



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

### Sixty-ninth session

Bangkok, 25 April-1 May 2013

Agenda item 3 (f)

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: Disaster risk reduction**

### Draft report

#### Disaster risk reduction

1. In addition to the common documents being considered under agenda item 3, the Commission had before it two information documents: the report of the Typhoon Committee (E/ESCAP/69/INF/5) and the report of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones (E/ESCAP/69/INF/6).
2. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; and Thailand. The representative of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) also delivered a statement.
3. The Commission noted with concern that the Asia-Pacific region continued to be the most disaster-prone region in the world. It observed that disasters seriously undermined inclusive and sustainable development, especially in least developed countries. The Commission recommended that building resilience to disasters needed to be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and should be integrated into policies, plans, programmes and budgets at all levels of government.
4. The Commission also emphasized the important role of regional cooperation in addressing disaster risks. One delegation emphasized that activities of the secretariat should also focus on setting up a regional platform for disaster risk reduction as well as complementing global efforts undertaken by UNISDR.
5. The Commission expressed appreciation for the role played by the secretariat in the area of disaster risk reduction and the assistance provided by the secretariat to the national efforts of member States in disaster risk

reduction and in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.<sup>1</sup>

6. The Commission emphasized the important role of information and communications technology (ICT) and space technology applications for disaster risk management, and commended the efforts of the secretariat in providing countries affected by disasters with satellite information. The Commission further appreciated the secretariat's work on developing a compendium of regional space capacity to better understand capacity gaps and needs. It highlighted the importance of regional cooperation initiatives, such as the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP), the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP) and Sentinel Asia, and called for further strengthening of regional collaboration and capacity in the use of space applications for disaster risk reduction, management and sustainable development.

7. The Commission expressed support for the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.

8. The Commission recognized the need for: creating a culture of risk assessment; promoting risk awareness and education for prevention and mitigation; and designing compensation strategies before the occurrence of a major disaster. It noted the role of the private sector in disaster risk reduction and the potential for public-private partnerships in that area, along with other potential innovative risk reduction financing mechanisms. One delegation noted the importance of integrated river basin management for disaster prevention and preparedness, and also proposed that a regional disaster emergency response team be established for providing emergency aid and relief.

9. The Commission underlined the importance of enhancing the implementation of disaster risk reduction at the local level as part of the strategy for building resilience, as was agreed in the Yogyakarta Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and Pacific 2012, which had been adopted at the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 22 to 25 October 2012. The Commission requested that the recommendations of the Declaration be incorporated into policies, strategies and action plans.

10. Several delegations informed the Commission of national initiatives, such as the development of strategies and policies to address disaster risk reduction in a holistic manner, the establishment of appropriate institutions, the promotion of local action and stakeholder participation, risk reduction financing and investment for disaster risk reduction, the establishment of specific standards and building codes and the utilization of ICT for disaster risk management.

11. The representative of Cambodia informed the Commission that the country had hosted the Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Forum in February 2013 to discuss inputs for the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction and thanked the secretariat for the technical assistance it provided to the National Committee for Disaster Management. The delegation of

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

Cambodia also requested further technical assistance from the secretariat for improving disaster risk reduction, particularly related to early warning systems and the transfer of technology for disaster risk reduction.

12. The delegation of Japan informed the Commission that the country had hosted the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku, Japan, on 3 and 4 July 2012 and would host the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. In that regard, Japan requested support for the forthcoming Conference from other member States.

13. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its support, guidance and advisory services in implementing Commission resolution 67/4 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management. The delegation also reported that the Government had already allocated the budget necessary and put into place the necessary administrative set up for establishing the centre.

14. The representative of Bangladesh informed the Commission that the country was in the process of establishing units for damage, loss and needs assessment and for multi-hazards risk and vulnerability assessment, and requested technical support for producing inter-exchangeable data and information on disaster impacts, losses and needs for recovery and reconstruction.

15. The representative of UNISDR informed the Commission on progress of consultations on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction on disaster and development. The work undertaken in collaboration with the secretariat pertaining to the preparation of the *Asia Pacific Disaster Report* and the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was recognized. The Commission was also informed of future plans, such as the next Asian ministerial conference on disaster risk reduction to be held in Thailand in 2014, and UNISDR expressed its commitment to consult with Governments and other stakeholders on the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.

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