

**Sectoral Paper for the High-level Political Forum 2020**  
***Sendai Group***

COVID-19 is showing that development gains can be lost in a matter of months, with millions of people around the world falling back under the poverty line after decades of effort to improve their conditions. It has also revealed the precariousness of the systems upon which trade, food, energy, transportation, and social safety nets depend. Finally, it is proving that **no individual, no community, and no nation is immune to disasters.**

We must acknowledge the impact disasters can have on development and the commensurate vulnerability of the Sustainable Development Goals when they are not implemented through a prevention lens.

We urgently need to start applying a preventive, risk-informed approach to all decision-making and develop accountability frameworks to support comprehensive risk disclosure and preventive action. Approaches that governments choose can radically transform the sectors that they seek to save and introduce a shift towards risk-aware behaviors and decisions by all of us.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) provides valuable guidance on how to implement risk-informed development. In line with the Framework, and considering the current context of COVID 19, the members of the Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism call on all people - but especially Member States and the United Nations - to reduce risks, save lives, and build a more sustainable and resilient world by:

1. **Strengthening multilateralism based on long-term vision, democratic values, human rights, health equity, accessibility, social justice and respect for nature.**

This moment requires a strengthened sense of global solidarity driven by sustainable development. Global systems driven by a financial profit motive only, rather than wellbeing, are one of the main causes of fragile, unsustainable development.

2. **Implementing a preventive approach as we build back better.**

There are countries starting to look into the recovery phase and are likely to revise existing policies or adopt new ones, update contingency plans and

reassess risk. This should result in a strong and effective cross-sectoral policy, informed by local realities, owned by local actors and adequately financed. Governments should strengthen their understanding of all aspects of risk and develop a comprehensive multi-hazard policy.

**3. Decentralizing and localizing decision making and resource allocation for effective prevention, response, recovery and preparedness.**

By virtue of being those most at risk, local actors must be enabled to participate, influence and take decisions on risk-informed development policies and practices. They have critical knowledge and experience of the threats they face and the actions which would help to reduce existing risks.

**4. Understanding and incorporate the needs and priorities of those most at risk through disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data.**

Different individuals within a community face different challenges and levels of risk. Disaggregated data is essential to understand how to best tackle this wide range of threats with measures that can prove effective to the entire community (including its most marginalized groups).

**5. Planning actions at local, national, and global levels through the lens of risk-informed development across all dimensions of sustainable development.**

Risk-informed development as recommended by SFDRR would ensure the prioritization of access to goods and services for all in need; require fail-safe systems in trade and supply lines; require that financial and other resources can be allocated on short notice; and encourage members of a community to both be prepared and know where to turn for accurate guidance.

**6. Reducing the risk of hazard's impacts and other unexpected events by addressing underlying factors that directly or indirectly increase vulnerabilities.**

Disasters do not occur in silos and communities face multiple threats at the same time with connected underlying conditions. Risk can be caused by seemingly unexpected underlying factors (e.g. corruption as a factor for flooding), hence a comprehensive assessment of risk is essential.

**7. Strengthen resilience from the perspective of those most at risk by taking a holistic, cross-sector, and integrated approach to the SDGs.**

Local actors should be included in response, recovery, preparedness and prevention. More often than not, local actors are both the first respondents, reaching communities where national government often cannot, and the ultimate beneficiaries of policies. We must empower and recognize the strengths of local actors, make pathways for their participation in decision-making processes and actions toward sustainable development and provide them with the resources and capacities to lead sustainable development at local level.

8. **Diversifying and contextualizing solutions**, including by drawing upon indigenous wisdom, the innovation of youth and persons with disabilities, and nature-based approaches along with appropriate, inclusive technologies, so that we may widen the range of who is reached by those solutions.