



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

This summary provides the Chair's assessment of the main thrusts of the deliberations at the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was attended by 152 Governments, 137 organizations, and 1688 participants in total. A draft of the summary was discussed in the final informal plenary and thereafter a revised draft was made available to participants for two weeks for further feedback, which has been considered in this final summary. More information on the meeting can be found at <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/>

Disaster risk and the Global Platform

1. The second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place in a context of growing alarm about global climate change and increasing disaster risks. In the opening high-level panel of the Global Platform, political leaders, including heads of State and heads of Governments, highlighted in stark, unequivocal terms that reducing disaster risk is critical to managing the impacts of climate change and avoiding an erosion of social and economic welfare.
2. Since the first session of the Global Platform in 2007 there has been a dramatic increase in political will in all regions to address disaster risk, across both developed and developing nations and both Governments and civil society organizations. This increase has been driven from the bottom up as communities recognize the dangers they face and the need for action. The energy and leadership in disaster risk reduction are increasingly coming from the South.
3. The Global Platform recognized that significant progress has been achieved since the Hyogo Framework for Action was endorsed by UN Member States in 2005, as reported in the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, particularly in terms of life-saving measures such as improved disaster preparedness and response, but that much more needed to be done. Governments, NGOs and other partners were united in the belief that greater urgency is now required to address the factors that are driving the increase in disaster risk, such as rural poverty and vulnerability, unplanned and poorly managed urban growth and declining ecosystems. Urgent action is necessary not only to reduce disaster risk, but also to maintain momentum in Millennium Development Goal achievement, including poverty reduction, adaptation to climate change and better health outcomes.
4. As the deliberations of the Global Platform progressed it became clear that innovative approaches and tools have been developed and applied in many key areas such as: the management of urban risks; the application of cost benefit analysis; community-based and local level strategies; early warning; and ensuring the security of facilities such as schools and hospitals.

5. The Global Platform highlighted the importance of education and sharing knowledge, including indigenous and traditional knowledge, and ensuring easy and systematic access to best practice and tools and international standards, tailored to specific sectors, and to necessary cross-border data. It also stressed the necessity for investment in research and development and higher education, and for the more effective integration of science and technical information into policy and practice.
6. Risk-prone countries are now giving high priority to disaster risk reduction and wish to move ahead quickly in the design and adoption of policies and strategies to address their risks. Increasingly, the urgency for this movement is coming from the vulnerable developing countries, which are likely to bear an increasingly disproportionate share of disaster impacts in times to come. A variety of national and regional platforms and organizations are being rapidly developed or strengthened to guide and coordinate this action. The international community needs to support these initiatives and facilitate better access to resources, assistance and expertise as a matter of urgency.
7. The following areas are considered critical to future progress.

Climate change

8. Climate change is already dramatically magnifying the disaster risks threatening many developing nations. Some countries reported that an increasing scale and frequency of humanitarian emergencies is stretching both national and international humanitarian capacities. In the case of some small island states, increasing risk levels are undermining their continued social and economic viability as nations. Slow-onset disasters and associated food insecurity are a major concern. At the Global Platform it was recognised that addressing the underlying drivers of disaster risk therefore offers the potential for a triple win – for adaptation, disaster risk reduction and poverty reduction.
9. The overwhelming view of the Global Platform is that urgent action is required to harmonise and link the frameworks and policies for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and to do so within the broader context of poverty reduction and sustainable development. A priority is to incorporate both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as core policy and programmatic objectives in national development plans and supporting poverty reduction strategies and country assistance plans. Better preparedness for the humanitarian consequences of climate change is needed, including through early warning systems and local level adaptation. It was stressed that disaster risk reduction must be a concrete part of the deal on climate change that is sealed at the United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.
10. Disaster risk reduction policies also need to take account of climate change. A number of countries put forward concrete proposals to integrate or coordinate their efforts in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. It was emphasised that ecosystem management approaches can provide multiple benefits, including risk reduction, and thus should be a central part of such strategies. One group of countries proposed that a minimum of 30% of the adaptation finance available to developing countries should be applied to weather- and climate-related risk reduction projects. At the same time, disaster risk reduction policies must not neglect the geological hazards, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, which are responsible for a large proportion of disaster mortality.

Reduced risk for all

11. The Global Platform highlighted a plethora of successful experiences in managing and reducing disaster risk at the community and local level and emphasised the key role of women as drivers and leaders of change in many of these processes, and the important roles of communities at high risk and indigenous communities. Children were also seen as strong agents for change who should be involved in the decision-making process. At the same time, it was highlighted that participatory and grassroots processes often were not adequately supported by central or local governments and that the methods, knowledge and tools generated are not being adequately brought into the mainstream of policy and implementation.
12. The Global Platform emphasised that success in reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change, and in achieving sustainable livelihoods, requires extensive collaboration and partnerships that reflect the mutual dependence of central and local governments and civil society actors. These should provide necessary resources at the local level, involve civil society in monitoring progress on disaster risk reduction, and include mechanisms for increased accountability.
13. There is a pressing need to build institutions, including legal frameworks, to sustain disaster risk reduction action as an ongoing concern, and several countries stressed the need for technical assistance, to help grow their capacities. The development of platforms for disaster risk reduction at both national and sub-national levels needs to be accelerated in order to create an enabling environment, and to inclusively engage varied government and civil society interests and address cross-cutting issues.

Setting targets for disaster risk reduction

14. The Global Platform highlighted that the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action must now accelerate rapidly from isolated actions and pilot projects to comprehensive programmes of action, and that the setting of targets in specific areas can help to achieve the necessary momentum.
15. For example, it was proposed that by 2011 national assessments of the safety of existing education and health facilities should be undertaken, and that by 2015 concrete action plans for safer schools and hospitals should be developed and implemented in all disaster prone countries. Similarly, disaster risk reduction should be included in all school curricula by the same year. These targets have emerged out of the 2008-2009 World Disaster Reduction Campaign on Hospital Safe from Disasters.
16. Another proposal was that by 2015, all major cities in disaster-prone areas should include and enforce disaster risk reduction measures in their building and land use codes. Targets were also proposed for such things as national risk assessments, municipal disaster recovery plans, early warning systems, water risks, and the enforcement of building codes. The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, called for a target to halve the losses of lives from disasters by 2015, when the term of the Hyogo Framework for Action ends.

Financing disaster risk reduction

17. The Global Platform recognised a drastic mismatch between the resources required to address disaster risk in developing countries and those actually available. A massive scaling up of action is needed. Put bluntly, many countries must dedicate substantially more funds from national budgets – or increasingly suffer the consequences. This is also

a must for the international community, since some countries suffer from institutional and capacity weaknesses and unless their capacities are strengthened implementation will not succeed.

18. A variety of innovations, such as incentives for retrofitting, risk transfer tools, risk-sensitive development, private sector involvement, debt swaps to finance disaster reduction measures and linkages with adaptation financing were proposed at the Global Platform. Institutional innovations proposed included more direct resourcing of local initiatives and groups that are effective in reducing risks, such as grassroots women's organizations. More explicit information is needed on the effectiveness and cost of specific measures and on the patterns of current investments in disaster risk reduction.
19. There is support by many participants to target the equivalent of 10% of humanitarian relief funds to disaster risk reduction work. Similarly, a 10% figure has been proposed as a target share of post-disaster reconstruction and recovery projects and national preparedness and response plans. Calls also were made for at least 1% of all national development funding and all development assistance funding to be allocated to risk reduction measures, with due regard for quality of impact. For its part the European Union has recently adopted a Union-wide strategy to support disaster risk reduction in developing countries.

The future

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

*Geneva, Switzerland
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