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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

### Third session

Bangkok, 27-29 November 2013

Agenda item 11

### Adoption of the report

## Draft report

## II. Summary of proceedings

### A. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development strategies (agenda item 4)

1. The Committee had before it the documents entitled “Building resilience to disasters: mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development strategies” (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/1) and “Disaster databases for development planning” (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/INF/4). This agenda item consisted of a panel discussion and country statements.

2. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion comprised of the following panellists: Lieutenant General (Ret.) Nadeem Ahmed, former Chief of National Disaster Management Agency, Pakistan; Mr. Suprayoga Hadi, Deputy Minister for the Development of Special Region, Ministry for the Development of Disadvantaged Regions, Indonesia; and Ms. Caitlin Wiesen, Regional Manager, United Nations Development Programme, Asia-Pacific Regional Centre. Key recommendations from the expert group meeting on Strategies Towards Building Resilience to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific were provided. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: China; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Fiji; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kyrgyzstan; Philippines; and Russian Federation. Representatives of the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) and the International Recovery Platform (IRP) also made statements.

3. The Committee noted that impacts of natural disasters hampered poverty reduction efforts and might roll back progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Committee also noted that rapid urbanization and population growth contributed to higher levels of exposure and vulnerability, with compounding effects on the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. In that regard, the Committee recognized the importance of building resilience to disasters by mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development processes and governance at all levels. To that end, the Committee noted the need for a holistic approach to mainstream disaster risk reduction with a robust policy framework, institutional mechanisms and sufficiently funded programmes.

4. The Committee noted the progress made by member States in the areas of monitoring and early warning, capacity-building, community-based disaster risk reduction, information and communications technology (ICT) for disaster risk reduction, including the application of space technology and geographic information systems (GIS), and the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development processes. One delegation expressed support for the secretariat's work related to public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction.

5. The Committee took note of issues that hampered the effective mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development strategies. They included, but were limited to, lack of political drive and ownership, the tendency to allocate more resources for response and reconstruction efforts rather than risk reduction and financial constraints. Gaps in coordination among planning and finance ministries, disaster management agencies and local/sectoral authorities were noted as hindering mainstreaming efforts.

6. The Committee discussed the critical need for a common set of indicators and parameters for monitoring resilience, including a core set of disaster-related statistics, to provide the basis for evidence-based policymaking for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and facilitating benchmarking across countries.

7. The Committee noted the importance of advocacy through multisectoral consultative or coordinative forums, such as national platforms, a mainstreaming reference group or other purpose-specific working groups. The Committee also underlined the importance of securing the position of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and associated targets in the development agenda beyond.

8. The Committee recognized several complementing elements including community-based disaster risk reduction, public-private partnerships and the role of technology, including ICT, space technology and GIS.

9. The Committee recognized maintenance of critical infrastructure and investing in "building back better" during the reconstruction phase as strategic opportunities for mainstreaming.

10. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Committee of progress made with regard to resolution 67/4 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management, and announced that the Government would co-organize with the secretariat two subregional workshops and one regional expert group meeting in 2014.

**B. Strategies in disaster risk reduction, including those related to climate change adaptation, for sustainable development (agenda item 5)**

11. The Committee had before it the documents entitled "Integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation for sustainable development" (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/2), "Strengthening early warning for coastal hazards through the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries" (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/3) and "Climate information and services: the role of the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones" (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/INF/5). The deliberations on the agenda item consisted of a panel discussion and country statements.

12. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion comprised of the following panellists: Mr. Munir Chowdhury, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Bangladesh; Mr. Manasa Tagicakibau, Director, National Disaster Management Office, Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Fiji; and Mr. Henk Verbeek, Acting Deputy Regional Director, United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Statements were made by the representatives of following countries: Cambodia; Maldives; Myanmar; Nepal; India; and Iran (Islamic Republic of). Representatives of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme also made statements.

13. The Committee noted that Asia and the Pacific was vulnerable to multiple and overlapping risks from natural disasters, climate change and socioeconomic shocks. Small island developing States had experienced a high frequency and increasing intensity of hydro-meteorological extreme events and geophysical hazards that continually threatened people's lives and livelihoods. In that regard, the Committee recognized that maintaining the status quo was not sufficient and emphasized the need to undertake disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner.

14. The Committee recognized that poverty eradication and environmental protection were overriding priorities for sustainable development, requiring joint efforts from Governments, international, regional and local organizations and other stakeholders. Some delegations underlined the link between environmental degradation and disaster risk, and stressed the need for building resilience in view of the increasing frequency of extreme events. In that regard, the use of ecosystem management had been recognized as an effective tool for integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

15. The Committee noted with satisfaction the agreement on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation reached at the 2013 Joint Meeting of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management and Pacific Climate Change Roundtable<sup>1</sup> and good practices in some countries.

16. The Committee expressed concern that, in many countries, efforts towards integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation were hindered by fragmented, parallel or overlapping policies, institutional arrangements, plans and funding.

17. In that regard, the Committee recognized the importance of and the need for adequate information, clarity of policy framework, coherent planning and coordinated programmes, as well as adequate financing and monitoring, technology transfer, and strengthened capacity for building resilience.

18. The Committee acknowledged the importance of strengthening connectivity and information management, particularly with regard to risk assessment and analysis, climate forecasting, hazard monitoring, early warning and emergency communication.

19. The Committee further recognized that empowering local governments, increasing local capacity in carrying out informed decision-making, and community-based risk reduction were among the key elements for the successful integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.pacificdisasterclimatemeeing2013.net](http://www.pacificdisasterclimatemeeing2013.net).

20. The Committee was informed of the importance of governance that includes coordinating the various stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional and international organizations, to ensure the optimization of resources, avoid duplication and reduce adverse impacts.

21. The Committee noted that migration was a climate adaptation option taken by certain vulnerable people and thus should be considered in future assessments of the potential impacts of climate change. In that regard, the Committee noted the experience of one country in identifying settlements for populations who were at risk of being displaced by the future impacts of climate change.

22. The Committee noted the progress made in the collaborative efforts of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee and the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones in developing Synergized Standard Operating Procedures for Coastal Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems, and welcomed their commitment to continuing to build synergy between those two platforms.

23. The Committee noted with satisfaction the efforts of the secretariat in preparing the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report* and the background documents for that agenda item.

**C. The development agenda beyond 2015 as it pertains to disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific** (agenda item 6)

24. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Disaster risk reduction relating to the development agenda beyond 2015, including issues pertinent to least developed countries and countries with special needs” (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/4). The agenda item was comprised of a panel discussion and country statements.

25. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion comprised of the following panellists: Mr. Masatoshi Yokkaichi, Director for Disaster Preparedness, Public Relations and International Cooperation, Cabinet Office, Japan; Mr. Aditya Bahadur, Research Officer, Overseas Development Institute; and Mr. German Velasquez, Head of Advocacy and Outreach, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Bangladesh; Bhutan, Cambodia; Fiji; India; Nepal; and Russian Federation. The representatives of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and UNISDR also made statements.

26. The Committee noted that, in order to prevent disasters from eroding development gains, disaster risk reduction needed to be integrated to the development agenda beyond 2015, including in the areas of poverty eradication, gender, health, education, infrastructure, water and sanitation and agriculture. The Committee noted that adequate integration of disaster risk reduction under the global development agenda had not taken place and requested the secretariat to review possible remedies. The Committee took note of the need for better integration of future Hyogo Framework for Action<sup>2</sup> goals and the development agenda beyond 2015.

27. The Committee expressed the view that while the result of the ongoing negotiations on the future Hyogo Framework for Action should not be precluded, the successor to that Framework should build on and improve the current one.

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<sup>2</sup> A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

28. Considering the specific context of vulnerability, the Committee noted the need to create a resilience framework for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States and called on the secretariat to attach priority to that work.

29. The Committee acknowledged the importance of managed migration as a key component of resilience strategies. It noted the rapid movements of large swathes of population and highlighted that contingency plans that respected the rights of migrating persons needed to be devised in that respect.

**D. Promoting regional cooperation on applications of space technology and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction** (agenda item 7)

30. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Promoting regional cooperation on applications of space technology and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction” (E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/5). The deliberations on the agenda item consisted of a panel discussion and country statements.

31. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion comprised of the following panellists: Mr. Jiahong Li, Deputy Director General, National Remote Sensing Centre, China; Mr. Parsi G. Diwakar, Deputy Director, National Remote Sensing Centre, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), India; Mr. Chu Ishida, Senior Chief Officer of International Relations for Space Applications, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Japan; and Mr. Francesco Pisano, Director of Research, Technology Applications and Knowledge Systems, UNITAR. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Bangladesh; China; Fiji; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of ); Japan; Mongolia; Myanmar; and Philippines. The representatives of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, UNITAR Operational Satellite Application Programme, the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies, the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP) and the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) also made statements.

32. The Committee reaffirmed that space technologies and GIS applications could play a key role in disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. The Committee recognized the need to further promote the effective use of space technology and GIS applications for disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in disaster-prone developing countries.

33. The Committee expressed appreciation for the progress made by the secretariat through the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP), and in implementing the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.<sup>3</sup> The Committee called upon member States, United Nations agencies and international and regional initiatives to further support the secretariat’s efforts in providing space-based data, services and products by focusing more on the period before and after a disaster, in addition to disaster response.

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<sup>3</sup> E/ESCAP/69/25, annex II.

34. The Committee noted the progress made by member States in the areas of space technology and GIS applications for disaster risk reduction and capacity-building. The Committee noted with appreciation that the service nodes of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning had been put in place in China and India for the provision of the space-based data and products to drought-prone countries, starting with Mongolia as the pilot country and subsequently in Cambodia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, as requested by those countries

35. The Committee expressed support for the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action and the development and operationalization of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning.

36. The Committee acknowledged the collaborative partnerships between ESCAP and other United Nations agencies, such as the UNITAR Operational Satellite Application Programme and UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER, and global/regional organizations and initiatives, such as Sentinel Asia, Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) and CSSTEAP.

37. The Committee noted with appreciation the offer from China to provide satellite remote sensing data to disaster-affected countries, and share successful practices for disaster risk reduction under the framework of RESAP.

38. The Committee noted with satisfaction the offer from India to provide near real-time satellite imagery, geospatial information and capacity development, as well as to share good practices in disaster risk reduction.

39. The Committee noted with appreciation the offer from Japan to share the results of the Sentinel Asia Step-2, good practices, satellite imagery and capacity-building for disaster risk reduction in the member States.

40. The Committee noted the successful establishment of a geo-portal for disaster risk management in Mongolia with assistance from the secretariat, and the request from the Government of Fiji to assist with capacity development related to geo-portal and satellite data management for disaster risk reduction.

#### **E. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme (agenda item 8)**

41. The secretariat presented information on the process for preparing the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017, which would be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. The main features of the strategic framework include incorporation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,<sup>4</sup> the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process and the emerging development agenda beyond 2015, and the placing of emphasis on gender concerns and support to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The secretariat sought guidance from member States regarding the future focus of the subprogramme in order to enable planning for the strategic framework for 2016-2017.

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<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

**F. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventieth session** (agenda item 9)

42. The delegation of Japan informed the Committee of its intention to sponsor, at the seventieth session of the Commission, a draft resolution on disaster risk reduction. The draft resolution would build on the outcomes, momentum and resolutions related to disaster risk reduction adopted at the sixty-ninth session of the Commission and further promote regional cooperation to address gaps and the need for assistance of many member States. It would also be a regional input to the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which Japan would host in Sendai in 2015.

**G. Other matters** (agenda item 10)

43. No other matters were discussed.

**H. Adoption of the report** (agenda item 11)

44. The Committee adopted the report on its third session on 29 November 2013.

**III. Organization of the session**

**A. Opening, duration and organization**

45. The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held its third session in Bangkok from 27 to 29 November 2013.

46. At the opening of the session, the Committee observed a minute of silence out of respect for those who had lost their lives in the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and other natural disasters. The Ambassador of the Philippines delivered a statement.

47. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered an opening statement. Ms. Fathimath Tashneem, Deputy Minister of Defence and National Security and Head of the National Disaster Management Centre of Maldives, delivered a statement in which she welcomed participants.

48. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP officially handed over the Sittwe seismic station to Myanmar. Statements were made by the Executive Secretary, Mr. Visarn Techateerawat, Deputy Minister of the Interior of Thailand, and Ms. Hrin Nei Thiam, Director General of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology of Myanmar.

**B. Attendance**

49. The session was attended by representatives of the following members of ESCAP: Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kyrgyzstan; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Thailand; and Turkey. The following associate member also attended: American Samoa.

50. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended: United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations

Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs; United Nations Population Fund; International Civil Aviation Organization; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Bank; and World Health Organization.

51. The following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were represented: Secretariat of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee; Asian Disaster Risk Reduction Centre; International Organization for Migration; Overseas Development Institute; and Muslim World League. A representative of the Order of Malta also attended.

52. A total of 13 panellists from ESCAP member States, United Nations organizations and the Overseas Development Institute attended the panel discussions organized in conjunction with the Committee session.

### **C. Election of officers**

53. The following officers were elected:

Chair: Ms. Fathimath Tashneem (Maldives)  
Vice-Chairs: Mr. Namgay Wangchuk (Bhutan)  
Mr. Pita Taguchkirewa (Fiji)

### **D. Agenda**

54. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development strategies.
5. Strategies in disaster risk reduction, including those related to climate change adaptation, for sustainable development.
6. The development agenda beyond 2015 as it pertains to disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific.
7. Promoting regional cooperation on applications of space technology and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction.
8. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
9. Consideration of draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventieth session.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report.

### **E. Back-to-back events**

55. The session was preceded by four meetings, namely: (a) Expert Group Meeting on Strategies towards Building Resilience to Disasters in Asia and



the Pacific, which was held from 26 to 28 November; (b) seventeenth session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, which was held on 26 and 27 November; (c) High-level Decision Maker Meeting on Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017, which was held on 27 and 28 November; and (d) Panel on Tropical Cyclones Integrated Workshop, which was held from 27 to 29 November.

56. In addition, an exhibition on “Building resilience to disasters” was displayed on 27 and 28 November at the United Nations Conference Centre, with the participation of 23 exhibitors, comprising 6 government bodies, 8 United Nations entities, an intergovernmental organization and 8 exhibitors from the NGO, the private or academia sectors.

## Annex

### List of documents

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
<i>General series</i>		
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E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/3	Strengthening early warning for coastal hazards through the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries	5
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<i>Information series</i>		
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