

## Input for Major Groups Session, 8 May 2014 – from the NGO Cluster on DRR

This cluster includes the Global Network of Civil society for Disaster Risk Reduction, Oxfam, WSPA, Islamic Relief and the Huairou Commission.

We are really pleased to see the strong references to disasters and the need for resilience to shocks and stresses in the current focus areas document. This reflects a broad understanding amongst states that disasters play a huge role in undermining development.

But reflecting cross-cutting issues in the goals will be a challenge, and the forthcoming process of negotiations must ensure an outcome that effectively reduces disaster risk:

This means all **types** of natural hazards – water and climate-related hazards are the most numerous and affect the highest numbers of people, and these have already been foregrounded, but death rates are higher in landslides, earthquakes, and tsunamis. All should be included.

Secondly – targets should include all **places** – both urban and rural areas. Whilst the urban population is increasing, by 2030, still 40% of people will live in rural areas, and they must not be forgotten.

Thirdly, targets should apply to all **sizes** of disasters. The focus is often on major disasters, but it is the recurrent small-scale disasters that cumulatively have greater impact and which are a cause of relentless attrition for poor people.

Effective disasters targets must capture the human and financial cost of disasters. A twin track approach is needed:

- Evidence – from Haiti, Pakistan, the Philippines and elsewhere – shows that disasters are a key **driver of poverty**. Targets therefore must be **people-centred** and ensure a focus on the poorest and marginalised people, who bear a higher burden of disasters. Efforts must focus on protecting livelihoods and productive assets as well as lives. We therefore strongly **support target d) under the poverty goal, but** stress that this must be extended to cover a broader perspective on human and social losses, not just mortality.
- National policies and actions must be translated through sub-national authorities to build capacities at the **local level**, where the risk burden falls. Hence **we support Target 15 t)**, which refers to capacity building, including on DRR, **but stress** the need for bottom-up agenda setting by high-risk communities, strong engagement of rural and urban poor peoples organizations and a holistic, integrated approach overcoming the fragmented silos that have failed to address the structural drivers of risk.
- As well as being people-centred, targets also need to focus on **economic growth and infrastructure** in recognition of the serious impact of disasters on economies: research finds that a major uninsured disaster causes a loss in economic growth of two to three percent. Public and private investment portfolios and trajectories need to change in order to bring environmental and social impacts in balance with economic benefits. **Target e) under cities is a good example in this direction but** not enough. We need a further target under economic growth and infrastructure in order to incentivise both ‘disaster-proofing’ of **existing development and also preventing the creation of unacceptable levels of new risk**.

To conclude, reducing the impact of disasters is a prerequisite for the SDG’s central objective of eradicating poverty, as well as achieving the inclusive economic growth that is key to shared prosperity.

Thank you.

Please find below our proposals in more detail

### **Focus area 1: Poverty eradication, building shared prosperity and promoting equality**

We fully support inclusion of resilience and DRR under a poverty goal as disasters play a major role in pushing households below the poverty line. However, we would like to adapt the language as follows:

1.d) Build resilience of ~~the poor~~ *people* and reduce by x% ~~deaths~~ *social, livelihood* and economic losses related to disasters

Disaster mortality is a highly imperfect metric for human cost as it neglects the many physical, social, economic and psychological impacts that disasters have on survivors – many of which are long term impacts. It is likely to continue the focus on major disasters, rather than small-scale but frequent disasters which cumulatively have greater impact and which are a cause of relentless attrition for poor people. We propose ‘social losses’ because this will provide a more accurate description of direct human impact by including numbers of people injured, displaced, made homeless and directly affected in other ways, as well as working days lost (to represent the impact on livelihoods), and school days lost (to represent the longer-term impact on poverty).

This also includes a target for ‘livelihood losses’ which is included in order to increase the focus on poor people, who bear a higher burden of disasters as their wealth is often more based in physical assets which are vulnerable to disasters, and who have reduced financial protection. This could be measured as the ratio of household losses to household income, or the number of people pushed into poverty as a result of disasters.

A further target is needed to mainstream risk reduction into development planning. There is a huge amount of evidence which shows that disasters can derail development, and therefore it is important that development plans at every level include risk assessment; this should be undertaken in a participatory way, as there is equally strong evidence that risk reduction is best achieved when involving those most at-risk.

*By 2030, all development plans and poverty reduction strategies - at the national, sub-national and local level - include risk reduction measures based on local participatory risk assessment.*

### **Focus Area 2: Sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition**

We fully support the reference to drought preparedness policies (f). A change is required to (g) to ensure that agriculture can withstand the gradual impacts of climate change, as well as extreme weather:

(g) Achieve ~~climate-smart~~ *sustainable agriculture practices* that are resilient and adaptable to *all climate change impacts including slow onset, extreme weather and natural disasters.*

### **Focus Area 6: Water and sanitation**

We fully support inclusion of DRR under a water goal as the majority of disasters and losses come from hydro-meteorological events. However, we would like to adapt the language as follows, for the same reasons as explained in Focus Area 1 above:

6.h Reduce by x% ~~deaths~~ *social, household* and economic losses caused by water-related disasters.

We also propose a new target, which focuses on the particular need to have effective water, drainage and sanitation services to reduce the probability and impact of a water-related disaster.

*By 2030, all water, drainage and sanitation infrastructure built to and operated at locally-appropriate hazard-resistant standards.*

### **Focus Area 8: Economic growth, employment and infrastructure**

We are concerned that the reference to disaster risk reduction has been removed from the previous Focus Area on **Infrastructure**, and the potential target has been weakened with only a reference to 'sustainable infrastructure'. The target should clearly specify that infrastructure needs to be resilient to disasters. We therefore propose a new target as follows:

*By 2030, all new infrastructure investment over \$x (including energy, communications, transport, housing, public buildings, schools, health centres etc) is built to locally-appropriate hazard-resistant standards.*

A key indicator for such a target would be the number of days function of infrastructure lost due to disasters.

We would also like a stronger link between disasters and **Economic growth**; there is currently a disconnect between national economic promotion and growth policies and disaster risk management strategies yet the drive for economic growth can expose countries to more risk, as has been seen in Thailand, India and elsewhere<sup>1</sup> and research finds that a major uninsured disaster causes a short term drop in economic growth of 0.6-1.0% and a cumulative loss of two to three times this magnitude. We therefore propose a new target as follows:

*By 2030, increase by x% of private and public investment being inclusive and resilient to disasters and climate change.*

This target would stimulate increases in numbers of national and investment-based disaster risk assessments, domestic revenue allocated to risk-smart development, numbers of investments using longer-term forecasting for climate and other risks and longer periods of return, the involvement of the private sector at national disaster reduction platforms, and comprehensive risk assessments of industrial and economic zones.

### **Focus area 10: Sustainable cities and human settlements**

We fully support the inclusion of disasters under a goal on human settlements as they concentrate the exposure of people and assets to disasters; many are particularly vulnerable as they are located in coastal areas and flood plains. We suggest a stronger target as follows:

*(e) By 2020, every human settlement with a population greater than 250,000 will have urban plans and codes to build resilience to disasters and climate change.*

Suggested indicators include numbers of risk-smart urban development policies and plans, numbers of effective building regulations enforced, percentage of at-risk population with access to adequate hazard-resistant shelters/safe places, number of days of function of infrastructure (including energy, communications, transport, public buildings, schools, health centres etc) lost due to disasters.

### **Focus Area 12: Climate change**

We are pleased to see the inclusion of target (b) to build resilience and adaptive capacity to climate induced hazards in all vulnerable countries but are extremely disappointed that a key reference to disaster risk reduction from the previous Focus Areas document has been removed. This should be reinserted, as follows:

*Reduce the damage caused by climate-induced and other natural hazards through disaster risk reduction.*

A further target should be included, and possibly added to target c):

*By 2030, all countries have developed and implemented science-based, economy-wide and participatory national climate risk assessments.*

**Focus Area 15: Means of Implementation**

We strongly support the inclusion of the need to build capacity in developing countries to support national plans in disaster prevention and reduction capacity, but would also extend this to building capacity at district and local level, as follows:

(t) develop and implement capacity building programmes in developing countries, especially LDCs, in support of the national, *district and local* plans for implementing sustainable development goals, including in agriculture, water, energy, health as well as in disaster prevention and reduction capacity and sustainable natural resources management.