



FIRST MEETING OF SAFE SCHOOL LEADERS
30-31 October 2014, Intercontinental Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey

Summary of discussions
Final Report

The first meeting of Safe School Leaders was hosted by the Government of Turkey and AFAD and jointly organized with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). The meeting welcomed approximately 70 representatives from Ministries of Education and of Disaster Management from fifteen (15) governments and the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, represented on that occasion by UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children and the World Bank (see details in the attached list of participants, Annex 1).

The first day benefited from the presence of the Governor of Istanbul and provided an opportunity for a very active and rich exchange of sound experiences and good practices on school safety. The discussions highlighted the diversity of approaches and methodologies used for safe school implementation at the national level, depending on the political structure, national priorities, the technical expertise and financial capacity of the countries. Federal systems acknowledged for instance the difficulty to promote a coordinated approach to school safety at the national level.

Governments present endorsed the Worldwide Initiative for Safe School (see Annex 2) as a valuable global framework that sets a good vision to guide an effective implementation of school safety at the national level. Governments also validated the three-pillar approach proposed by the Initiative and welcomed the on-going and future cooperation with technical partners on selected pillars as required. Two countries in particular (i.e. Indonesia and Turkey) presented action and progress in all of the three pillars, while others developed a specific expertise in one or two of the three pillars. A few examples included the involvement of communities in building school facilities to increase the ownership of safe school work in Indonesia, child clubs mobilization in Nepal, Skills for Life promotion in Brazil or Reaching All Children for Education in Lebanon.

Some key challenges were identified to safe school implementation at the national level. For a majority of Governments present, addressing the growing flow of refugee children and students from neighboring conflict-stricken areas, accommodating them all and providing them with the relevant education is a challenge they face on a daily basis and a serious threat to school and educational infrastructures resilience. Mobilizing political support to

raise resources for safe schools and education work was also highlighted as a serious challenge. Though school safety work benefits from a strong legal basis in selected countries, ensuring a sustainable allocation of budget for safe school and education work remains a real challenge for a majority of governments. The need for evidence and data to convince political decision makers was highlighted in this regard. In many parts of the world schools are still located in disaster-prone areas and are still used as emergency shelters hence delaying schools renovation processes and, importantly, education. Ensuring the quality control of private schools was also seen as a major concern and priority as part of the 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. In still too many countries, safe school is still a choice and is not mandatory. The lack of building codes enforcement and the limitation of budget allocations to school safety due to competing demands or sudden emergency crises were also strongly felt by all participants as a major obstacle in advancing the school safety agenda. The development of a school safety index was recommended to facilitate schools rating.

Some lessons learned and recommendations were proposed to scale up the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools. In particular, a call was made to develop a roadmap for the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools to which Governments should commit. Good data and evidence is required to convince decision-makers to make safe school a priority as part of their national education plan and to allocate related budget for its implementation. This is also essential to build the social demand for safe schools and bring the private sector on board. Risk assessment and school mapping appeared as common areas of actions taken by all Governments and an area of growing involvement by children and students themselves. Governments were invited to exchange their school assessment methodologies and to take part in assessment processes. Capacity building and training development were confirmed as crucial elements that should be more systematically promoted to raise competent experts. Safe school implementation was acknowledged by countries as an expensive undertaking which should however not be seen as a cost but as a long term and resilient investment in reducing children and communities' vulnerabilities to disasters. It was recommended that a specific portion of the national development or education plan budget should be allocated to actions on safe school (in particular for retrofitting). The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools should target all countries and not just high risk developing countries with low capacity. It is urgent to make safe schools a priority and stop being compromised by other priorities.

The second day benefited from the presence of Dr. Fuat Oktay, President of AFAD and Mr. Vasip Sahin, Governor of Istanbul. School safety was confirmed as a priority for Turkey and Istanbul. As part of the "39 Schools and 39 Provinces" project, a major urban transformation process and renewal of the building stock was undertaken throughout the province with the retrofitting of 989 key infrastructures (schools, hospitals) and the rehabilitation of a total of approximately 1162 public services buildings and bridges over the Bosphore. The training of teachers and students and the integration of disaster risk reduction in school curriculum in cooperation with AFAD were processed in school safety priorities.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction congratulated Turkey for this outstanding effort and reminded that ensuring the resilience of vital infrastructures such as schools, hospitals and key public services is a critical investment for long-term economic growth and sustainability. This allows for business and

Governments to continue functioning and delivering basic social services at times of emergencies. As cities grow, the density of population puts a lot of pressure on their sustainability and requires a rather long-term and costly urban transformation process with a complex rehabilitation and modernization of cities. The group sent a strong message over the two-day meeting to pursue efforts in this area and to mobilize other governments to join hands. This is a major commitment that “Safe School Leaders” are taking out of the Istanbul discussions.

The meeting was positively welcomed by most countries as a first and unique opportunity provided to Ministries of Education from different countries to exchange and discuss school safety among themselves as well as with technical / disaster risk reduction experts from their respective governments and from the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector. These exchanges of experiences allowed countries like Lebanon, Nepal, Costa Rica or Italy to recognize that they had been working so far only on one or two pillars of school safety and to commit to focus on a more holistic approach to safe schools (around the three pillars), to ensure comprehensive school safety work implementation by 2015 and beyond.

Governments confirmed their commitment to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools and their plans on safe school implementation and over the coming years or decade. They also reaffirmed their role as Safe School Leaders in promoting the initiative’s implementation at the national level and in motivating new Governments to join the initiative.

Some examples of integration of school safety as part of public policies and of securing a budget and political commitment for this subject were shared. All Governments confirmed that school safety should not be just a national priority but an obligation for all Governments.

Governments announced the following plans and voluntary commitments to safe school implementation:

- Indonesia has placed school safety as a national priority and is finalizing their blueprint for safe schools 2015-2020 as a major tool to guide safe school implementation at the national level .
- Indonesia and Nepal will continue campaigning, advocating and fostering training for safe school implementation.
- Nepal will further promote a multi-sectoral approach to safe school implementation at the national level and the use of locally available and low cost materials for the building of disaster-resilient schools. Nutrition represents a major component of safe schools in Nepal.
- The Government of I.R. Iran has enacted 4 billion US\$ between 2006 and 2014 in the renovation and retrofitting of schools, leading to resilient school infrastructure and an increase of students’ life safety from 33% in 2006 up to 67% in 2014. Such experience in mobilizing relevant budget for domestic safe school implementation can serve as role model for neighboring countries.
- Nigeria shared a successful case of public-private partnership for safe schools. By prioritizing school safety at the national level, Nigeria benefited from US\$10 million from the Government as seed money to support particularly the integration of disaster risk reduction into school curriculum, to which US\$10 million more were

received from the private sector, 1 million more from the African Development Bank and more from other countries (UK, Germany and Norway) amounting to a total of US\$27 million.

- Brazil proposed some innovative approaches to make safe school implementation sustainable and interactive by promoting the concept of sister cities and school cities exchanges and cooperation models through the Resilient Cities Campaign. Brazil is also reaching out to children through high-technology tools (i-phone applications) that children use on a daily basis, thereby building the social demand by children themselves to learn in safe school environments. Croatia highlighted the focus they will continue placing on life-skills and risk perceptions to effectively address the unpredictability of people's behaviours at times of disasters.
- Tunisia recommended to strengthen risk assessment methodologies and to better involve civil society in reducing urban risks and making resilient cities and schools.
- Algeria indicated that Maghreb countries share common threats and called for a closer sub-regional "Mediterranean" cooperation in sharing experiences and supporting each other in implementing school safety. Algeria also highlighted the need to promote a universal culture of risk and resilience with effective and systematic exchanges of information and methodologies on school safety for national replication, and recommended the development of a geographic information system on training programmes.

Governments also committed to the development of a "Roadmap for the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools - From Istanbul to Sendai and beyond" (see Annex 3) to be presented at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan). Governments' commitments are structured around three key layers namely a) implementing school safety at the domestic level , b) motivating other Governments to join the Worldwide Initiative and become Safe School Leaders and c) providing technical expertise to neighbouring countries for safe school implementation. Elements of the road map collectively identified include a set of principles, selected global objectives and goals, standard indicators and national targets as well as a continuous sharing of good practices and cohesive support from development partners. Governments agreed to develop the roadmap on the basis of short-term plan (up to Sendai) and a longer-term plan (beyond 2015). A first meeting on indicators was proposed by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education sector to which interested Governments were invited to join.

It was reminded that the high-level event planned in Sendai to launch the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools and announce Safe School Leaders' commitments is just the start of a broader and longer-term process and global collective action that will aim at mobilizing interested Governments' support in implementing the Worldwide Initiative to build a safer world and safe knowledge haven for all children of the world. The initial timeframe of 2030 was felt too ambitious and will be discussed again – or "re-negotiated" - at the next Safe School Leaders meeting.

Summary of firm commitments from the meeting:

- Governments confirmed their commitment to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools and their plans on safe school implementation and over the coming years or decade.

- Governments also reaffirmed their role as Safe School Leaders in promoting the initiative's implementation at the national level and in motivating new Governments to join the initiative.
- Turkey committed to support selected neighboring countries in South Eastern Europe, caucasia, central asia and middle east and africa with technical expertise in the area of school safety. Kyrgyzstan expressed interest to benefit from Turkey's experience and expertise in safe school implementation.
- Turkey committed that by 2018 all school buildings in Istanbul will be made safe
- The Government of I.R Iran offered good practice in mobilizing budgetary allocations in safe school implementation at the national level.
- The Government of I.R Iran and Brazil offered to host future meetings of Safe Schools Leaders:
 - ✓ The second meeting of Safe School Leaders is planned in 2015 in Iran.
 - ✓ Brazil offered to host the third meeting after the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, exact dates to be confirmed.
- Governments committed to the development of a "Roadmap for the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools - From Istanbul to Sendai and beyond" to be presented at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan).
- The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) committed to involve the UN Private Sector Group in implementing the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools, once felt appropriate and timely by the safe School Leaders.
- UNISDR will also request Parliamentarians to take the Initiative forward through the newly appointed President of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), who is a former Disaster Risk Reduction Champion, to influence national legislations with safe school priorities.
- The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) confirmed their commitment to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools and offered technical expertise to interested Governments around the three pillars of comprehensive school safety. They also offered to support UNISDR in drafting the Istanbul Roadmap and invited Governments to express interest to take part in a Task Force on indicators they are setting up to elaborate on targets and indicators for safe school and the Istanbul roadmap.

A few process-related proposals were also made during the discussions as follows:

- Building on Iran's point that they would welcome an independent review of their work on safe school, a proposal was made that each Host Country of future Safe School leaders meeting could benefit from an informal peer-review of their work on safe school on the first day of the meeting.
- In view of the wealth of expertise and country experiences shared on safe school implementation, it was proposed that a publication compiling good practices in this area e produced, exact timing to be further discussed.
- Scaling up the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools will require funding. It is essential that national funding be secured to ensure a sustainable domestic implementation. International extra funding will also be required and will need to be mobilized. Governments are encouraged to pursue their excellent cooperation with

international partners to seek their continued support in safe school implementation at the national level.

- A proposal was made to consider the possibility to launch a Decade for Safe Schools in support of the implementation of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Agreed next steps and timeframe

	Agreed actions	Action Owner	Proposed timeframe
1.	Governments are encouraged to promote safe school work and the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools during the consultations with Member States on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the forthcoming second session of the Preparatory Committee to the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (17-18 November 2014, Geneva).	All Governments present in Istanbul (and others to be recommended to UNISDR)	November 2014
2.	Governments to report back to their highest authority to confirm their commitment to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe School and the Istanbul Roadmap at the next Safe School Leaders meeting (tentatively planned in January 2015)	All Governments present in Istanbul	November – December 2014
3.	Iran to confirm their hosting of the second meeting of Safe School Leaders and propose exact dates to UNISDR, for relevant information and coordination with the Safe School Leaders group.	Iran	By mid-December 2014
4.	Draft Istanbul Roadmap to be developed by UNISDR in coordination with interested Governments and GADRRRES, for presentation and discussion at the second meeting of Safe School Leaders	UNISDR	By mid-December 2014
5.	UNISDR to coordinate action with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Safe School Leaders regarding the preparations for the second meeting of Safe School Leaders.	Iran - UNISDR	December 2015 – Jan 2015
6.	Safe School Leaders governments to recommend to UNISDR new countries active in safe school work who should be invited to the next meeting of Safe School Leaders	All Governments present in Istanbul	By end of December 2014
7.	Safe School Leaders to share working level Focal Points' contact details in their Ministries of Education and of Disaster Risk Management with UNISDR for relevant follow-up actions.	Interested Governments	By end of November 2014
8.	Webpage to be developed on the World Conference website where all documentation in relation to the First Meeting of Safe School leaders will be posted (including Governments presentation, meeting agenda, list of participants etc).	UNISDR	By mid-November 2014



**First Meeting of Safe Schools Leaders
List of Participants 31.10.2014**

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Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools

For every new school to be safe from disasters



Global Alliance for
Disaster Risk
Reduction and
Resilience in the
Education Sector

Expected outcomes

1. At least 10 Governments engage as "Safe School Leaders" and announce commitment to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS) at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan).
2. At least 100,000 schools are preliminary assessed through crowd-sourcing initiatives
3. Growing social demand for safe school implementation, in particular from children themselves and communities
4. A digital platform is developed as a collaborative Safe Schools web-based monitoring platform to collect data and track progress on school safety implementation globally.
5. School safety is recognized as a priority in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, as part of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and in Regional Platforms' political declarations.
6. Regional partners support the development of tools and standards for school safety and support a coordinated delivery of the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools on the ground.

1. Why this Initiative?

- The 2009 Second Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction 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. A range of initiatives and tools for school safety have been developed since then by a number of partners.
- The High-Level Dialogue Communiqué of the 2013 Fourth Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction proposed to "Start a global safe schools and safe health structures campaign in disaster-prone areas with voluntary funding and commitments to be announced at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.
- A set of initiatives on school safety are being developed by various partners in an uncoordinated manner as a response to the High Level Communiqué's call. UNISDR has the mandate and responsibility to ensure that a global holistic initiative for school safety that builds on key is presented at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015

2. What is a safe school?

The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector defines a "safe school" as combining all of the following three components:

- Safe Learning Facilities (disaster-resilient infrastructure)
- School Disaster Management
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Education



Diagram: The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools will promote action on all three pillars of school safety to ensure every new school is safe as of 2015

3. Worldwide Initiative's Objectives

- The Worldwide Initiative for Safe will focus efforts on motivating and supporting Governments in high risk and low capacity countries to implement school safety according to the three pillars highlighted as part of the Global School Safety Framework. No school will be considered safe unless all three pillars of school safety are implemented. A major global advocacy component will foster political commitment to school safety.
- Governments will lead action, with the support of technical partners as required, on the development of national strategies for school safety around the three key pillars of school safety.
- The main objectives of the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools are:
 - To promote Governments' good practices, expertise and achievements in safe school implementation for possible replication in other countries and regions;
 - To identify remaining challenges to effectively implement safe school;
 - To support Governments in developing national strategies for school safety as part of existing national disaster risk reduction or Education plans; and
 - To offer technical assistance and particular expertise as required by Governments, around the core three pillars of safe schools.

4. Key pillars of the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools

A school will be considered as safe if it combines all of the following components:

- **Safe School Facilities**
This component will aim at integrating structural safety in the construction of new schools and at retrofitting existing vulnerable ones. National Ministries of Finance will help to ensure that all new schools will be constructed according to building codes that ensure that they are structurally "safe". Children and communities will be encouraged to assess the safety of their school through crowd-sourced school safety assessment initiatives.
- **School Disaster Management**
This component will involve children in enhancing their school preparedness and contingency plans and building some "social demand" for safe educational facilities. Activities will include the conduct of evacuation drills, the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as well as capacity-building and training exercises.
- **Risk Reduction Education**
This component will aim at mobilizing Ministries of Education to include disaster risk reduction as part of school curricula and at strengthening teacher education institutions in disaster risk reduction and resilience education to allow children to acquire critical thinking and life-saving skills in support of a global culture of prevention.

Activities in the above technical pillars will be supported by a solid **global advocacy component** that will aim at mobilizing political commitment for school safety implementation. Activities will include:

- Identifying and engaging Governments interested and active in school safety to become "Safe School Leaders" and get prepared to commit actions and resources to school safety at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan);
- Supporting Governments with the development of national strategies for school safety or the integration of school safety as part of existing Education plans with the relevant budgetary allocation; and
- Organizing specific discussions on school safety at WCDRR and at Regional Platforms to ensure the recognition of school safety as a priority as part of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and related negotiations, and as part of WCDRR and Regional Platforms' outcome documents.

Coordination activities will also be essential to:

- Develop further cooperation and partnerships among Governments, technical partners, civil society and private sector to implement safe school at all levels
- Promote common advocacy messages to motivate further Governments' action on safe school
- Support resource mobilization efforts at the global level for national and local level school safety implementation through targeted donors, the private sector, individuals and associations
- Map out and track actions in school safety in targeted countries, monitor and report on progress through a global digital platform on school safety implementation and Governments' own national reporting process.

5. What does it mean to be a Safe School Leader ?

Safe School Leaders will be expected to:

1. Commit actions and resources to school safety at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.
2. Allocate national budget for school safety implementation and in partner countries.
3. Mobilize Ministries of Education and Planning in the development of national strategies for school safety.
4. Assess the status of school safety implementation at country level.
5. Share experiences and good practices in school safety implementation.
6. Foster the development of national strategies for school safety as part of national disaster risk reduction strategies.

7. How can Governments participate ?

There will be three ways by which Governments will be able to participate in and commit to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools. Governments will be encouraged to:

- Confirm the plans and commitments already made to safe school implementation as part of their on-going or forthcoming work programme or national strategy for disaster risk reduction;
- Make safe school implementation a priority as part of their national budget and allocate a portion of their national budget in support of the implementation of the school safety strategy in their respective countries.
- Pledge financial support and technical assistance to neighbouring or general high risk and low capacity countries with whom cooperation links already exist to help implement comprehensive school safety programmes.

WORLDWIDE INITIATIVE FOR SAFE SCHOOLS
The Roadmap from Istanbul to Sendai and beyond
(extract from the PPT presentation made on 31 October 2014, Istanbul)

Voluntary Commitments to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools

- **National plans towards safe schools in respective countries**
- **Advocacy to engage other countries**
- **Assistance to other countries**

Elements of the Roadmap

- **Global objectives and goals**
- **Standard indicators**
- **Continuous sharing of good practices**
- **National targets based on respective situations**
- **Cohesive support from development partners**

Ways Forward

- **Name the roadmap – e.g. The “Istanbul Roadmap for the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools”**
- **Hosting the next meeting (January 2015)**
- **Drafting the Worldwide Initiative Roadmap**
- **Agenda and attendance for the launch of the Worldwide Initiative at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, 14-18 March 2015 in Sendai Japan**