**Australia’s position on the pre-zero draft of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction**

Australia welcomes the opportunity to shape the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Australia strongly supports the view that we need to build on, rather than replace or simply replicate the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA). Australia does not see the HFA becoming redundant or being retired through the post-2015 process. While the HFA helped raise awareness and understanding of the centrality of disaster risk reduction to social and economic development, the gap between policy and practice still needs to be bridged. The post-2015 framework should therefore focus on concrete measures to close this gap by harnessing the depth of knowledge and expertise accumulated since the original HFA was agreed in 2005.

Importantly, Australia’s view is that disaster risk reduction must be recognised as an investment. The post-2015 framework should promote the case for reducing risk and building resilience to disasters not only to save lives but also to ensure the sustainability of economic growth. Critically, it demands development solutions to humanitarian concerns. The post-2015 process should aim to engage the private sector to share its knowledge and experience in risk management to make public and private investments more risk-sensitive and to avoid creating new risks as economies, urban infrastructure and populations grow.

While climate change will be a driver of increasing extreme weather events, disaster resilience must focus on a broader range of disaster risks, including geophysical events such as earthquakes and volcanoes and climate events not directly associated with climate change.  It is our view that ‘addressing disaster risk’ will, by default, also address climate change related disaster risks along with other climate and geophysical risks.  We should take into account the challenges posed by all types of natural disasters, while seeking to complement and support – but not duplicate – negotiations already underway internationally. International action on climate change should continue under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Australia appreciates the efforts of the drafting committee thus far in the development of the pre-zero draft and provides the following commentary to assist in the development of a coherent, action-oriented and measurable framework.

***Section A: Preamble***

Australia is supportive of the general observations made in the pre-amble about the achievements of the HFA, however suggests that there is further scope to tell a more coherent story about the lessons learnt and gaps identified under the HFA and to clearly articulate how the new framework will address these gaps and guide future action.

For example, the opening paragraph should make a clear statement that the new framework does not replace, but builds on the HFA. It should note that while the HFA helped raised awareness and understanding, there are gaps between disaster risk reduction policy and practice that still need to be bridged. Further, as currently drafted, many of the guidance points within the pre-amble seem to articulate key issues raised through global consultations, rather than clear points of guidance, with therefore varying levels of import and focus. Many of the key points in this section are also repeated under the guiding principles. Australia therefore suggests that these sections be revised, or merged.

***Section B: Purpose, Scope, Outcomes and Goals***

Australia suggests that the purpose of the new framework should be to guide investment by all sectors of society in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response in order to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.

Australia supports measurable and realistic global targets that encourage governments to be ambitious, inclusive, and accountable for disaster risk reduction efforts and supports their coherence with the Sustainable Development Goal targets. Australia notes that further discussion is required to define the suggested global targets and how they will be measured to ensure the adequacy of future reporting, particularly for those nations with a federated governance system.

Australia supports the need to have strategic and mutually reinforcing goals and strongly recommends that the current goals be rearticulated to more closely align to the priorities for action and indicators. This will be central to making the document more coherent, action-oriented and measurable.

For example, as currently drafted there is little differentiation between goals 1 and 2 except that the first focuses on reducing exposure and vulnerability to new risk and the second focusses on existing risk. Australia suggests that there is merit in distinguishing these as they require different actions, however suggests these are re-drafted to clearly differentiate between the two, or be merged to form one goal which focuses on the adoption of risk-informed measures that aim to decrease exposure and vulnerability of all levels of society to both new and already existing risk.

***Section C: Guiding Principles***

To avoid unnecessary repetition throughout the document, Australia suggests that the guiding principles need to clearly articulate guidance for nations to follow, rather than simply rearticulate the key issues which have been raised through consultations.

***Section D: Priorities for Action***

Australia strongly recommends the priorities for action are revised to ensure they are action oriented and devoid of un-necessary repetition. Further, Australia strongly suggests that the priorities for action be restructured to ensure a narrative that describes how to create an enabling environment for disaster risk reduction, helps identify what risks need to be managed and guides targeted investments to improve resilience. Australia suggests the following order for the priorities for action:

* + Strengthening governance to manage disaster risk;
  + Understanding disaster risk;
  + Investing in social, economic and environmental resilience;
  + Preparedness for response, recovery and reconstruction – ‘Build Back Better’

Further, Australia suggests the following changes to the current text:

*Understanding disaster risk*

* The need for common methodologies for risk assessments should be clearly articulated upfront. A clear priority for action should be incorporated that encourages common methodologies for risk assessments which are placed in social and economic terms across all levels of society.
* A clear priority for action should be included which encourages nations to influence land-use planning decisions in order to reduce underlying risks.
* Paragraph 14a could include the following text ‘*in the context of event-specific hazard, exposure and vulnerability information.’ A*s information on the nature of the hazard, exposure and vulnerability are required to relate the event to the reasons for the losses.
* The framework should promote better understanding of risk and the need to translate that understanding into risk informed decision making. Further, free and open availability of risk information empowers all actors to understand their risk and the factors driving it. Clear priorities for action should be included which focus firstly, on the need to promote free, open availability of and access to hazard exposure, vulnerability, risk, disasters and loss information and its dissemination at all levels and, secondly, the need to promote better understanding of data through the provision of easily understandable information on disaster risks that takes into account the needs of different categories of users.
* It is suggested that paragraph 14j be broadened to include education and training across the disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response spectrum.

*Strengthening Governance to Manage Disaster Risk*

* Paragraphs 15a, b, e and g could be simplified and merged to include a priority for action which calls for the adoption, implementation and coordination of specific national and local frameworks and plans by all stakeholders, with clear targets, indicators timeframes and reporting mechanisms, aimed at preventing the creation of risk, the reduction of existing risk, and the strengthening of social, economic and environmental resilience.
* In order to clearly articulate the need for shared responsibility, paragraph 15d should be revised to encourage nations to develop specific mechanisms to encourage the collective responsibility, ownership, and action of all sectors of society, including all levels of government, business, the non-government sector, communities and individuals in all facets of disaster risk management, including in prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response.
* Given the need arising from the global consultations for nations to build better partnerships between the public and the private sector, a priority for action could be included which calls on nations to establish public-private partnerships to better engage the private sector in disaster risk reduction activities, and assist the public sector in removing barriers in order to encourage the private sector to foster a culture of disaster prevention within their own supply chains.
* Paragraph 15f should be re-drafted to ensure a priority for action which calls for nations to focus on ensuring that disaster risk management is not only considered by all levels of government, but that it is mainstreamed across the different sectors within each level of government.

*Preparedness for Response, Recovery, and Reconstruction – ‘Build Back Better’*

* Paragraph 16b should include the need for nations to develop, maintain and further strengthen early warning systems to ensure those nations who have been unable to develop appropriate early warning systems are incentivised to do so.
* The second sentence in paragraph 16e could be removed.
* Paragraph 16f could be expanded to encourage nations use opportunities during the recovery phase to develop capacities that reduce disaster risk in the medium and long term.

*Investing in Social, Economic, and Environmental Resilience*

* The introductory paragraph should state that: Risk sensitive social, economic and environmental investments are essential to strengthen the resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets. A continued focus on disaster resilience in key development areas, such as health, education, food security, water, ecosystem management, housing, tourism, cultural heritage, public awareness, innovative financial and risk transfer mechanisms, especially for local governments, households, and the poor and vulnerable is required.
* Paragraph 17d should encourage nations to ensure, as appropriate, that programmes for displaced persons do not increase risk and vulnerability to hazards, or to sexual violence.
* Paragraph 17i should promote the incorporation of disaster risk assessments into land-use policy development and implementation, including urban planning, informal and non-permanent housing such as through the use of guidelines and monitoring tools.

Australia also strongly recommends that the separation between ‘national and local’ and global and regional’ be removed given many of the priorities for action are relevant in either context. For example, paragraph 18a is relevant to local, national, regional and global contexts.

Additionally, many of the priorities for action within the global and regional context more appropriately belong within the implementation section, or need to be rearticulated to be more action oriented. For example, paragraph 19 c could be rearticulated to encourage nations to work to ‘Develop partnerships through current global, regional and sub-regional platforms for disaster risk reduction’.

Australia also suggests that greater clarity is provided in relation to the role of different stakeholders, particularly the role of the private sector, women and children. At present, it is not made clear whether the actions identified are actions for nation states, or stakeholder groups themselves.

***Section E: International Partnership in the implementation and follow-up process***Australia suggests that consideration be given to having a defined time bound commitment rather than an open-ended timeframe, noting that a time bound commitment could help build coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) and the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

Australia suggests that paragraph 26b highlight the need for the development of gender sensitive early warning systems. Similarly Australia also suggests that paragraph 26g outline the need to generate gender-sensitive evidence based guidance.