

## Open-ended informal consultative meeting, 10 October 2014

### Joint UN Statement

#### *Section D: Priorities for action, national and local context*

#### ***Inputs on job resilience, health protection and water management***

*Excellencies, distinguished Member State representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen*

*The UN System wishes to reiterate its gratitude 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.*

*The UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience calls on UN agencies to collectively contribute to the process of developing a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. On the basis of our experience and knowledge on job resilience, health protection and water management in the face of catastrophic events, we would like to offer the following observations for your consideration.*

#### ***On resilient jobs<sup>1</sup>***

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 pre-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, may cause temporary or long-term unemployment, particularly of 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

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<sup>1</sup> This statement was prepared by ILO, with the contribution of FAO and the International Organization for Migration.

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 resilient jobs require the adoption of a multidimensional approach and can only result from the joint efforts of governments, local communities, and civil society, including workers' and employers' organizations.

While we endorse the pragmatism of the pre-zero draft, which emphasizes a preventive approach to risks through the identification and analysis of root causes and the promotion of sustainable development practices, we wish to offer the following observations to strengthen the "Section D: Priorities for action, national and local context" of the new framework.

### **Understanding disaster risk**

We believe that, to better understand, assess and manage disaster risks:

- The periodic collection of **information on employment and livelihoods**, the analysis of their risk exposure and vulnerability and the generation of options for their protection and recovery should be included under paragraph 14. b);
- **Workplaces** should be included - under paragraph 14. d) - among the platforms for the exchange of risk and disaster information in light of their role as communication hubs.
- With reference to the paragraphs 14. e) and g), training and learning programs on disaster risk reduction addressed to local government officials should be extended to all key stakeholders, including **workers' and employers' organizations**, to enhance their capacity to understand 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.

### **Strengthening governance to manage disaster risk**

- 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 workers' and employers'**

**organizations of all sectors** in disaster risk management. This should be reflected in paragraph 15 d) of the pre-zero draft.

- 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.
- **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.

### **Preparedness for response, recovery and reconstruction**

The following elements could be used to reinforce the messages of Paragraph 16.:

- **Social protection instruments** – such as conditional transfers, temporary employment programs and microinsurance schemes – 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 human capital development.
- **Vulnerable groups**, such as female-headed households, the poor, the elderly, the disabled and other vulnerable populations, should be supported through special programs and social safety-net mechanisms that aim to diversify livelihoods and increase resilience. 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 programs should address economic sectors at risk, especially in the primary sector, in order to tackle their vulnerabilities, such as farmers who are one of the biggest employment groups worldwide and are often highly exposed to disaster risk.
- The engagement of the public and private sectors in disaster risk reduction is essential 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 a hazard. In particular, the development of **business continuity plans through the participation of entrepreneurs and workers** protects the lives of employees, promotes job security and reduces business losses. In addition, plans to

guarantee the **continuity of public services** should be developed and implemented in all critical sectors, involving the social partners to ensure ownership and support from the start. Lessons learned from various sudden onset disasters show that appropriate preparedness reduces the impact of disasters and lays the foundations for quicker business recovery, improving also 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.

- **Public service 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 and providing them with appropriate equipment is essential to enable them to conduct successful prevention and response actions to catastrophes.

- 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.

**Economic recovery** 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, local markets, services and businesses that provide employment or support livelihoods more broadly also need to be reinforced.

Through targeted recovery programs, new jobs, environmentally sustainable, can be created, with the most efficient use of limited resources and with a positive rebound on local communities, both in terms of preparedness and recovery. For example, **livelihood recovery** can be part of rebuilding homes and infrastructure through employment-intensive schemes that create quality jobs (even if temporary) with minimum wage guaranteed, protective gear and clothing as well as health and social security contributions. These initiatives help improve living and working conditions of affected communities through the rehabilitation and improvement of destroyed essential infrastructure.

### **Investing in social, economic and environmental resilience**

Paragraph 17. of the pre-zero draft could be strengthened by adding the following references to the support to microfinance schemes and the application of health and safety standards at the workplace:

- The promotion of the development of **financial risk-sharing mechanisms**, particularly insurance and reinsurance against disasters, can contribute to livelihood disaster risk reduction and increase the resilience of employment and income. Efforts to develop alternative and innovative financial instruments for addressing livelihood disaster risk should also be sustained. (For example, intervention tools could include expert support for micro-scale activities and micro-credit schemes, marketing advice, guidance, and training to microfinance lenders and micro- and small-scale enterprises, including cooperatives.)
- **Workplaces** should be made center stage for disaster risk reduction in view of the role they play - with their actors, workers and employers - 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.

With reference to paragraph 21. c), **fragile-to-fragile state cooperation** should be encouraged and supported to share successful practices and lessons learned on prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures.

### **Role of stakeholders**

As stated repeatedly in the text of the pre-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 public-private partnerships, specific incentives and mechanisms of cooperation with the local communities. Paragraph 23. should explicitly mention social partners. Private-public partnerships capitalize on the unique position of the private sector 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 small, medium and large enterprises.

We would like to conclude by noting that a disaster is also an opportunity for improvement. If recovery is well-designed, institutions' capacity-building will follow, as well as progress on a number of areas, such as health and education; poverty reduction; livelihood security; gender equality; and the empowerment of civil society. We trust that the successor of the original Hyogo Framework for Action will contribute to the achievement of these goals.

## *On health<sup>2</sup>*

There are millions of people whose health is at risk due to emergencies and disasters. They are the people whose deaths, injuries, illnesses, disabilities and their related effects on social functioning could be avoided or reduced with effective risk management measures.

A key imperative for disaster risk reduction is the protection of people's health, however there are only a few specific references to health in the current HFA and in the pre-zero draft. Therefore, we propose that the Member States consider the following to give stronger emphasis to people's health throughout the framework.

We have five key messages:

1. Make people's health and well-being an explicit outcome of the new global framework on DRR.
2. Include health targets and indicators for the monitoring and reporting on DRR.
3. Strengthen action and resources to support health and other sectors that are vital for implementing DRR.
4. Establish the Safe Hospitals Initiative as a global priority for action to ensure that new and existing health facilities remain operational in emergencies and disasters.

Our fifth message is to apply an all-hazards approach to DRR that includes biological hazards (thus expressly including epidemics and pandemics), and we are heartened to hear that the co-chairs are proposing to refer to the UNISDR Glossary definition of hazards which includes biological hazards.

Specifically, we propose wording in the new framework on health (which reflects and expands on the wording in the current Hyogo Framework for Action):

- "Integrate disaster risk management throughout the health sector in primary, secondary and tertiary care, and in other sectors that contribute to building health system resilience, reducing health risks and consequences, and to improving health outcomes especially for people whose vulnerabilities are associated with their health status (e.g. the aged, people with disabilities, lactating and pregnant women, children and people with communicable and non-communicable diseases);
- Scale up action through the Safe Hospitals Initiative to ensure that hospitals remain functional in disasters by implementing measures to protect patients and health workers, the physical integrity of hospitals, including building and retrofitting new and existing facilities, critical systems and equipment; and to prepare hospitals to

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<sup>2</sup> This statement was prepared by WHO in consultation with UNAIDS.

function and provide appropriate levels of healthcare in times of emergencies and disasters.

- Strengthen capacities and resources through the implementation of national, regional and global frameworks on emergency and disaster risk management for health, improve local and national health preparedness, response and recovery (including regional and international coordination, such as national and foreign medical teams) and ensure compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005) for the management of public health emergencies of international concern.

Through the UN system, the health community supports a greater emphasis on prevention, as prevention is core to the preservation of public health. At the same time, the health sector supports the inclusion of “managing residual risk” as a goal including preparedness, response and recovery. These capacities are essential to reduce mortality and other health consequences, and there is a great need for capacity development for preparedness, response and recovery in many countries around the world.

### ***On water<sup>2</sup>***

Water-related disasters (floods, droughts and storms) account for more than 90% of the people affected by disasters since 1990, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations including women and children. While supporting the principles and strategic directions of the pre-zero draft, we feel there is a need for a stronger and more direct emphasis on water-related disasters. While the key priority areas and specific actions mentioned in Section D. of the pre-zero draft are all pertinent and relevant, it should be made clear in the Hyogo-2 framework that in order to strengthen resilience to water-related disasters, the actions mentioned should translate into improving the way we manage water.

Integrated water resources management is a primary means for the world’s efforts in disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate variability and change to be effective. For this reason, climate change adaptation, water resources management, and disaster risk reduction should be addressed in a more holistic and integrated way instead of being considered as separate topics.

Therefore, we strongly suggest that under “Strengthening Governance to Manage Disaster Risk” in Section D. “Priorities for Action” of the pre-zero draft, an integrated approach to

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<sup>2</sup> This statement was prepared by WMO, with assistance by UNESCO, UNECE, GWP, on behalf of UN-Water.

water resources management at the basin level should be promoted, as this has proven to be the most effective and sustainable approach to strengthen resilience of communities to droughts and minimize the negative impacts of floods. In transboundary basins, cooperation in water management and disaster risk reduction helps to improve early warning, but also to increase the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction and prevention by locating measures where they have the optimum effect.

In this regard, there must also be coherence with parallel efforts, in particular the development of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Clear linkages and coherence need to be established between the SDGs to be adopted in 2015, the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the climate change negotiations, in particular a possible climate deal at COP21. UN-Water for example is streamlining its advice to Member States in these different processes. In this context, we are pleased to mention that the forthcoming Background Paper on Water and Disaster Risk, which is being prepared by the Global Water Partnership, is fully coherent with the UN-Water recommendations in this area.

However, we take this opportunity to mention that there is widespread concern in the water community that in the Open Working Group's final proposal on Sustainable Development Goals, the target on water-related disasters was taken out of the water goal and moved into the one on cities and human settlements. The impacts of water-related disasters such as storms, floods and droughts are devastating in rural areas too, in terms of loss of human life, loss of livestock, crops, private property and public infrastructure, and the overall threats to food security for both rural and urban populations. Food price spikes can be directly linked to such water-related disasters. A clear statement from the Conference recommending that the target should be moved back under the water goal or under a specific, to be created, goal on disaster risk reduction, would certainly be welcome.

*Thank you for the opportunity to contribute these observations for your consideration. The UN system stands ready to provide technical assistance to the Bureau and the Member States for the framing of the post-2015 framework throughout this process.*