</sup>

21. As of April 2021, the average self-reported score of alignment of the national disaster risk reduction strategies with the Sendai Framework, based on 10 key elements developed by the Office, stands at 0.68 on a scale of 0 to 1. While this is a significant increase from 0.41 in 2015, attention still needs to be paid to improving the quality of the strategies in terms of their alignment with the Framework. The focus of strategies continues to be on preparedness and response, and a lack of risk-informed strategic approaches focused on prevention remains. There is also a need to increase measures to reduce underlying drivers of risk, including inequality, and to increase the focus on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in all sectors. Countries could benefit from the application of the Office's qualitative assessment methodology and tool, which serves to provide recommendations to strengthen the alignment of the strategies with the Framework.

22. The essential role of local authorities in managing and reducing disaster risk has become increasingly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of April 2021, 91 countries have reported the development of 49,662 local strategies to the Sendai Framework monitor. While progress is being made, a greater focus is needed on the development and implementation of local disaster risk reduction strategies. Building on the success of the Making Cities Resilient campaign that concluded in 2020, which reached 4,300 cities, the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative was launched in 2020. It provides a three-stage resilience road map on assessing, planning and implementing local risk reduction strategies and resilience-building initiatives.

23. Countries continue to make progress towards establishing or strengthening inter-institutional coordination mechanisms for risk governance. To be most effective, national mechanisms or similar national coordination structures should strengthen links among disaster risk management authorities and ministries and institutions with key roles in risk-informed sustainable development, such as development planning, finance and budget, land use, agriculture, infrastructure, climate change and environmental management. They should establish institutional and policy arrangements with clear mandates and responsibilities for implementing, monitoring and reporting on disaster risk reduction strategies. Monitoring and reporting can be strengthened by using the Sendai Framework monitor module on customized national targets and indicators. In many countries, capacity development, resources and political leadership are needed to ensure that national mechanisms convene regularly and provide strategic guidance on the development, implementation and monitoring of national disaster risk reduction strategies. Establishing mechanisms by official decree or law can provide the necessary political support.

24. Disaster risk governance is most effective when it involves the inclusive and equitable participation of non-State stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is more common at the strategy formulation stage but diminishes during implementation and monitoring. According to recent research by UN-Women, only 26 countries have policies or strategies in place that ensure the inclusion of all stakeholder groups

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "Progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience" (Geneva, 2021).

identified in the Sendai Framework.<sup>8</sup> The perspectives of women and girls are essential to the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. In 2020, UN-Women supported 500 women's organizations in promoting a gender-responsive approach to disaster risk reduction policies and strategies, and the Office launched the Women's International Network for Disaster Risk Reduction, which aims to strengthen women's leadership capacities in disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific. Countries could benefit from the assessment of national disaster risk governance systems to determine their suitability to support the implementation of multi-hazard, inter-institutional and multi-stakeholder strategies.

25. Efforts are under way to formalize the role of stakeholders and capitalize on their contributions to disaster risk reduction. To date, 340 organizations have published 76 voluntary commitments with 300 concrete deliverables through the Sendai Framework voluntary commitments online platform, which serves to raise awareness about stakeholder activities and promote their inclusion in the implementation of the Framework. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is working to formalize the participation of workers' and employers' organizations in national disaster risk governance. In 2020, it launched e-learning modules on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as part of a massive open online course on ILO Recommendation No. 205. Meanwhile, in Europe, the network of Aarhus Centres is leveraging the *Maastricht Recommendations on Promoting Effective Public Participation in Decision-making in Environmental Matters*, published by the Economic Commission for Europe, to promote the engagement of local communities in disaster risk reduction activities. To mobilize an all-of-society approach, disaster risk governance was made the focus of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction and of World Tsunami Awareness Day in 2020.

26. The absence of laws and regulations for disaster risk reduction, limited enforcement of existing legislation and lack of interoperability among disaster risk reduction strategies and associated regulatory frameworks are bottlenecks to effective disaster risk governance. In that regard, UNDP, the Office and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are supporting countries to review and update legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction and national disaster management acts. Legal frameworks should go beyond traditional stand-alone disaster management laws to ensure that risk reduction permeates regulations, standards, budgeting and planning in all sectors. The establishment of parliamentary committees or networks to review national legislation on disaster risk management can help to ensure that it is aligned with the Sendai Framework and promote the integration of risk reduction into relevant legislation. Members of the European Parliament have recently reviewed several legislative texts to strengthen their contribution to the implementation of the Framework. To support this work, the Office and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will issue a guide for parliamentarians on disaster risk reduction to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

27. Policy coherence has been established among the Sendai Framework and agreements on sustainable development and climate change at the global and regional levels. However, there are still policy coherence challenges to implementing integrated approaches to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in support of sustainable development at the national level, as well as challenges related to coordination and governance, monitoring and financing.<sup>9</sup> Through the "target E coherent approach", the Office, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat and other partners supported the mapping of climate

<sup>8</sup> UN-Women, Women's Resilience to Disasters Policy Tracker. Available at <https://wrd.preventionweb.net/tracker> (accessed on 1 July 2021).

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation: Pathways for Policy Coherence in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Geneva, 2020).



change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policy landscapes in 16 countries in 2020. The secretariat and the Office also signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen integrated approaches to implementing and financing national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies. Dedicated discussions on disaster risk reduction at the annual sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change could promote coherence between climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction to ensure risk-informed climate action in order to avoid maladaptation.

28. The high-level political forum on sustainable development remains a crucial intergovernmental space to provide guidance and share good practice in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into efforts to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals. Annual consideration of disaster risk reduction at the forum could contribute significantly to promoting the risk-informed approach crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The voluntary national review reports can be further leveraged to establish coherence between national disaster risk reduction and sustainable development strategies and promote a risk-informed approach to sustainable development. In 2020, 86 per cent of countries included disaster-related information in their voluntary national reviews, and 40 per cent included direct links to the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

### **Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience**

29. Today's disasters have macroeconomic implications that cannot be confined to a single sector or place and can lead to a steady decline in national wealth in the world's poorest countries.<sup>10</sup> With the interconnection of global financial and economic systems, previously isolated events are developing into large-scale catastrophes with systemic implications that are hard to anticipate and manage.<sup>11</sup> The current approach to disaster finance is still not aligned with this reality. It remains heavily focused on reactive measures, such as contingency funds, insurance and catastrophe bonds to finance post-disaster response and recovery.

30. In the outcome document of the 2021 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, Ministers and high-level representatives highlighted an urgent need to shift the balance from investing in response, to investing in prevention and disaster risk reduction.<sup>12</sup> Governments can scale up investments and resource for disaster risk reduction by integrating it into economic planning, public investment strategies, and budgets and expenditure frameworks in all sectors. To facilitate such an approach, disaster risk reduction has been incorporated into the building blocks of the integrated national financing frameworks for sustainable development, developed by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development. The participation of ministries of finance and economic planning in the development of national disaster risk reduction strategies and in risk-informed reviews of public budgets has been beneficial in enhancing policymakers' understanding of the financing gaps and the need for alignment between national budgets and disaster risk reduction strategies.

31. Decision makers often require evidence of the value of applying disaster risk reduction in public and private finance. In Africa, the Office and partners supported the Governments of Angola, Tanzania and Zambia to assess the multiple economic

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "Regional assessment report on disaster risk in Latin America and the Caribbean" (Geneva, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021* (United Nations publication, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> [E/FFDF/2021/3](#).

and social benefits of systematically investing in resilience across sectors.<sup>13</sup> For many developing countries, providing the evidence base for risk-informed budgeting and investing requires capacity development and resources to generate or access disaster data, including long-range climate forecasting capabilities, in order to decide how much to spend and identify which measures are most effective in reducing disaster risk and losses.

32. As noted in the summary of the seventh high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum,<sup>14</sup> international development cooperation must become more risk-informed, given the increasingly complex risk landscape and the scope of resources and expertise required. This aim can be supported by aligning national development cooperation policies with national disaster risk reduction strategies and climate change adaptation plans. However, according to a review of national development cooperation policies in the 2020 survey study of the Forum, few such policies include disaster risk reduction.<sup>15</sup> Increased reporting on global target F of the Sendai Framework and usage of the disaster risk reduction marker developed by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development are needed to provide a more in-depth understanding of how bilateral and multilateral donors are integrating disaster risk considerations into development assistance, including with regard to COVID-19 recovery efforts.

33. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed systemic weaknesses in the resilience of private companies and their supply chains. Government legislation and standards and stronger incentives and guidelines are needed to mandate the disclosure of disaster risk in private sector investments, operations and transactions. Legislation and standards should also serve to ensure that investors and businesses routinely conduct risk assessments with long-term horizons so that investment decisions seek to not only minimize the risk to financial returns but also to reduce rather than create social, economic and environmental risks. As a contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Finance Action Plan, the European Commission adopted the European Union Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act, which includes activities to reduce the impacts of disasters and to ensure investments to prevent the creation of new risk. Moreover, the Coalition for Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure has initiated work streams on strengthening critical infrastructure regulations, the development of a resilient infrastructure assessment scorecard and rating standard, and a methodology for stress-testing interconnected infrastructure assets. Dedicated policy frameworks and innovative financial products are also needed to reduce disaster risk for small and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>16</sup>

34. The insurance sector has an important role to play in incentivizing risk-reducing behaviour. A recent publication by the Office and the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation contains recommendations to guide the insurance industry in expanding its focus from providing risk transfer products to also include incentivizing and investing in disaster risk reduction and prevention. In addition, a recent report by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security contains recommendations for insurance solutions tailored to the specific contexts, risks and vulnerabilities of small island developing States. Moreover, in July 2021, eight of the world's leading insurers and reinsurers established the Net-Zero

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "Multiple benefits of DRR investment: reducing risk and building resilience against floods and droughts in sub-Saharan Africa" (Geneva, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> [E/2021/70](#).

<sup>15</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "DCF survey study 2020: toward effective development cooperation in the COVID-19 period" (New York, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Reducing Risk and Building Resilience of SMEs to Disasters* (Geneva, 2021).

Insurance Alliance, convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

35. Countries can also do more to capitalize on the benefits of investing in ecosystem-based approaches for disaster risk reduction. A *Words into Action* guide issued in 2021 contains practical guidance on nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Disaster risk reduction is also included in the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions, which is designed to support users to apply, learn and continuously strengthen and improve the effectiveness, sustainability and adaptability of their nature-based solutions.

36. While priority 3 is the engine of the Sendai Framework, financing for disaster risk reduction remains too short term, small scale and project based. Tools and methodologies for risk-informed investing are also underdeveloped. There is an urgent need for international financial institutions and development banks, as well as the financial sector, to focus on the development of disaster risk reduction financing instruments. Such instruments can include risk reduction and prevention bonds, blended financing tools and pooled funds, as well as guidance and methodologies to include disaster risk reduction in decisions of business and institutional investors. Central banks and credit rating agencies can also align their strategies and operations with the Framework to ensure that they prioritize risk reduction.

#### **Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction**

37. The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder that most countries are not adequately prepared for disasters, in particular concurrent and complex disasters, nor are they prepared to build back better in a manner that reduces risk and builds resilience in the recovery phase. In the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States stressed the need to strengthen preparedness to respond to all types of disasters and to reduce risks and make systems more resilient. Preparedness, an essential component of disaster risk management, can save lives and reduce economic losses. However, disaster preparedness does not address the drivers of risk and is therefore not an end goal. To break the cycle of disaster, response, recovery and repeat, advancements are needed in national policymaking and capacity-building for a multi-hazard, multisectoral and longer-term approach to preparedness that is integrated within a comprehensive approach to risk reduction and prevention.

38. In 2020, United Nations entities supported 151 countries to develop and implement national disaster preparedness frameworks. Given that only 13 per cent of these frameworks reflect a multi-hazard approach,<sup>17</sup> the United Nations system should adopt a more coordinated and integrated approach to preparedness in line with the Sendai Framework. Aligning or integrating national disaster preparedness frameworks with national disaster risk reduction strategies can help to ensure that preparedness contributes to risk reduction and resilience priorities and strategies to build back better.

39. Several United Nations entities, such as FAO, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP and WFP, are supporting countries to strengthen anticipatory action, including early warning that leads to early action, and forecast-based financing. Several lessons learned and good practices are emerging from this work. For example, preparedness should be informed by an understanding of systemic

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "Progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience".

risk to enable communities and countries to deal with the potential cascading impacts of hazards and concurrent disasters and to avoid the adoption of negative coping strategies. Disaster preparedness should also be expanded beyond weather-related hazards to include environmental, technological and biological hazards, as well as conflict and displacement risks, where relevant. Improved analytical tools and guidelines for anticipatory action are therefore needed to allow for integrated monitoring of multiple risk factors. Early warning and anticipatory action should also be informed by localized vulnerability assessments to ensure that the needs of all groups are included. There is also a need to equip public service workers with the necessary funding, resources and capacity to ensure the continuity of operations during and after disasters. After-action reviews and simulation exercises are effective tools that can help to identify preparedness gaps and build capacity.

40. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of policies, capacities and access to financing to ensure that post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts build back better. The new European Union Adaptation Strategy requires funds and instruments for disaster recovery to incorporate the concept of building back better. The 2021 International Recovery Forum offered guidance on building back better from compound disasters in the context of a global pandemic and natural hazards. The “Guide on supporting a post-COVID-19 green economic recovery”, by ParlAmericas, contains information on how parliaments can apply the Sendai Framework in their efforts to build back better. While these documents and efforts provide some necessary guidance, Governments can do more to be prepared and effective with regard to building back better.

41. Effective disaster preparedness and anticipatory action require capacities and resources for long-range multi-hazard early warning systems and climate forecasts. Country-reported data on global target G show that much greater investments and transfer of technology are needed to build the forecasting and early warning capacities of developing countries. By the end of 2020, the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative was supporting 57 countries. Its projects, implemented by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Bank Group and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), are supporting least developed countries and small island developing States to strengthen the hydrometeorological and early warning services in the Caribbean, South-West Indian Ocean and South Pacific, including the integration of gender aspects and the perspectives of children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Office and WMO are developing a set of custom indicators to support countries to measure the effectiveness of their multi-hazard early warning systems.

42. As disasters know no borders, a regional transboundary approach to early warning is essential. Noteworthy progress was made during the reporting period to improve the availability of risk and early warning information in Africa. The African Union Commission, the International Governmental Authority on Development and the Governments of Angola, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia are implementing the Africa Road Map for Improving the Availability, Access and Use of Disaster Risk Information for Early Warning and Early Action, including in the Context of Transboundary Risk Management. The International Governmental Authority on Development, the Office, WFP and the Government of Sweden also established the Horn of Africa partnership for early warning for early action in October 2020. The partnership aims to establish a disaster operations centre as part of the International Governmental Authority on Development to operationalize a subregional multi-hazard early warning and early action system and serve as a hub for risk knowledge and disaster data in support of food security.

#### **IV. Disaster risk reduction in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries**

43. Increased international support, including with regard to dedicated financing instruments, policy and capacity development, is urgently needed to enable the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries to reduce disaster risk and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries provides an opportunity to establish policy coherence between the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the new programme of action for the least developed countries expected to emerge from the Conference. Establishing policy coherence between the two processes can promote the integration of risk reduction into the economic and development policies of the least developed countries, including their COVID-19 recovery strategies. Disaster risk reduction featured prominently in the deliberations and outcomes of the Africa regional review meeting held in preparation for the Conference and of the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Conference. Member States outlined disaster risk reduction priorities to be included in the new programme of action, including strengthened understanding of systemic risk and its application in decision-making, financing for disaster risk reduction and risk-informed public and private investing, and strengthened scientific capacity and access to technology.

44. Most countries graduate from the category of least developed country with high levels of economic and environmental vulnerability, which threaten to reverse progress. In its resolution [2021/11](#) on the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twenty-third session, the Economic and Social Council recognized the relevance of addressing disaster risk in the graduation process and the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction into the smooth transition strategies of graduating countries. Coordinated support from the United Nations system will be essential to ensure that smooth transition strategies and international support are aligned with the Sendai Framework and address risk reduction capacity gaps during the graduation process. The Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries can be leveraged to support efforts in that regard; it has already partnered with the Office for Outer Space Affairs to strengthen the capacity of disaster management agencies in the use of space technologies for disaster risk reduction.

45. The implementation of the mandates of the midterm reviews of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 is promoting their coherence with the implementation of the Sendai Framework. Under the Samoa Pathway, relevant efforts include the examination of the disaster-related funding and support environment, the development of a monitoring system and the exploration of a multidimensional vulnerability index. The road map for the accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the remaining five years includes several key disaster risk reduction activities as part of the coordinated support from the United Nations system, including activities related to national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction, multi-hazard risk assessment and resilient infrastructure. Greater attention needs to be paid to the specific disaster risk reduction challenges faced by middle-income countries, including access to financing to invest in disaster risk reduction and resilience building. A deeper understanding of multidimensional vulnerability in middle-income countries with regard to the interrelations among the impacts of climate change and the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as inequality and economic instability, can

support the development of disaster risk reduction strategies and financing instruments tailored to the specific needs of such countries.

## **V. Disaster risk reduction in countries affected by conflict, protracted humanitarian crisis and disaster displacement**

46. With its focus on addressing the underlying social, economic and environmental drivers of risk, the implementation of the Sendai Framework can contribute to reducing humanitarian needs, sustaining peace and reducing the risk of disaster displacement. To support risk-informed humanitarian action, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, in collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has issued a set of recommendations accompanied by a checklist on scaling up disaster risk reduction in the humanitarian programme cycle.<sup>18</sup> The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNEP also released a reference document on the use of the nexus environmental assessment tool which supports the integration of environmental risks into humanitarian action.

47. Despite inherent challenges to disaster risk reduction in countries affected by conflict, progress is possible, especially at the local level. Countries affected by conflict require further support from the United Nations system to conduct multi-hazard and multidimensional risk assessments that include disaster risks. The climate security mechanism, a joint initiative of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNDP and UNEP, has developed a guidance package to support United Nations country teams, political and peacekeeping missions and regional organizations to conduct risk assessments and develop strategies that address the complex interplay among climate stressors, vulnerability and security risks.

48. In her report transmitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons concluded that further international support was needed for joint action on climate change, disaster risk reduction, development, human rights protection and peace to address internal displacement.<sup>19</sup> The Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Governmental Authority on Development, with support from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Platform on Disaster Displacement, conducted a policy mapping exercise to provide solutions on how disaster-induced displacement can be better integrated into disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and development strategies. An e-learning course is being rolled out in collaboration with CEPREDENAC and the Authority to complement the results of that exercise.

49. In countries affected by protracted or recurring crises, the implementation of the Sendai Framework can be sporadic and limited by capacity, technology, financial and governance constraints. Sustained international support and innovative approaches are needed to integrate risk reduction into humanitarian action, peacebuilding programmes and durable solutions to disaster displacement, tailored to the specific needs and capacities of crisis-affected countries and communities.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Scaling up Disaster Risk Reduction in Humanitarian Action 2.0: Recommendations for the Humanitarian Programme Cycle* (Geneva, 2021).

<sup>19</sup> [A/75/207](#).

## VI. Coordination of disaster risk reduction across the United Nations system

50. The implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system continues to support the integration of disaster risk reduction into the work of the system. This support has been reinforced by the adoption of resolution [75/233](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, in which the Assembly gave a clear mandate to the United Nations development system to further integrate disaster risk reduction into its work. With support from FAO, UNDP and the Office, an inter-agency task team prepared a guidance note on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.<sup>20</sup> A training-the-trainers programme on the topic was delivered to United Nations country teams. A training package is also being developed to support country teams to apply the United Nations common guidance on helping to build resilient societies. As of December 2020, disaster risk reduction and resilience have been integrated into the results frameworks of 24 new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

51. To ensure that countries are provided with the necessary support, disaster risk reduction must be included in the assessment of country team configuration and the assets required to implement the Cooperation Frameworks. The inclusion of competencies to detect emerging trends and multidimensional risks in the resident coordinator leadership profile is a significant contribution to that end. Furthermore, UNDP and the Office have signed a statement of intent to deliver collaborative support to countries, which has led to the development of joint workplans at the global, regional and national levels. Regional issue-based coalitions and knowledge management hubs are also proving instrumental in bringing together the technical expertise, resources and data of the United Nations system to provide coordinated and efficient technical guidance and risk knowledge products to country teams.

52. The results framework of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience is providing information to strengthen coordination across the United Nations system by identifying gaps, duplication and areas for collaboration. The implementation of the Plan of Action is guided by the Senior Leadership Group on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience. In 2020, the Senior Leadership Group requested the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Focal Points' Group to conduct a study on the status of gender equality and women's leadership in disaster risk reduction and a review of the COVID-19 recovery support provided by the United Nations system to ensure risk reduction and resilience building with regard to multiple hazards. The study and review and their recommendations were presented to the Group at its 2021 meeting.

## VII. Addressing the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon in an effective global response

53. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation is one of the most significant phenomena affecting global climate systems and weather patterns, with considerable social and economic impacts. In 2020 and early 2021, La Niña, the cooling phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, was in effect. La Niña conditions peaked as a moderate strength

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: Guidance Note on Using Climate and Disaster Risk Management to Help Build Resilient Societies* (Geneva, 2020).



event between October and December 2020 and continued until May 2021. It is anticipated that neutral conditions will dominate until October 2021 in the northern and southern hemispheres,<sup>21</sup> with a 50 per cent probability of La Niña conditions returning later in 2021, reflecting the historical tendency for a second period of La Niña following the first.<sup>22</sup>

54. While La Niña is considered the weaker phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, it has had a significant impact on climate and weather patterns worldwide. In 2020, the combination of the La Niña phase and the impacts of anthropogenic climate change contributed to a record-breaking Atlantic hurricane season: 12 storms made landfall, resulting in 430 deaths and more than \$47 billion in damages.<sup>23</sup> Hurricane Eta was the most damaging of these storms, killing 394 people and affecting 7.1 million more in 10 countries stretching from Colombia to the United States of America. Honduras and Guatemala suffered the brunt of the impact, with 4.6 million people and 2.4 million people affected, respectively.<sup>24</sup> In Asia and the Pacific, Australia experienced higher-than-normal precipitation due to La Niña, which brought flooding to the eastern and northern parts of the country between December 2020 and March 2021. In Indonesia and Timor-Leste, La Niña conditions also contributed to above average rainfall between December 2020 and February 2021, causing flooding and landslides which affected livestock, the fishing industry and rice and maize planting operations. The Department of Health of the Philippines noted that heavy rains brought about by the La Niña phase increased the spread of diseases due to flooding and contaminated water, such as cholera, acute gastroenteritis, dengue and malaria. In Africa, by contrast, La Niña contributed to drought conditions, particularly in the Greater Horn of Africa region between October and December 2020. The droughts have had substantial impacts on food security as dry conditions damaged rangelands, increased pasture losses, destroyed crops and delayed planting operations.<sup>25</sup>

55. The United Nations system has provided coordinated support to countries affected by La Niña in 2020 and 2021, guided by the “Standard operating procedures: early action to El Niño/La Niña episodes”, developed by the Inter-agency Standing Committee. In July 2020, the Committee’s El Niño-Southern Oscillation global cell convened to identify countries at the highest risk ahead of the predicted La Niña phase, and several United Nations entities deployed monitoring tools to support anticipatory action. For example, WFP implemented its mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping project in the South Pacific, and FAO adopted an anticipatory approach to curb the potential impacts of dry conditions induced by La Niña in Afghanistan. Regional briefings were organized by FAO, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and WMO in the South Pacific, South-East Asia and East Africa to discuss the implications of the forecasts and devise appropriate mitigation strategies.

56. Early El Niño-Southern Oscillation predictions are critical to support decision makers, including at the community level, to take anticipatory action to mitigate the adverse effects on livelihoods and food security. The International Centre for Research on El Niño, based in Guayaquil, Ecuador, provides national decision makers

<sup>21</sup> WMO, “El Niño/La Niña Southern Oscillation: current situation and outlook”. Available at <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/climate/el-ni%C3%B1o-la-ni%C3%B1a-update> (accessed on 8 July 2021).

<sup>22</sup> National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, “El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) diagnostic discussion”, 8 July 2021.

<sup>23</sup> National Centres for Environmental Information of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, “2020 North Atlantic hurricane season shatters records”, 17 December 2020.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, “2020: the non-COVID year in disasters”.

<sup>25</sup> “FAO 2020–2021 La Niña advisory” (Rome, 2021).



and planners, the agricultural and finishing industries, the media and the general population with timely syntheses of relevant information, with a focus on the eastern Pacific. In December 2020, the Centre held its annual climate outlook forum to assess ocean and atmospheric conditions and climatic forecasts for the region. Information produced by the forum was widely disseminated and used to inform anticipatory action by governments and the private sector, in particular the energy, agriculture and water sectors.

57. The environmental and economic impacts of the 2020 and 2021 El Niño-Southern Oscillation have combined with and further exacerbated vulnerability to the ongoing climate and biodiversity crises, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge of responding to multiple simultaneous hazards, including the COVID-19 pandemic, reaffirms the need to include the El Niño-Southern Oscillation in multi-hazard disaster risk assessments and national and local disaster risk reduction strategies. Countries should also include it in multi-hazard early warning systems to guide preparedness, including early or anticipatory action informed by a more in-depth understanding of the vulnerability and exposure of communities and critical industries to both the El Niño and La Niña phases.

## **VIII. Midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**

58. In its resolution [75/216](#), the General Assembly decided to hold a midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework, in 2023. Taking stock of the Framework's seven global targets and four priorities for action and reviewing the application of its guiding principles will provide a comprehensive picture of progress towards the expected outcomes and goal of the Framework. By identifying lessons learned, good practice, gaps and challenges, as well as new and emerging trends and systemic issues with potential implications for the Framework's successful implementation, the midterm review can generate recommendations to accelerate progress and overcome obstacles and constraints over the remaining seven years of the mandate.

59. The midterm review is also an opportunity to focus attention and resources on areas of the Sendai Framework which currently receive limited attention and where progress is lagging. Several areas have already been identified in the present report and the previous report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Sendai Framework.<sup>26</sup> The midterm review should also provide recommendations to address the challenges facing the countries furthest behind in implementing the Framework and the support they need, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries affected by protracted or recurring crises.

60. Achieving the goal of the Sendai Framework rests on the integration of disaster risk reduction into policies, legislation, programmes, investments and budgetary decisions in all sectors and at all levels. An assessment of progress and challenges towards this integration and of coherence and synergies in the implementation of the Framework and intergovernmental agreements related to sustainable development, financing for development, climate change and the environment, would be an important component of the midterm review. Similarly, the midterm review is an opportunity to assess lessons learned in risk governance and risk management from the COVID-19 pandemic and the extent to which the Framework is guiding recovery and rehabilitation.

<sup>26</sup> [A/75/226](#).

61. A review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the regional, national and local levels should be at the core of the midterm review. To ensure a comprehensive review that results in practical and evidence-based recommendations, Member States could initiate their midterm review process before the end of 2021 to be completed before the end of 2022. To be most effective and efficient and ensure a whole-of-government approach, they could utilize existing multisectoral inter-institutional mechanisms, which would also ensure consultation with key ministries and institutions beyond disaster management authorities. The perspectives of regional, subnational and local authorities are also critical. Data reported to the Framework monitor will provide an accurate assessment of countries' progress towards the Framework's seven global targets. It is therefore essential that Member States report on all targets and indicators to the monitor by September 2022.

62. While States have the overall responsibility of implementing the Sendai Framework, participatory and inclusive national and local consultations can ensure that the midterm review includes input and perspectives from civil society stakeholders. The private sector, academia and scientific and research institutions can also provide crucial insight and should actively engage in the process. Countries can employ cost-effective measures, such as surveys and online consultations and dialogues, to ensure that all stakeholders are included.

63. Member States are encouraged to produce voluntary reports on the findings of their national midterm reviews. United Nations entities should also provide input to the midterm review, which could be complemented by thematic studies. The seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Indonesia in May 2022, as well as the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction to be held in 2021 and 2022, provide timely opportunities for broad multi-stakeholder stocktaking and thematic reviews. Their outcomes can serve as a central component of the midterm review. In that regard, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction will produce a comprehensive report on the findings of the midterm review and a synthesis report to capture the main outcomes and recommendations.

64. The midterm review could culminate in a high-level meeting of the General Assembly convened by its President and complemented by interactive thematic dialogues and multi-stakeholder round-table sessions, enabling Member States to share the findings of their midterm reviews and deliberate on the specific actions and support measures needed to implement the Sendai Framework. The adoption of a concise and action-oriented intergovernmentally agreed political declaration at the high-level meeting could provide guidance on implementing the practical recommendations of the midterm review, as well as renew and raise the level of political commitment and ambition to implement the Framework and promote its integration into development and climate policy and financing. The midterm review can also provide input to other key intergovernmental deliberations in 2023.

## IX. Conclusions and recommendations

**65. In the midst of a global pandemic and an escalating climate crisis, it is undeniable that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is contingent upon achieving the goal of the Sendai Framework to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk. Many countries made considerable progress towards Sendai Framework global target E to have national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in place by the end of 2020. Immediate action is needed to address the capacity gaps and challenges that constrain their effective implementation, as outlined in the present report. Local disaster risk reduction strategies continue to represent a crucial gap, as do the sectoral strategies aligned with national and**

local strategies. Unless addressed with urgency, the gaps will have significant implications for the implementation of the Framework and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

66. Access to risk information is a roadblock in many countries. Financial support, capacity development and affordable technology tailored to national contexts should be scaled up to enable countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, to generate and access disaster risk data and climate forecasts and apply risk information to policy and investment decisions in all sectors. Enhanced national systems for sharing risk data are also a priority. Strengthened capacity development for, and partnership with, academic and technical and research institutions can help to improve access to user-friendly disaster risk information. The pandemic has also brought to the fore the need to strengthen the understanding of intersectional vulnerability in multi-hazard risk assessments in all countries and sectors.

67. Risk governance is most effective when it embraces a broad range of sectors and actors, including ministries of planning and finance, the health sector and other actors not traditionally engaged in disaster risk management. This approach is essential to facilitate the urgently needed integration of disaster risk reduction into policies, strategies, laws, regulations and budgets in all sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of building capacities and establishing mechanisms that can allow for a flexible and adaptive approach to risk governance based on regular monitoring and iterative learning. The participation of non-State stakeholders in the governance mechanisms that guide the implementation and monitoring of disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes can also be strengthened. An approach to disaster risk reduction that promotes and protects all human rights can facilitate the institutionalization of diverse stakeholder participation and ensure that strategies and programmes address the social and economic drivers of disaster risk, including gender inequality and racial discrimination.

68. Financing for disaster risk reduction and approaches to risk-informed investing remain underdeveloped and are therefore an obstacle to the effective implementation of the Sendai Framework. The United Nations system, international and national financial institutions, and development banks, as well as the financial sector, will continue to work together to develop financing instruments for disaster risk reduction. In that regard, COVID-19 recovery packages and commitments to allocate 50 per cent of climate finance to adaptation can be leveraged as opportunities to increase financing for disaster risk reduction.

69. In its resolution [75/233](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the General Assembly gave a clear mandate to the United Nations development system to deepen the integration of disaster risk reduction into its work and operations. All resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams will continue taking concrete actions to strengthen the integration of disaster risk reduction into their policy and programmatic support for countries and align their operations with the Sendai Framework. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group and regional collaborative platforms can also strengthen the consideration of disaster risk reduction in their work.

70. Without urgent action to systematically integrate disaster risk reduction into COVID-19 recovery strategies, economic models, development policies and public and private investment decisions in all sectors, the pandemic could be a mere overture to the looming climate crisis. With the human toll and financial

cost of inaction on risk reduction now abundantly clear, governments have a moral obligation to prioritize disaster risk reduction as a public good. Systems are interconnected on a global scale to such a degree that no country can effectively manage disaster risk alone. Strengthened multilateralism and global partnerships for risk reduction and prevention cannot wait. Disaster risk reduction is essential to the implementation of the decade of action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, and to the deliberations of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The midterm review of the Sendai Framework is an opportunity to renew commitments and raise the level of ambition to ensure a risk-informed approach to development.

71. It is recommended that:

(a) Member States begin national processes for a participatory, inclusive and multisectoral midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework before the end of 2021;

(b) Member States actively engage in the seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, in May 2022, as well as the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction to be held in 2021 and 2022, with participation across sectors at the highest level possible;

(c) Member States apply the Sendai Framework to ensure a prevention-oriented and risk-informed approach to COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery policies, strategies and financial packages;

(d) Member States accelerate progress to develop new and review existing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in accordance with the Sendai Framework, promote coherence with the implementation and financing of policies, strategies and plans related to climate change, sustainable development and the environment, ensure that sectoral risk reduction strategies are in place and aligned with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, and periodically assess and publicly report on and discuss progress on national and local strategies in the relevant institutional forums, including parliaments and local councils;

(e) Member States, through ministries of finance and economic planning and central banks, increase domestic investment in disaster risk reduction, including resilient infrastructure, develop national disaster risk reduction financing strategies, and include disaster risk reduction in national financing frameworks for the Sustainable Development Goals, climate adaptation financing and other relevant budget processes across sectors;

(f) Member States, with the engagement of national statistical offices, increase the use of the Sendai Framework monitor to track progress on all indicators of the global targets of the Framework and the disaster risk reduction targets of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13, and consider using the monitor to track related goals and targets of other relevant intergovernmental agreements;

(g) Member States create or enhance multisectoral systems for collecting, validating and reporting disaggregated disaster loss data, establishing baselines, conducting and regularly updating disaster risk assessments and disseminating disaster risk information, invest in the development of science and technology capacities and establish or strengthen private sector partnerships to develop cost-effective tools for multi-hazard risk assessment;

(h) Member States strengthen disaster risk reduction governance, including mechanisms for multisectoral coordination with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for disaster risk reduction across ministries and institutions and at the national, subnational and local levels, and consider formalizing roles for non-State stakeholders;

(i) Member States consider making disaster risk reduction part of national legislation and developing disaster risk reduction regulations and standards, including risk disclosure in public and private investments and transactions, and ensure that any such regulations and standards are enforced;

(j) Member States consider including disaster risk reduction and its potential to facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the annual follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, using the voluntary national review process and engaging disaster risk reduction authorities to assess disaster risk reduction in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and consider including disaster risk reduction in the annual deliberations of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the deliberations of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(k) The United Nations system work with international financial institutions and development banks to enhance disaster risk reduction financing, including the development of disaster risk reduction financing strategies and instruments;

(l) Member States enhance the provision of the means to implement the Sendai Framework, including through international cooperation, global partnerships and North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, in order to support the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries facing specific challenges and, in that context, ensure that bilateral and multilateral development assistance is risk-informed and aligned with national disaster risk reduction strategies;

(m) Member States consider augmenting financial contributions to the trust fund for disaster risk reduction and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in order to support countries in their efforts to manage and reduce disaster risk and to implement the Sendai Framework, and to support the midterm review of the Framework.

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