

DRAFT
Joint UN Statement
Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education
UN Contributions to the open-ended informal consultative meetings
13 October 2014, Geneva

Chairs, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

The UN System wishes to record its appreciation to the honourable Co-chairs, Bureau Members and to all Member States for the continued opportunity to participate in the Informal Consultations as Observers and Resource Persons. On behalf of my colleagues involved in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education sector work, as well as those engaged in preparedness, we hope that the following statement will contribute to your discussions in designing the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action. UNESCO and UNICEF for the Education Sector and OCHA, and WFP for the preparedness part have contributed to this intervention, with input from UNU, WHO and IMO.

Current Status – Celebration of Achievements

Chairs, Ladies and Gentlemen, a significant amount of progress towards more fully integrating risk reduction and resilience into the education sector has been made globally. In the Education Sector, documented progress has been achieved across all major areas: policy and implementation, curriculum and training, research and evaluation, spearheaded by initiatives like the Global campaign on “One Million Safe Schools and Hospitals” and the promising development of the Global Alliance for DRR and Resilience in the Education Sector (GAD3RES), which is based on the Comprehensive School Safety model (GAD3RES) consisting of three interconnected pillars, namely, Safe Learning Facilities, School Disaster Management and Risk Reduction and Resilience Education.

Challenges and Recommendations

Ladies and gentlemen, notwithstanding the significant successes accomplished we are still faced with significant challenges as disasters and consequent population displacement, have detrimental effects on the fulfilment of children’s right to education; for example it is estimated that approximately 875 million schoolchildren are living in high seismic zones and hundreds of millions are exposed to regular floods, droughts, landslides, and extreme wind and fire hazards.

Your continuous commitment to mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector is commendable as elements of the comprehensive school safety framework are evident in the HFA2 pre-zero draft document; nevertheless we would like to propose the following suggestions that could strengthen, in our opinion, the document:

- *Understanding disaster risk,*
 - *paragraph j) we propose the addition of the phrase “including climate change adaptation measures” right after “DRR education”;*

- *paragraph k) we propose the addition of “including the protection for the rights of children” right after “the promotion of public education and awareness”.*
- *We would further propose to include an additional paragraph that states the following:*
 - *l) It is critical to link the strengthening of education systems with the gaps in human capital necessary to advance DRR and CCA. This includes the area of providing scientific and technical evidence for decision making processes.*

This will promote the role of education systems in developing a critical mass of experts in key disciplines and sectors via formal undergraduate and post-graduate programmes as well as continuing education for public officials (on the job training) that will support national and regional efforts in identifying, assessing and monitoring risk through scientific and technological means.

- *Investing in Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience: We propose that the word schools in paragraph c) is replaced by educational facilities; this will allow the inclusion in the prioritization of all buildings related to educational systems, covering formal and informal education, from pre-primary to university levels.*

The UN would like to express its gratitude to your demonstrated strong support and leadership and offer the following recommendations for your consideration that reflect the main education issues that the UN system believes could be articulated more clearly in a post-2015 framework regarding key sectors.

- *Maintain existing strong commitment to school safety in pre-zero draft of post 2015 DRR framework as a pre-requisite for creating a culture of safety and resilience for this generation and the next*
- *Adopt/adapt the comprehensive safe school framework and its three pillars in your work*
- *Become part of the Worldwide Initiative on School Safety*
- *Support concrete targets, like the ones proposed by the GAD3RES, and monitoring mechanisms in establishing a resilient, risk aware and ready Education Sector*

Moving to preparedness - while it is recognized as an area of success, we believe that it needs continuing attention using an all-hazards and whole of society approach. Various UN entities have and will suggest areas that might be strengthened in the document, in particular in paragraphs 16 and 20. Two examples worth mentioning today are:

- *The need to reflect preparedness for recovery and reconstruction but, most importantly, highlight a need to maintain a focus on the core of preparedness to respond, as this foundation is directly related to the primary global target of ensuring that lives are not lost.*
- *While access to relief items is mentioned in the document, perhaps minor restructuring could better bring out the fact that preparedness needs to go beyond planning and norms and cover tangible capabilities – such as rapid availability of these relief items and the means to deliver and distribute them.*

We would also make the observation that preparedness is an area that lends itself particularly well to partnerships including making tangible bilateral, regional and international capability available under national lead in a structured and coherent way, while national and local actors are developing their own. An example is how emergency logistics capacity has been developed in some countries.

To support these types of assistance, the UN system has developed a Common Framework for Preparedness, endorsed by the leadership of the IASC, UNDG and UNISDR, to better meet increasing demands for capacity partnership in a more coherent manner.

Finally, we note the work on indicators that will take place under the leadership of the Ambassador of Jamaica. Some UN agencies have developed indicators that might be relevant, for example in timeliness of response (which drives levels of preparedness).

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to reiterate that the UN system stands ready to provide its technical assistance, including as appropriate, in suggesting specific language, to the Bureau and the Member States for the framing of the post-2015 framework throughout this process.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to contribute these consultations