

Disaster targets and indicators for the post-2015 development framework

Thirty global experts met at King's College London on 25 March 2014, to formulate disaster targets and indicators for the post-2015 development framework. This is the summary and conclusions of the discussion as captured and edited by Oxfam and Christian Aid.

The international community has an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen global efforts to address disaster risk reduction, risk prevention and resilience building. But this will only succeed if *coherent* approaches are taken across complementary global frameworks and political processes: post-2015 development framework, Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA2), UNFCCC, and World Humanitarian Summit. This necessitates increased and coordinated action and advocacy by stakeholders across and throughout these processes.

In the post-2015 development framework, at least one specific disaster target is needed to ensure increased political support for DRR and global visibility and accountability for delivering integration of risk management in other sectors. These targets and indicators should be consistent with those developed for the HFA2, and could be delivered through monitoring under the HFA2.

Criteria for disasters targets

Experts discussed, developed and agreed the following core criteria to ensure that disasters targets are effective. Disasters targets should:

- Incentivise public and private development that intrinsically builds in risk reduction, to minimise disaster risk creation and to reduce existing risk.
- Incentivise local level action and building community and household resilience. National policies and actions must be translated to building capacities at local level, where the risk burden falls.
- Incentivise risk reduction for recurrent, small-scale disasters, as well as large disasters. Both types of disasters are key drivers of poverty and thwart inclusive economic growth.
- Incentivise risk reduction measures targeted towards the most vulnerable, who suffer most.
- Be simple, motivating, and easy to communicate, thereby leading to policy change.
- Be measurable. Data availability and consistency remains a challenge, but can be addressed through new data collection requirements in the HFA2 as well as SDGs.

'Being motivating' was identified as the biggest priority for disasters targets. Targets will have most success where they inspire and spur broad support leading to bold actions from the different relevant stakeholders: governments, private sector, civil society and the aid sector.

Experts reviewed six distinctive approaches¹ for formulating disaster targets and indicators against the agreed criteria. From these deliberations, the following target is proposed:

Proposed disasters target and indicators

Target: Reduce the impact of disasters on poverty eradication and economic growth, including the impact on poor men and women.

Indicators:

- **Direct economic losses from disasters, as percentage of GDP**
- **Loss of household assets from disasters, as percentage of household income**
- **Number of people killed and directly affected by disasters, women and men, and ratio**
- **Number of people pushed into poverty as a result of disasters, women and men, and ratio**

Explanation of the proposed target

Development cannot be *sustainable* without ensuring its economic, social and environmental aspects are protected from disasters. Reducing the impact of disasters is therefore 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, and ensuring the achievement of all other post-2015 goals.

The disasters target and indicators balance two mutually-reinforcing elements. Firstly they take a people-centred approach, as required by a framework with poverty reduction at its heart. Reducing the impacts of disasters on poverty levels is identified as a core ingredient for a disasters target.

[Evidence](#) – from Haiti, Pakistan, the Philippines and elsewhere – shows that disasters play a major role in pushing households below the poverty line and keeping them there.

Secondly, the target has a focus on economic growth in recognition of the serious impact of disasters on economies: [research](#) finds that a major uninsured disaster causes a short term drop in economic growth of 0.6-1.0 per cent and a cumulative loss of two to three times this magnitude. This focus also recognises that economics and finance are key drivers of both public and private actions. Investment portfolios and trajectories need to change in order to bring environmental and social impacts in balance with economic benefits, and avoid the creation of unacceptable levels of disaster risk. This focus will appeal to developing, emerging and developed economies alike.

Explanation of the proposed integrated indicators

To ensure that all the criteria are met, and relevant stakeholders engaged, several integrated indicators are proposed. The indicators are linked to the target, providing prompts for appropriate policy change to achieve the target, as well as being a tool for monitoring and accountability.

Key considerations for these indicators:

- Data disaggregation, along lines of sex, age, ability, socio-economic grouping and sub-national region, is key in order to ensure that this target delivers for the most vulnerable people. At a minimum, there is a requirement to monitor and improve both income and gender equality, considering the impact of the targets on the poorest wealth quintiles and women as well as men. Disaggregating data at sub-national level will also motivate change at different levels of governance.
- These indicators will be based primarily on quantitative data sets. However, this is insufficient to fully capture the impacts of disasters, and hence will be reinforced with qualitative inputs of people's perceptions, attitudes and beliefs collected via polls.
- The baseline proposed for these indicators is 2010: learning from the original MDGs, backdated baselines can provide a strong dataset, which is particularly important for new issues.
- The indicators presented here are core indicators, which all countries should report on. Countries are strongly encouraged to develop their own additional indicators at national level, to complement and contextualise the indicators.

- ***Direct economic losses as a percentage of GDP (actual and modelled data)***

Economic losses are significantly increasing, [doubling every decade](#), and compelling arguments were made that measuring the reduction in economic losses from disasters could be feasible and motivating for governments.

- Considering economic losses relative to GDP is a better reflection of economic burden than absolute losses. This should be considered and reported at sub-national as well as national level, to ensure that risk is reduced across all regions, not simply the most economically active.
- Loss data is clearly dependent on hazard profiles which are inherently stochastic; this would be dealt with by using actual data for recurrent events, from disaster loss databases, and modelled data for rare, extreme events (such as earthquakes, tsunamis), such as that used by the insurance industry. This would allow states to be recognised for their actions and efforts to reduce risk.

- There is a significant requirement to build the data for this indicator: disaster loss databases exist but are neither comprehensive in their coverage (currently around 75 countries have them), nor consistent in their quality, nor comparable. The HFA2 has a key role in bridging this data gap; the new instrument could agree a commitment for countries to have standardised loss databases within a very limited timeframe, say two years. [Technical advice](#) on databases is already available to support this. Further work is also required on modelled data.

It was clearly noted by experts that this indicator would not adequately measure the reduction in disaster impact on poor people, and hence on its own is a significantly deficient indicator.

- ***Loss of household assets as a percentage of household income (actual and modelled data)***

The burden of disaster losses is higher for poor people, whose wealth is often more focused in physical assets which are vulnerable to disasters – such as houses, family assets, livestock, farmland, and other productive assets – and who have limited financial protection, through insurance, savings or credit. Hence this indicator will measure asset losses at household level as a percentage of household income, to reflect the financial burden on people.

- It will clearly incentivise government action in the poorest communities, and will be able to show at community level any improvement in the protection of homes, productive assets, or family assets, and may support micro-insurance.
- It will also be able to capture the impact of slow-onset hazards and frequent small-scale disasters, not just major disasters.
- As above, investments in disaster loss databases and modelled data are required.

- ***Number of people killed and directly affected, women and men, and ratio***

A compelling case was made to measure the physical impact on people given the strong motivating impact that this information has to reduce disaster risk, and the availability of relatively strong data. Mortality levels alone were felt to be too limiting and would not adequately reflect the broader impacts of a disaster.

- Current [best practice](#) is to consider people affected in the following ways:
 - Fatalities – number of people killed and missing;
 - Directly affected – number of people injured, relocated (evacuated and displaced), homeless or made victims in other ways.
- As above, improved disaster loss databases are required to collect this data. Gender disaggregation would be a minimum requirement, with additional age, disability or marginalised group disaggregation to be considered as priorities for disaster loss databases.
- Using a ratio of women/men would enable the identification of the gender inequality gap for disaster impacts.

- ***Number of people pushed into poverty as a result of disasters, women and men, and ratio***

Experts felt that disaster loss indicators alone were challenged in how well they captured the impact of disasters on poor men and women and on efforts to eradicate poverty, the overarching mission of the SDGs.

- An indicator that captured the impact of disasters on impoverishment would complement gaps in some of the other indicators and would incentivise aid and civil society groups as well as governments concerned with poverty reduction.
- This indicator encourages states to address the range of policy areas that prevent shocks and stresses having long term impact, including through disaster mitigation, social protection, resilience-building and effective response and recovery. As part of this it provides a link with the humanitarian sector who have a key role to play to build on DRR efforts and ensure emergency responses limit the long term impoverishment caused by disasters.
- There would be requirements for additional panel set data, which would be useful investment for poverty work more broadly. Advancements in studies of attitudes, awareness and perceptions using polls (such as Gallup, World Values Survey or Global Barometer) have opened up opportunities to triangulate data.

- Using a ratio of women/men would enable the identification of the gender inequality gap for disaster impacts and whether social protection or resilience building work should target specifically vulnerable groups.

Integrating disaster risk across other goals

In addition to the overarching recommendation to incorporate the primary disaster target under poverty eradication and economic growth goals, experts recognised the need to make other sectoral targets ‘risk-smart,’ otherwise hard-won gains could be too easily lost through the impact of disasters. A range of different indicators were shared in the meeting; a full list is available on request. At a minimum, disasters targets and indicators in other goals should include:

Cluster 1: Poverty eradication, Promote equality

- Development plans include risk reduction measures at the national, sub-national and local level based on local participatory risk assessment.
- % of at-risk population receiving targeted programmes of support. Eg. livelihood protection; social protection etc.

Cluster 2: Gender equality, Education, Employment, Health

- % of municipalities with mechanisms in place to meet women’s needs in disasters or other crises – including gender-based violence and women’s health
- Number of school days lost as a result of disasters or other crises.
- Proportion of population affected by lost health centres services as a result of disasters or other crises.

Cluster 3: Water and sanitation, Sustainable agriculture, food security, and nutrition

- Percentage of population served by water and sanitation services that is built to locally appropriate hazard-resistant standards
- Number of people with vulnerable livelihoods – people located in highly hazard-prone areas who are reliant on land for their livelihoods, who do not have access to resilient crops or livelihoods and are not protected through participatory disaster planning.

Cluster 4: Economic growth, Industrialization, Infrastructure, Energy

- Percentage of at risk population with access to adequate hazard-resistant shelters/safe places
- % of infrastructure (inc. energy, communications, transport, housing, public buildings, schools, health centres etc) built to locally-appropriate hazard-resistant standards
- Number of days function of infrastructure lost due to disasters

Cluster 5: Sustainable cities, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Climate

- Percentage of the population receiving practical weather and climate information
- Number of people in municipalities which have not undertaken detailed risk and hazard mapping, risk assessments and with active risk reduction in their urban planning and development plans.

Cluster 6: Marine resources, Ecosystems and biodiversity

- Percentage of designated conservation areas and ecosystems (wetlands, mangrove, etc) with effective disaster risk reduction plans.

¹ Reducing economic, physical and social losses; Reducing vulnerability and risk (measured through existing indices); Preventing impoverishment; Building community resilience; Reducing risk (measured through modelling); Attitudes and perceptions of risk (measured through polls).