

**OPENING OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE  
FOR THE THIRD UN WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK  
REDUCTION**

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for Disaster Risk Reduction**

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Ambassador Kairamo,  
Ambassador Thongphakdi,  
Acting Director-General Moller,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates and friends,

Almost a decade ago, the international community came together in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami and committed to building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, by adopting the Hyogo Framework for Action – the HFA.

The HFA was the result of over 35 years of work and progress and learning achieved under the leadership and guidance of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) 1971, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) 1989, the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World 1994 and finally the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) 1999.

Ten years on significant progress has been made and recorded. In particular, in reducing the loss of lives.

It is recognised that the adoption of the HFA in 2005 has played a decisive role in promoting and progressing disaster risk reduction across international, regional, national and local agendas.

The HFA has been decisive in strengthening and guiding international cooperation efforts, in generating the political momentum necessary to ensure that disaster risk reduction is used as a foundation for sound national and international development agendas, as well as providing a common language and a framework for critical actions to which governments have clearly responded. It has created an international platform for learning and building on national and regional experiences, as reflected in the platforms for disaster risk reduction at national, regional and global levels. Today these are effective instruments for partnership and learning.

On the other hand, disaster risk and economic, social, environmental, and cultural losses are increasing. Economic losses now regularly exceed a billion annually and are projected to double by 2030. Over the last 30 years, risk of economic loss due to floods has increased by over 160 per cent and to tropical cyclones by 265 per cent. Economic loss risk to floods and cyclones in the OECD countries is growing faster than GDP per capital.

Over the last decade, we have learned a lot about how disaster risk is generated, how it can be reduced, and how the creation of new risks can be prevented. We know what to do now to manage risk.

The experience of many countries, that have determined that they must protect lives, shows that decisive and consistent action works and has impact. Several recent examples throughout the world shows us how loss of lives can be prevented. And the evidence of reduced loss of lives demonstrates that collective focus, goodwill, knowledge and expertise do achieve intended objectives.

In 2011, a Mid-Term Review of the HFA analysed the extent to which its implementation had progressed and identified critical areas to give more attention to. This was also the basis for the consultations that started in 2012, as called for by the UN General Assembly Resolution.

Since March 2012, consultations were held engaging thousands of people: international meetings, regional platforms (some regions even organised 2 rounds of consultations), meetings of intergovernmental organizations, national dialogues, stakeholder forums, and social networks. The fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2013 in Geneva alone included over 40 consultations.

In brief, Governments, regional intergovernmental organizations, the UN and international organizations, local governments, Parliamentarians, civil society, communities, private sector, science and academia, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, women, disability groups and young people, and many others, have reflected on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the HFA. Together, they have identified gaps and opportunities to be harnessed in a post-2015 framework. The value of these contributions, the work and commitment behind them is an indispensable part of the learning and basis for the post-2015 framework.

All together, we have clear guidance.

Allow me to underline a few of these points on which there is a strong convergence on the need to:

1. Build on the HFA.
2. Focus more on preventing the creation of new risk and continue steady action to reduce existing risk.
3. Focus on reducing vulnerability and exposure.
4. Engage all of society and promote equality, inclusion and non-discriminatory participation, a responsibility of all stakeholders.
5. Develop more effective financing mechanisms in both public and private sectors for managing risk.
6. Contribute to create synergies across the three key post-2015 frameworks (the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction, the sustainable development goals and a renewed agreement on climate change) – we know that the lack of coherence in policies and approaches is in itself a risk driver.
7. Strengthen national governance and coordination to manage disaster risk.

8. Engage all State institutions.
9. Empower local communities and authorities in managing disaster risk and contributing to the definition of national policies and plans.
10. More clearly define responsibilities across public and private sector actors.
11. Strengthen regional cooperation and address transboundary risk.
12. Monitor progress more carefully in order to allow for necessary corrective actions and continue strengthening of what we already know works.

Overall, human rights are a solid foundation for the work ahead, before us, and equality between women and man indispensable.

In summary, as this intergovernmental work begin, we have the key elements to design a framework that is a concise, focused, forward-looking and action oriented as the General Assembly asked us: a post-2015 framework that will guide our work in the coming decades.

There is a high expectation on this process, to deliver the much needed post-2015 framework. It will require to look for the “common good” in the interests of all nations and communities. It is within our power, in your hands as Member States to transform these appeals, requests, wishes, and hopes into clear and sharp guidance that can generate and open opportunities for collaboration and a sense of ownership by all

stakeholders. The post-2015 framework will have to be specific on stakeholders' role.

This is a generational opportunity. The post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction, together with the sustainable development goals and a renewed agreement on climate change can provide the world, for the first time, with a comprehensive and risk-sensitive development agenda, one that lays the foundations for a more resilient planet in the 21st century.

The challenge is clear. We must focus our efforts further, build on our achievements, and re-commit to strengthening the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

Allow me to conclude by assuring you of my personal support and that of UNISDR and the United Nations as a whole for a successful outcome in Sendai.

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