

The Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction 2015-2030. Progress achieved in its implementation

2017 Global Platform

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1. Introduction

The Sendai Framework is the structure for concerted international action which aims to reduce disasters in the 2015-2030 period. It was adopted at the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held over 14-18 March 2015 in the Japanese city of Sendai following a process of consultations, deliberations and inter-governmental negotiations that lasted three years. It was approved by the UN General Assembly via Resolution A/Res/69/283 of 3 June 2015.

This framework is based on the experience gained by the international community over the past twenty-five years in applying policies, strategies and measures coordinated internationally to reduce disaster risk, reflected in several different international instruments promoted by the United Nations and which shall be described anon.

The framework comprises elements that guarantee the continuation of the work performed nationally, regionally and internationally in connection with the Hyogo Framework for Action for the previous period of 2005-2015 and provides new tools aimed at foreseeing disaster risk and planning measures to reduce it from the standpoint of diminishing the degree of exposure and vulnerability to avoid new disaster risks arising.

Action in this is based on establishing seven worldwide targets and four priorities for acting that should guide states, and both regional and international organisations towards achieving the goal intended by applying them:



UN World Conference on
Disaster Risk Reduction
2015 Sendai Japan

Since the 70s the United Nations has been taking different measures in response to a diverse range of severe disasters which have claimed the lives of thousands of people, such as the earthquakes in Iran in 1962 and 1968, and hurricane Flora in October 1963, which devastated Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Trinidad & Tobago, among others.

Witnessing the high level of recurrence of disasters and the serious damage they inflicted on the development of nations, especially among the least developed countries, led the United Nations to consider the need to take kinds of action that would go beyond a merely reactive response and which, from a more integrated perspective, might encompass studying, preventing, planning and preparing for disaster situations as the most suitable way to mitigate the effects that disasters were bringing about.

“Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience”.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) will be in charge of facilitating the implementation, monitoring and revision of the Sendai Framework. To this end it will be able to count on the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which will meet regularly (every two years) pursuant to the commitment to biennial revisions that is laid down in the framework's agenda. The first meeting of this global platform actually took place this year 2017.

It should be pointed out that the 2017 Global Platform meeting held from 24 to 26 May in Cancún, (Mexico) marked a milestone, because it was both the first opportunity that the international community has had to follow up the progress made in applying the Sendai Framework and also the first time that this biennial international forum on disaster risk reduction has been held outside the United Nations headquarters in Geneva.

The 2017 Global Platform has enabled identification of both the achievements in these first two years of application of the framework and the major issues that need to be addressed to achieve Sendai's goals, as will be outlined below.

2. Background to the Sendai Framework

Since the 70s the United Nations has been taking different measures in response to a diverse range of severe disasters which have claimed the lives of thousands of people, such as the earthquakes in Iran in 1962 and 1968, and hurricane Flora in October 1963, which devastated Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Trinidad & Tobago, among others.



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The development of these new approaches gradually took shape and became established over the 70s and 80s. Over these years the UN General Assembly passed several resolutions (1) which contained measures to promote the study, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters. Then, at the end of the 80s, the General Assembly decided to call the 90s the “International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)” (2), with the aim of getting the international

(1) Resolution 2717, Assistance in cases of natural disaster; Resolution 2816 Assistance in cases of Natural Disaster and other disaster situations; Resolution 3243 Strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator.

(2) Resolution 42/169 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

community, under the auspices of the United Nations, to focus special attention on fomenting international cooperation in the area of natural disaster reduction.

2.1. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

For the purpose of getting the IDNDR underway, on 1 January 1990 the General Assembly adopted Resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, "The International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction", which represented the first tool for concerted international action to reduce such disasters.

The Framework specified the objective and goals to be achieved within the decade, national and international measures which should be taken to apply them, their means of funding and the requirements for evaluating them.

On a national level all governments were urged to formulate nationwide programmes to mitigate the effects of disasters, to set up national committees in cooperation with the scientific and technological communities with a view to achieving the objective and goals for the Decade and to report to the Secretary General on successes achieved so that the United Nations could become an international centre for exchanging information and to harmonise efforts to support the achievement of the objective and goals for the Decade.

On an international level the framework urged bodies, organisations and tools of the United Nations system to prioritise preparation for disaster events and preventive, help and short term recovery measures in their operational activities, including assessment of economic damage.

To advance the IDNDR, pursuant to what the framework advocated, an organisational structure was set up, comprising three bodies: (i) a special high-level council to promote cooperation by public and private sectors in the measures to be adopted to gain a better understanding of disasters, (ii) a scientific and technical committee charged with drawing up programmes to orientate bilateral and multilateral cooperation for the Decade, evaluating the activities carried out during the Decade, and making recommendations to be followed via annual reports, and (iii) a secretariat at the UN's Geneva office working closely with the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator, responsible for daily coordination of the activities for the Decade and providing technical and administrative assistance to the special high-level council and the scientific and technical committee.

To fulfil the assessment mandate established within the framework, at the proposal of the scientific and technical committee, a World Conference of representatives of national committees for the IDNDR was convened and staged from 23 to 27 May 1994 in Yokohama (Japan). Some 155 countries took part at the conference where the results of the first period within the plan of action for the Decade were analysed, priority actions to carry out in the second half of the IDNDR were discussed, and approval was given for the "*Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation*" (3) which was adopted by the UN General Assembly under Resolution 49/22 of 2 December 1994.

The Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action represented a major milestone in raising awareness of the objective and goals of the IDNDR and as regards the significant role which the organisational structures had played in promoting the Framework for Action.

In this respect the conference underlined the need to establish or strengthen national committees for the Decade that are responsible for promoting and coordinating activities to reduce disasters. It showed the importance of establishing regional and sub-regional centres to reduce and prevent disasters which, in conjunction with international bodies, could enhance national capabilities. It confirmed the roles of the special high-level council and the scientific and technical committee in promoting the activities of the IDNDR and called for the capacities and resources of the Decade secretariat to be stepped up so as to ensure implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action.

(3) A/CONF.172/9.

The Yokohama Strategy appealed for prevention to be boosted as the most effective means to reduce disasters, as is evidenced by the principles upon which it based its Plan of Action:

- Risk assessment.
- Integration of disaster prevention and preparation for disaster events into development policy and planning at national, regional, bilateral, multilateral and international levels.
- Development and strengthening of capacity to prevent and reduce disasters and to mitigate their effects on a national, regional and international level.
- Early warning of disasters and effective dissemination of information.

Once the IDNDR was over, it became necessary to examine the successes achieved and, above all, to discuss the guiding principles for international action to reduce disasters in the future, and to this end the *"International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) programme forum"* was organised, which took place in Geneva from 5 to 9 July 1999.

At the Forum the relevance of implementing the IDNDR 10-year programme was stressed, especially as regards applying the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. In particular the institution of the International Day for Disaster Reduction had contributed to fomenting preventive culture and become established as a major international platform for exchanging and disseminating information towards disaster reduction. 141 national committees or coordination centres for the Decade had been set up in the Member States. Inroads had been made into studying warning systems by identifying local achievements and experiences which could improve the effectiveness of early warning systems in the 21st century, while collaboration had been fostered among the bodies in the UN system which had included disaster reduction in their programmes.

At its conclusion the forum called on the international community and the United Nations to build on the progress achieved over the Decade with the intention of ensuring that risk management and disaster reduction would become key elements in the policies of governments.

To this end it urged the UN system to uphold and consolidate the organisational structure for activities aimed at disaster reduction after the end of the Decade and to adopt the International Disaster Reduction Strategy "A safer world in the 21st century", which was approved at the forum.

Based on this input, the Secretary General's reports (4) and in accordance with the requests from the Economic and Social Council (5), the UN General Assembly approved the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and an Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to take charge of the matter in a continuous and concerted manner via Resolution 54/219 of 3 February 2000.

The secretariat (UNISDR) and the inter-agency task force constituted the two key elements to provide continuation for the Yokohama Plan of Action within the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which succeeded the Decade as the instrument for concerted action by the international community to reduce disasters.

While the Decade had the key aim of raising awareness about the importance of disaster reduction by promoting the conceptual change from simply responding to disasters to reducing them, and stressing the essential role played by human action, the ISDR specified its purpose as *"to enable societies to increase their resilience to natural, technological and environmental disasters and hazards and to reduce associated environmental, human, economic and social losses"*.

(4) A/54/132 and A/54/497.

(5) Resolution 1999/63.

2.2. The Hyogo Framework for Action. Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters

In late 2001, with the intention of examining implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action in the context of the framework for action for implementing the ISDR, the UN General Assembly gave its approval to convening the 2nd World conference on Disaster Reduction (6), which was held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, (Japan) and was attended by some 168 UN Member States.

With consensus from all of the 168 participating countries, approval was given at the conference for the “Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015): Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters (7)”, as the successor to the Yokohama Framework for Action.

The framework established as its intended general objective for 2015 “The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries”.

To achieve this outcome the framework set three strategic goals that should guide the actions to be undertaken:

- The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.
- The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, with potential to systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.
- The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Yet the most notable aspect of the Hyogo Framework for Action, which was backed by a broad consensus when it was approved, is to work from the assumption that states are responsible for its implementation, without devaluing the need for cooperation from regional and international institutions at all to put it into practice and, based on this, it established a set of functions and duties at national, regional and international levels.

Particularly relevant among the duties laid down within the Hyogo Framework for Action are those related to the need to designate bodies to both implement the framework and to develop procedures for follow-up and progress assessment in this process.

In this regard the framework establishes the following tasks:

For states:

- To designate suitable national coordination mechanisms for the implementation and follow-up of the Framework for Action and report information to the ISDR secretariat.
- To make national assessments of the status regarding disaster risk reduction (DRR) and share this information with the relevant regional and international bodies.
- To perform periodic examination of the progress made nationally in implementing the Framework for Action and send a situation report to existing international frameworks for this purpose.

(6) Resolution 56/195.

(7) A/CONF.206/6.

For regional organisations and institutions:

- To set up specialised regional collaborative centres or strengthen those already in existence to undertake research, training, education and capacity building in the field of disaster risk reduction.
- To coordinate and publish periodic reviews on progress in the region and on impediments and support needs, and assist countries as requested in the preparation of periodic national summaries of their programmes and progress in implementing the framework.

For international organisations:

- To develop standards, keep databases and devise indicators and indices, among other actions, to support states in preparing national assessments and situation reports in relation to implementation of the framework.

To address these demands the UN General Assembly approved the creation of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which would act as a world forum for coordinating and reviewing progress in implementing the framework. Setting up and managing the global platform was entrusted to the UNISDR Secretariat, which drew up the procedures for it to come into operation, which it did in 2006.

On the other hand, with the goal of providing support for countries in making follow-up (monitoring) reports and establishing national coordination mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the framework, the UNISDR secretariat drafted its “Guidelines for Reporting on Progress on the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (8)” and “Guidelines: National Platforms for Disaster risk Reduction (9)”.

The establishment of the global platform in 2006 represented a cornerstone of the UN system for disaster reduction. The first meeting of the global platform took place from 5 to 7 June 2007 in Geneva and since then it has consistently met on a biennial basis to examine progress in implementing the international instruments used in disaster risk reduction. It is currently the leading world forum for strategic advice, coordination and review with respect to concerted international frameworks for disaster reduction.

3. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

When the period during which the Hyogo Framework for Action was in effect came to an end, the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction took place in the Japanese city of Sendai from 14 to 18 March 2015 in order to establish a new framework for action to reaffirm the international community's commitment to combating disasters. The result was the approval of the “**Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**” (8).

The Sendai Framework is thus the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action and is structured taking into account the experience acquired during implementation of the latter. It is based on recognition of the success achieved by its predecessor and assumes the challenges for after 2015 which need addressing as a priority towards obtaining significant disaster reduction by 2030. To do this it is necessary to shift the conceptual focus from disaster management to disaster risk management.

It represents a 15-year plan of action that defines seven global targets and four priority areas for action (see table 1), aimed at enhancing the capacity of communities to face up to and manage the risks around them so they can build up their resilience and consequently reduce damage in relation to the threats to which they are exposed.

(8) <http://www.eird.org/cdmah/contenido/lineamientos.pdf>

(9) <http://www.eird.org/cdmah/contenido/lineamientos-plataformas.pdf>

(10) A/Res/69/283. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

To this end the Sendai Framework lays emphasis on the need to develop quantitative ongoing assessment of the damage caused by disasters in terms of losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

In response to the Sendai Framework mandate and with the aim of facilitating disaster damage assessment for states, the UN General Assembly set up an open-ended intergovernmental working group of experts on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction (11). After completing its assignment the working group issued a report with recommendations on global indicators associated with the global goals in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted by the General Assembly via Resolution 71/644 of 1 December 2016 (12).

SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

Expected outcome for 2030	The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries
Goal	Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience

7 GLOBAL TARGETS

4 TARGETS TO BE REDUCED BY 2030	3 TARGETS TO BE INCREASED BY 2030
Reducing global disaster mortality. Manage to bring down the average global mortality rate per 100,000 persons in the 2020-2030 decade compared to the 2005-2015 period	Increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020
Reduce the number of affected people globally. Lowering the average global figure per 100,000 persons in the 2020-2030 decade compared to the 2005-2015 period	Enhance international cooperation through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the Framework by 2030
Reduce economic loss caused directly by disasters in relation to gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030	Increase the availability of early warning systems and information for the population
reduce damage caused by disasters to critical infrastructure and the disruption of basic services	

(11) Resolution 69/284 of 25 June 2015.

(12) http://www.preventionweb.net/files/50683_oiewgreportsanish.pdf

4 PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

Priority 1	Understanding disaster risk
Priority 2	Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
Priority 3	Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience
Priority 4	Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

Table 1: Summary of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

2017 Global Platform

Pursuant to the programme of biennial meetings of the Global Platform, in conjunction with the Mexican government the UNISDR office organised the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which was held in Cancún from 24 to 26 May. At this, there was a review of the efforts that have been made globally to implement the Sendai Framework in the two years which have passed since it was approved in accordance with the commitment to undertake reviews that was established in the agenda of the framework.

The 2017 Global Platform played host to over 5,000 delegates across a forum of world leaders, two ministerial round tables, four plenary sessions, two special sessions, 15 working sessions and numerous special events.

Deliberations over all the sessions managed to pinpoint (among others) the following issues worth bearing in mind in implementing the Sendai Framework in the next few years:

- A need to monitor implementation of the Sendai Framework. The special representative of the General Secretary for Disaster Risk Reduction said that the first cycle of monitoring progress in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction will commence in early 2018. This first cycle will cover the 2015 to 2016 and 2017 to 2018 periods. This will end in March 2019, for which reason he reiterated the duty on the part of states to make an assessment of disaster damage and send in the relevant reports to the UNISDR for global monitoring.
- A need to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.
- A requirement for the Sendai Framework to be consistent with the agendas for sustainable development and climate change.
- A need to establish new alliances for developing and using tools and methodologies aimed at including and applying investment in disaster risk reduction.

The essential documents which outline the results of the 2017 Global Platform are:

- The Cancún High-Level Communiqué ensuring the resilience of infrastructure and housing (13).
- The Chair’s Summary (14).

(13) http://www.preventionweb.net/files/53439_thecancunhighlevelcommuniquof24may2.pdf

(14) http://www.preventionweb.net/files/53989_chairsummaryofthe2017globalplatfor.pdf

4. Spanish contribution to the disaster risk reduction initiatives in the United Nations system

Spain has participated in the UN's disaster risk reduction strategies by developing programmes in keeping with the guiding principles in the various frameworks for action which have been adopted over the past 25 years.

For the purpose of coordinating such actions the National Commission for Civil Protection was assigned the role of Spanish Committee for International Strategy for Disaster Reduction under the secretariat of the Directorate General for Civil Protection and Emergencies. To provide support for the National Commission in this role a Technical Committee was set up to advise on drawing up disaster risk reduction programmes in keeping with international agreements up to 2015.

Now, however, following the passing of Law 17/2015 on the National Civil Protection System, the National Commission for Civil Protection has ceased in its duties, being replaced by the National Civil Protection Council, which has been established as the high-level coordinating body for the Spanish civil protection system.

This fact, along with the approval for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which defines a new Plan of Action for 2015-2030, requires that the bodies that are to take on the responsibility for implementing the Framework be redefined within the context of the current way in which the Spanish civil protection system is organised, as well as getting those mechanisms underway which enable achievement of Sendai's goals and targets.