

Open Working Group, January 2014:

Australia, the Netherlands, United Kingdom Constituency Statement

Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

Climate change and disaster risk reduction are key issues for post-2015 development.

Disasters and climate change affect all countries, millions of people both poor and rich. Since 2000, disasters have killed over 1.1 million people, affected over 2.7 billion and caused USD 1.3 trillion worth of damage.<sup>1</sup> Climate change will increase the frequency of extreme weather events, and pose a threat to the overall goal of poverty eradication and sustainable development. The cost of taking action now will be much less than the cost of dealing with the consequences later.

The poorest and most vulnerable are hit the hardest. They have the least capacity to adapt to disasters and climate changes and are often the most exposed to the risks. 325 million extremely poor people will be living in the 49 most hazard-prone countries in 2030.<sup>2</sup> The participation and empowerment of the most vulnerable will be important in developing effective responses – the poorest countries and small island developing states, women and children, slum dwellers, people with disabilities and other excluded groups.

Climate and disaster risk reduction are therefore essential elements of achieving the post-2015 development agenda, and must be fully reflected in the framework. We should take into account the challenges posed by disasters and slow-onset climate risks, complementing and supporting – but not duplicating – negotiations already underway internationally.

***Climate Change***

- The post-2015 framework should recognize that tackling climate change and meeting the 'below 2 degrees C objective' is essential to poverty eradication and should support efforts to achieve this.
- Climate change continues to be a major challenge for all countries – OECD, MIC, LDC alike – but the ability to deal with its impact will vary considerably. Climate change will increase the frequency and severity of weather and climate related disasters and affect the long term growth prospects of many countries;
  - the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) SREX Report finds that a changing climate leads to changes in the frequency, intensity, spatial extent, duration, and timing of extreme weather and climate events, and can result in unprecedented extreme weather and climate events;

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<sup>1</sup> Rawinji, Fladwel. [Claiming the Human Right to Protection from Disasters: the Case for human rights-based Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

<sup>2</sup> Overseas Development Institute (2013). [The geography of poverty, disasters and climate extremes in 2030](#)

- as temperatures increase, many of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable citizens will face a growing risk of more intense or prolonged drought, extreme rainfall, storms and flooding, severe heat waves and sea-level rise.
- Addressing climate change is necessary to protect development gains and promote sustainable economic growth:
  - as well as helping to address the causes of global climate change, more low-emission, climate-resilient development pathways will also improve energy security and natural resource management to ensure development is sustainable.
- In particular, sustainable energy is a necessary prerequisite for the attainment of economic growth and poverty reduction:
  - as the sector responsible for more than two-thirds of **non-land** greenhouse gas emissions globally,<sup>3</sup> development of sustainable energy and enhancing energy efficiency must play an important role in mitigating climate change impacts;
  - employing low carbon energy technologies and ensuring broadest possible access thereof will help decouple emission growth from economic growth, while helping to lift people out of poverty.
- Effective natural resource management is important for climate adaptation and mitigation and is a key driver of development:
  - natural resources and ecosystem services are at risk to the impacts of climate change, which in turn will slow, delay or in some cases reverse economic growth and poverty reduction efforts;
  - it is important to consider land-use change and deforestation, from the perspective of achieving water and food security as well as climate change;
  - freshwater withdrawals should be aligned with supply and water efficiency in agriculture, urban areas, energy and industry should be increased;
  - economic development that sustainably uses natural resources will create the foundations for improved environment protection efforts, enabling governments to protect their natural assets and adapt to the challenges of climate change.
- International action on climate change should continue under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), supported by practical complementary initiatives and ensuring policy coherence by integrating climate aspects in relevant policy domains
  - a new global agreement under the UNFCCC, due to be adopted in Paris in 2015, should provide a durable and inclusive platform for all countries to work together to address the urgent issue of climate change;

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<sup>3</sup> International Energy Agency, World Energy Outlook 2013

- the post-2015 agenda should complement such an agreement and support global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

Multiple facets of development are affected by climate change, and our success in managing both disasters and slow-onset climate impacts will affect our ability to support sustainable economic growth. So we should focus on ways to integrate climate change and disaster resilience throughout the post-2015 agenda, especially in key sectors such as, energy, agriculture, water, natural resources, health and infrastructure;

### ***Disaster Risk Reduction***

- Disaster losses threaten development gains and investments:
  - the scale of disaster losses over the past 20 years has outstripped the total value of official development assistance in the same period;
  - over the next 20 years, disaster losses are expected to increase as more people and assets are located in areas exposed to hazards and as the impact of climate variability becomes more evident;
  - these trends threaten achievement of the next generation of development goals.
- Disasters impact on the most vulnerable:
  - the poorest people in the world have the least capacity to adapt to disasters, lacking the necessary wealth and assets, networks, mobility and political power;
  - slow onset and disaster shocks have the potential to exacerbate food insecurity, reduce household incomes and increase rates of illness for people and communities who are least able to cope with its impacts.
- National and community resilience must focus on a broad range of shocks and risks:
  - while climate change will be an important driver of increasing risk, especially with regard to water and weather related disasters, nations and communities need to build resilience to a broader range of risks, including geo-seismic risk, technological failure, economic shocks, industrial hazards, conflict, pandemics and other emerging crisis drivers.
- Addressing disaster risk can be a key driver of investment and increased economic growth:
  - building resilience to a diverse range of risks and shocks and addressing the causes of disasters is central to protecting lives, livelihoods and development gains;
  - there is also an increasing focus on the role of effective disaster risk management as an *enabler* of development that can facilitate public-private partnerships and catalyse higher rates of investment<sup>4</sup> and act as a key *driver* of economic growth;

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank (2012) An exploration of the link between development, economic growth and natural risk

- the positive aspects of effectively managing risk should be recognised within the post-2015 development agenda.
- Globally, a renewed Hyogo Framework for Action will be the internationally agreed framework to manage disaster risks, reduce disaster losses and build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.
  - addressing disaster risk within the post-2015 development must be consistent with the renewed Hyogo Framework for Action.
  - for example, there have been suggestions for a specific post-2015 target on building resilience to disasters, and disaster risk reduction indicators could also be incorporated within other targets across the framework.

### **Summary**

Climate change and disaster shocks pose a threat to poverty eradication and sustainable development, and so are key issues for the post-2015 development agenda.

While all countries are affected, the poorest and most vulnerable people are hit the hardest. Climate and disaster risk reduction will be an essential ingredient of sustainable development into the future. The post-2015 development agenda should take into account the challenges posed by climate change and disasters, complementing negotiations already underway internationally.