

### **Suggestions to incorporate disaster risk reduction into Voluntary National Reviews**

The Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic served as a wake-up call not only to improve our preparedness for health-related crises but also other challenges and crises, and to learn and share experiences and information to reduce risks and make our systems more resilient. The UN General Assembly declaration on the Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic stresses that the pandemic has highlighted the need to reduce the risk of the impacts of disasters and build resilience through disaster risk reduction, and calls upon Member States to ensure a risk-informed response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including to design recovery strategies that are risk-informed, supported by integrated national financing frameworks.

Disaster risk reduction is an integral part of sustainable development, and critical to protect human life and development gains. The political declaration of the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) “Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development” recognizes the criticality of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which guides the multi-hazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors, to fulfil the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda. The importance of considering disaster risk reduction, including data from the Sendai Framework Monitor, in the deliberations and outcomes of future HLPFs, and of engaging Sendai Framework focal points<sup>1</sup> early in the national review process is recognized in the General Assembly resolutions on “Disaster risk reduction” adopted in the 74<sup>th</sup> and 73<sup>th</sup> sessions, respectively.

Disaster risk is increasingly complex and systemic,<sup>2</sup> and as demonstrated by the cascading impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, hazards can trigger each other with effects across sectors, geographies and borders at all levels. The interrelation of risks across multiple dimensions and scales, and potential unintended negative consequences should inform development policies and investments. It is imperative that development is risk-informed to reduce losses, enhance resilience, and achieve sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals. When conducting a Voluntary National Review, it is therefore critical to incorporate disaster risk reduction, including a view of how disasters and disaster risk impede attainment of sustainable development, and the steps that therefore must be taken to reduce the vulnerability and exposure of people and assets. Towards this aim, this document provides suggestions and highlights opportunities for incorporating disaster risk reduction into the 2021 Voluntary National Reviews.

When preparing Voluntary National Reviews, countries may wish to:

- Engage Sendai Framework focal points, national and local platforms or equivalent coordination mechanisms for disaster risk reduction, and other disaster risk reduction stakeholders, including

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<sup>1</sup> The Sendai Framework focal points are the designated government focal points for disaster risk reduction and sit in the nodal ministry responsible for this portfolio.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the systemic nature of risk, please consult the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, located at: <https://gar.undrr.org/>

from civil society, science and technology, and the private sector, within the coordination structure of the VNR and throughout all stages of their preparation.

- Incorporate and apply relevant data on disasters and disaster risk, including from the national disaster loss database<sup>3</sup>, disaster risk profiles, the Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities, where available, and the Sendai Framework Monitor,<sup>4</sup> to assess progress on disaster risk reduction and resilience building.
- Consider how disaster risk reduction concerns have been integrated into policies, baselines, and institutional mechanisms for the Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>5</sup> and provide details on how this was accomplished. Assess the extent to which national and local disaster risk reduction strategies and national adaptation plans are integrated, and how integration can be leveraged to bolster efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.<sup>6</sup>
- Reflect on how the Sendai Framework, including its provisions related to “building back better,” can drive a sustainable and risk-informed recovery from COVID-19 and also address underlying drivers of disaster risk in a systemic manner.<sup>7</sup> Consider how both response<sup>8</sup> and recovery measures can work to build resilience across systems.<sup>9</sup> Examine risk governance gaps, including those highlighted by the cascading impacts of the pandemic.
- Assess challenges and lessons learned in applying a risk-informed approach to sustainable development, for instance, risk-informed decision support tools, and how identified challenges have been overcome and lessons learned applied.
- When considering trade-offs in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, reflect on how disaster risk was taken into account in the decision-making.
- Examine whether investment towards growth, development and the Sustainable Development goals is risk-informed<sup>10</sup> and take future disaster and climate risk scenarios into account, and are based on a disaster risk reduction financing strategy.

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<sup>3</sup> Key databases include <https://www.desinventar.net> and [https://www.emdat.be/emdat\\_db/](https://www.emdat.be/emdat_db/)

<sup>4</sup> <https://sendaimonitor.undrr.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Publications such as UNDRR’s ‘Words into Action: ‘Nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction’, currently under public review and found at <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/74080>, and UNDRR’s ‘Words into Action: Implementation guide for land use and urban planning’, found at <https://www.preventionweb.net/publications/view/67430>, may be useful towards this aim.

<sup>6</sup> Publications such as UNDRR’s ‘Words into Action: Developing national disaster risk reduction strategies,’ designed to support countries in developing a national disaster risk reduction strategy that is aligned with the Sendai Framework may be useful in this process, found at: [https://www.undrr.org/publication/words-action-guidelines-developing-national-disaster-risk-reduction-strategies#:~:text=The%20Words%20into%20Action%20\(WiA,aligned%20with%20the%20Sendai%20Framework](https://www.undrr.org/publication/words-action-guidelines-developing-national-disaster-risk-reduction-strategies#:~:text=The%20Words%20into%20Action%20(WiA,aligned%20with%20the%20Sendai%20Framework)

<sup>7</sup> UNDRR’s webinars, policy briefs and technical guidance on DRR and COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.undrr.org/drr-and-covid-19>

<sup>8</sup> UNDRR’s guide on “Scaling up disaster risk reduction in humanitarian action” may be useful towards this aim, found at <https://www.undrr.org/publication/scaling-disaster-risk-reduction-humanitarian-action>

<sup>9</sup> The Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework provide guidance towards resilient health systems, found at: [https://www.who.int/hac/events/2016/Bangkok\\_Principles.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/hac/events/2016/Bangkok_Principles.pdf?ua=1)

<sup>10</sup> Publications such as UNDRR’s “Multiple benefits of DRR investment” may be useful towards this aim, found at: <https://www.undrr.org/publication/multiple-benefits-drr-investment>

- Consider how enhancing capacity for disaster risk reduction has supported risk- informed development policies, plans and programmes in country. Consider the use of the Strategic Approach to Capacity Development for Implementation of the Sendai Framework<sup>11</sup> to support the identification and review of capacity for disaster risk reduction needs.
- Ensure that the impact of small- and large-scale hazards, including both man-made (environmental, biological /health-related and technological) and natural hazards, and the impact of climate change are adequately reflected in the country context and efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Beyond the documents specifically referenced in the footnotes throughout this list of suggestions, countries may find the full list of UNDRR's publications at <https://www.undrr.org/publications>. Additional reference materials are available at <https://www.preventionweb.net/>.

For any queries in relation to the integration of disaster risk reduction into Voluntary National Reviews, please contact Ms. Laurel Hanson, at [laurel.hanson@un.org](mailto:laurel.hanson@un.org).

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<sup>11</sup> This Guide can be found at <https://www.undrr.org/publication/strategic-approach-capacity-developmentimplementation-sendai-framework-disaster-risk>