12 November 2014

**Decent jobs for resilient communities**

**ILO’s comments on the Zero draft**

**with wording suggestions**

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**ILO’s comments on the Zero draft**

**Introduction**

Today, as the overall risk situation continues to worsen, the vast majority of disasters, and the consequences of their impact on people, are regrettably concentrated in those countries that are less equipped to cope with them.

The Zero draft of the new framework acknowledges the essentiality of preparedness for strengthening the resilience of communities and countries, and we welcome this recognition. Indeed, evidence shows that there is a growing need to improve emergency preparedness worldwide and in particular in countries at high risk of natural hazards and conflict, the poorest and most fragile, where such catastrophic events are likely to exacerbate pre-existing weaknesses and instabilities.

Disasters, if not prevented or mitigated, will add numbers to temporary or long-term unemployment in countries where the lack of Decent Work is already the rule, particularly for large numbers of agricultural workers and share croppers. Higher preparedness reduces risk levels, develops the capability to respond and reinforces the ability to recover. The promotion of resilient employment and livelihood opportunities is an integral part of higher preparedness and, by enhancing the capacity of communities to survive, adapt, and grow in spite of adverse conditions, produces social and economic stability. Creating opportunities of decent jobs require the adoption of a multidimensional approach and can only result from the joint efforts of governments – through their national and local administrations – workers’ and employers’ organizations, local communities, and civil society at large.

While endorsing the pragmatism of the Zero draft, which emphasizes a preventive approach to risks through the identification and analysis of root causes and the promotion and rapid implementation of sustainable development practices, we wish to offer the following observations to strengthen the new framework.

**Section A. Preamble**

Ref. Paragraphs 2, 5 and 6 (pp.4-5)

* According to the definition provided in the HFA, a hazard is “a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity […]” and “can have different origins: natural […] or induced by human processes”.

This definition implies that **technological hazards** are within the remit of disaster risk reduction, and legitimates the workplace as a center stage of disaster risk reduction in view of its role in prevention and mitigation strategies, as well as in recovery and rehabilitation strategies[[1]](#footnote-1).

The Zero draft should reflect better the reality of the workplace and the threat of industrial disasters as major sources of concern in a risk reduction strategy.

* While governments need to retain and increase their firm governance role in disaster risk reduction, the **collaboration between public and private sectors** is also an important driver to achieve a solid integrated approach, to share expertise and capacities for prevention and response, to develop an enabling environment for recovery and to minimize the long-term impacts of hazards and risks. In particular, the development of **business continuity plans** through the participation of employers’ and workers’ organizations has the potential to contribute to theprotection of workers’ lives, maintaining adequate standards for health and safety, promoting job security and reducing business losses.

In addition, plans to guarantee the **continuity of public services** should be developed and implemented in all critical sectors, involving public sector unions in their design and lately being discussed with communities and other civil society organizations, to ensure ownership and support from the start.

Lessons learned from previous sudden onset disasters show that appropriate preparedness reduces the impact of disasters and lays the foundations for quicker business recovery, restoring quality jobs and incomes but also improving key enterprise functions, processes and practices, with positive spillover effects at community level.

Along with continuity of business and public service delivery, livelihood strengthening is key to minimizing the impact of disaster-induced population displacement and a precondition for addressing it through durable solutions.

**Section D. Priorities for action**

**Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk**

Ref. Paragraphs 21 and 22 (pp.8-9)

* The periodic collection of **information on employment and livelihoods**, with gender specific data, the analysis of their risk exposure and vulnerability and the generation of options for their protection and recovery are necessary steps to better understand, assess and manage disaster risks.
* Training and learning programmes on disaster risk reduction addressed to local government officials, public servants, communities and volunteers should be extended to all key stakeholders, including **employers’ and workers’ organizations**, to enhance their capacity to deal with general or sector-specific disaster risk and to contribute to the formulation and implementation of related policies and plans. Similarly, social partners should be involved in community-based training initiatives: being directly concerned with business continuity and health, environmental and safety standards at the workplace and surrounding communities, they can contribute to enhance local capacities to cope with disasters as well as prevent, or at least mitigate, their impact on employment and livelihoods.

**Priority 2: Strengthening governance and institutions to manage disaster risk**

Ref. Paragraph 25 (pp.10-11)

* Countries, in their efforts to preserve assets and development gains from the devastating consequences of disasters, should strengthen participatory planning mechanisms to encourage the active **participation of employers’ and workers’ organizations of all sectors** in disaster risk management.
* **Employment and livelihood concerns** should be factored into disaster risk management of vulnerable countries, considering in particular the planning and management of rural and urban development and of ecosystems, and focusing on strategies to reduce livelihood risk and increase resilience.

**Priority 3: Investing in economic, social, cultural and environmental resilience**

Ref. Paragraphs 28 and 29 (pp.12-13)

The Zero draft could be strengthened by adding the following references to the support of social security schemes (including social finance) and the application of health and safety standards at the workplace:

* The establishment of **social floors** contributes to **livelihood disaster risk reduction** and increases the resilience of employment and income. Efforts to develop alternative and innovative financial instruments for addressing livelihood disaster risk would benefit small enterprises and cooperatives as well as promote the formalization of the informal economy.
* **Workplaces** should be made center stage for disaster risk reduction in view of the role they play - with their actors, employers and workers, and their representatives - as frontlines to de-escalate the impact of disasters through prevention, mitigation, recovery and rehabilitation. It must not be forgotten that the workplace is also a potential source of major industrial and technological disasters and that a key strategy to prevent and deal with them is to adopt a health and safety approach based on the respect of international labour standards. Collaboration between employers’ and workers’ representatives in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) committees is the first step to establish a culture of prevention and mitigation.

**Priority 4: Enhancing preparedness for effective response, and building back better in recovery and reconstruction**

Ref. Paragraphs 30-32 (pp.13-14)

* **Social protection instruments** – such as conditional transfers, temporary employment programmes and social security schemes, starting with the establishment of social floors – should be adopted to protect vulnerable people before, during and after emergencies, and ultimately contribute to enhance the resilience of individuals and households, reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth and development.
* **Vulnerable groups**, such as female-headed households, the poor, the elderly, the disabled, indigenous people and other groups should be supported through special programmes and social safety-net mechanisms that aim to diversify livelihoods and increase resilience, promoting equality and rights at work. Specific attention should be given to migrants, displaced persons and refugees, through policies that promote inclusion in labour markets and prevent de-skilling, informality and exploitation.

Similar programmes should address economic sectors at risk in order to tackle their vulnerabilities. In particular, the primary sector, with farmers being one of the biggest employment groups worldwide, is often highly exposed to disaster risk.

* **First responder workers** are on the front line of disaster response: they are committed to ensure the safety of families and communities before, during and immediately after disaster events, and they can only succeed if they are adequately prepared. Reinforcing the capacities of public service workers through training, providing them with appropriate equipment and decent working conditions and involving them in the design of plans and mechanism is essential to enable them to conduct successful prevention and response actions to catastrophes.
* It is important to support **public administration services and workers engaged in the public sector** in view of their immediate deployment during and in the aftermath of catastrophic events. This support could translate itself into reviewed procedures, regulations and entitlements with regard to all aspects of public administration, including urban planning, environmental protection and health and safety practices.
* **Fragile-to-fragile state cooperation** should be encouraged and supported to share successful practices and lessons learned on prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures.
* Planning for a smooth **transition from relief to recovery** allows maximizing employment and development opportunities from day-one of the relief effort, fostering a strong and lasting recovery and, at the same time, addressing underlying risks and vulnerabilities as well as promoting sustainable development.

**Economic recovery**- shaped through locally discussed employment and development policies and schemes - enables people to reduce their dependency on long-term relief; adding to self-motivation, dignity and a sense of purpose. Alongside direct relief to affected people, the communal dimension needs to be reinforced, adequately addressing local markets, services and businesses that provide employment or support livelihoods more broadly.

Through **targeted recovery programmes**, new, decent, environmentally sustainable jobs can be created, with an efficient use of limited resources and with a positive rebound on local communities, both in terms of preparedness and recovery. For example, livelihood recoverycan be part of rebuilding homes and infrastructures through employment-intensive schemes that create quality jobs with the respect of fundamental rights at work, the guarantee of at least a minimum living wage, safe and healthy working conditions as well as health and social security contributions. These initiatives help improve living and working conditions of affected communities, starting from the rehabilitation and improvement of destroyed essential infrastructure.

* When new codes and standards are required, it should be ensured that the process always include **consultations with representative groups**. Better still would be to prefer partnerships and other forms of cooperation that will have more flexibility in the face of differing situations rather than standards, which tend to be rigid.

**Section E. Role of stakeholders**

Ref. Paragraph 34 (pp.14-15)

As stated repeatedly in the text of the Zero draft, achieving resilience requires all stakeholders, both in the public and in the private sector, to participate and assume responsibilities. Governments should promote a stronger engagement of social partners, businesses and agents of local economic development in disaster risk reduction, through specific incentives and mechanisms of cooperation with the local communities.

Private-public partnerships may offer useful avenues to reduce risk by leveraging business strategies (such as supply chain management and business continuity planning), strengthen the foundations of resilience and lead to economic opportunities for the public sector as well as for small, medium and large enterprises and cooperatives.

**Conclusions**

We would like to conclude by noting that the main role of the international community and the multilateral system is to prevent disasters from happening through adequate share of resources for implementing the sustainable development goals which are currently being set through the post- 2015 agenda. If a disaster anyway strikes, the response should not aim to rebuild the status quo ante, but should use it as an opportunity for improvement. If recovery is well-designed, development will follow, starting with institutions’ capacity-building as well as progress on a number of areas, such as health and education; poverty reduction; livelihood security; gender equality; and the empowerment of men and women who up to now have lived at the margins of society. Decent Work is a key component of any successful strategy to rebuild resilient and democratic societies. We trust that the successor of the original Hyogo Framework for Action will contribute to the achievement of these goals.

**Wording suggestions**

**for the Zero draft of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction**

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| **Paragraph no.** | **Proposed text** | **Comments** |
| 5 (p.5) | There has to be a broader and a more people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk. Enhanced work to address exposure and vulnerability and ensure accountability for risk creation is required at all levels. More dedicated action needs to be focused on tackling underlying risk drivers and compounding factors, such as demographic change, the consequences of poverty and inequality, weak governance, inadequate and non-risk informed policies, limited capacity especially at the local level, poorly managed urban and rural development, the lack of appropriate health and safety procedures at the workplace, declining ecosystems, climate change and variability, and conflict situations. Such risk drivers condition the resilience of households, communities, businesses and the public sector. Moreover, it is necessary to continue increasing preparedness for response and reconstruction and use post-disaster reconstruction and recovery to reduce future disaster risk. |  |
| 15 c) (p.6) | Disaster risk reduction depends on governance mechanisms across sectors and at local, national, regional and global levels and their coordination. It requires the full engagement of all State institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels, and a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders, including business through the collaboration between employers and workers, to ensure mutual outreach, partnership and accountability. |  |
| 21 (p.8) | Policies and practices for disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity and exposure of persons, their assets and livelihoods and hazards characteristics. This requires an all-states and all-stakeholders effort on a number of areas for action, such as collection, analysis and dissemination of information and data, advancement of research, and the development and sharing of open-source risk models, as well as continuous monitoring and exchange of practices and learning. | Livelihoods are the means by which people make a living. They include the capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life to a group of people. The periodic collection of information regarding livelihoods, particularly those more at risk, and the analysis of options for their protection and recovery are key elements for disaster risk management especially in disaster–prone areas. |
| 22 e) (p.9) | Promote and improve dialogue and cooperation among scientific communities, including social, health, economic and environmental sciences, practitioners, businesses, employers’ and workers’ organizations, people at risk and policymakers; |  |
| 25 h) (p.11) | Stimulate, in accordance with national practices, the development of quality standards and mechanisms for disaster risk management, including the establishment of certifications and the adoption of occupational safety and health principles, with the participation of the private sector and professional associations and scientific organizations. |  |
| 25 (p.11) | i) Promote social dialogue as a governance tool for the prevention and mitigation of workplace-related disasters and as a means to enhance preparedness and livelihood resilience at community level. |  |
| 28 a) (p.12) | Allocate resources at all levels of administration for the development and the implementation of disaster risk reduction policies, plans, laws and regulations in all relevant sectors, involving both the public and the private sector at the workplace level to ensure ownership and support; |  |
| 28 c) (p.12) | Protect or support the protection of museums and other sites of historical, cultural and religious interest; | References to workplaces have been included in paragraphs no. 5, 25 and 28 a). |
| 28 f) (p.12) | Encourage the revision of existing or the development of new building codes, standards, rehabilitation and reconstruction practices at the national or local levels, as  appropriate and in consultation with the relevant industry organizations, with the aim of making them more applicable in the local context, particularly in informal human settlements, and reinforce the capacity to implement, monitor and enforce such codes, including through a consensus-based approach; |  |
| 31 a) (p.13) | Prepare or review and periodically update disaster preparedness and contingency plans and policies at all levels, including occupational safety and health policies and practices, with a particular focus on preventing and responding to possible displacement, and ensuring the participation of all sectors and stakeholder groups, including the most vulnerable, in the design and planning; |  |
| 32 b) (p.14) | Promote, where necessary, and in consultation with representative organizations of the groups affected, the development of standards, codes and other guidance instruments to support preparedness and response, and contribute to the lessons learned for policy practice and reconstruction programmes; |  |
| 34 a) (p.14) | Business, professional associations, employers’ organizations, private sector financial institutions, including financial regulators and accounting bodies, and philanthropic foundations to integrate disaster risk management, including business continuity, in business models and practices, especially in micro, small and medium enterprises, engage in awareness-raising and training for their employees and customers, engage in and support research and innovation as well as the full use of technology in disaster risk management, share and disseminate knowledge, practices and data, actively engage with the public sector for the development of normative frameworks, quality standards, regulations, as well as policies and plans to incorporate disaster risk reduction; | We praise the relevance given to business continuity for small and medium-sized enterprises, as proposed by the ILO since the beginning of the drafting process.  Higher participation of workers and employers in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response will allow to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the face of the emergency. |
| 34 c) (p.14) | Social groups, volunteers, civil society, trade unions and faith-based organizations to engage with public institutions and business to, inter alia, provide specific knowledge and pragmatic guidance in the context of the development and implementation of normative frameworks, standards and plans for disaster risk reduction; engage in the implementation of local, national, regional and global plans and strategies, and their monitoring; contribute to and support public awareness and education on disaster risk ; advocate for an inclusive and all-of-society disaster risk management which strengthen the synergies across groups. |  |
| 34 c) (p.15) | vi) First responders to disasters, including fire fighters, emergency health personnel, uniformed personnel, and workers who clear rubble and restore utilities, are at the frontline of response and should be given adequate training and protection and be involved in the design of plans and mechanisms. |  |

1. This position is coherent with the current proposed SDGs referring to the promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)