

Statement by Ms. Mami Mizutori to the Session
“Review of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Implementation and
Interrelations Among Goals: Discussion on SDG 13 – Climate Action”
of the 2019 High-level Political Forum

Excellencies,

Climate change has become a major driver of risk and amplifier of disaster losses, both of human lives and the economy. While there is progress in reducing mortality, more and more people are pushed back into poverty by disasters. Of all disaster in the past 30 years, 90 % are related to climate change and extreme weather events.

The landscape of risk and disasters is changing quickly. Climate change generates more powerful storms, exacerbate coastal flooding, raises temperatures and protract droughts. And, these disasters are coming to places which historically were not disaster prone. No one is immune from disasters any more.

Against this background, there is a crucial case in aligning our efforts to reduce risk, and this process has multiple connections with climate change mitigation and adaptation and vulnerability reduction. To give you one example, more secure land tenure and better access to electricity and agricultural extension services can move forward drought mitigation.

However, in reality, few disaster risk reduction plans incorporate these connections. Failure to include climate change scenarios in the assessment of disaster risk and planning its reduction, creates redundancy of efforts and wastes resources.

We cannot achieve, sustainable development, climate mitigation and action, and disaster risk reduction in silos without alignment. Improved coherence of action should take place at all levels, global, regional and national, to implement the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

So, what do we need to do?

Firstly, understanding the commonalities and differences between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the context of each country is important for effective policy coordination. In particular, if the two are to be integrated into strategies at both the national and local levels.

Such an integration can only be possible when silos are broken in the process of planning and implementation of policies. On top of that, a strong institution with a coordinating mandate has to lead and oversee the process.

The source of financing is also a major factor. Different streams of international financing not taking into consideration the need for coherence, can reinforce silos at the national level, due to strict funding criteria and compliance requirements. Risk reduction will not happen unless the money to do this is available.

Other important elements include, (1) establishment of strong governance mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders, (2) development of central and accessible knowledge management platforms and risk assessment systems, (3) common data management, and (4) building capacity for coherence and coordination.

In one word, we need to abolish fragmentation at all levels and areas, if we are serious about reducing risks.

As we move ahead towards the Climate Action Summit, my organisation, the Office for Disaster Risk Reduction is working with UNFCCC, UNDP and other UN agencies to contribute towards bringing this much needed coherence and alignment amongst agendas, strategies

We have to all work aligned and raise our ambitions together. That is the spirit of this Summit.