RISK REDUCTION HUB EVENT

WORKING WITH NATURE FOR RESILIENCE

Date: Friday, 19 May 2023, 8:15am – 9:45am

Venue: Conference Room 6, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Context

Too often disasters are seen as caused by Nature and therefore something to be endured. Yet disasters are not natural. Rather, it is our choices that turn hazards into disasters. The state of Nature affects the exposure, vulnerability and capacity of those at risk, and thus plays an important role in minimising the extent and impact of disasters. While efforts are undertaken to reduce risks and avoid creating new ones, our societal, political, economic and financial systems continue to undermine ecosystem limits and compromise the planet’s capacity to support humanity. Acknowledging the critical role of nature for human survival, societal resilience and disaster risk reduction, it is time to work with Nature.

The session invites Government representatives and policymakers to discuss how to change the narrative, seeing nature not as an adversary but as a key ally for comprehensive risk management. The session will reflect on policy, governance, and financial barriers to nature-based solutions for resilience as well as required approaches and actions to support a course correction. It will consider how implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction over the next seven years, in increased synergy with relevant international agendas and processes, can contribute to the transformative change needed for nature-positive and sustainable development.

Background

Since the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted in 2015, our understanding of risk has changed. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that risk is systemic: one type of risk can transform into another, exposing and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Furthermore, we have also gained a greater understanding of the role humans play in either
worsening disaster risks (e.g. through human-induced climate change\(^1\), biodiversity loss or governance) or breaking the risk cycle through risk-informed approaches across sectors, geographies and scales.

As socio-ecological and technological systems become ever more interconnected and interdependent, disasters, economic loss, poverty and inequality are increasing just as ecosystems and biospheres are at risk of collapse. We must seize this moment to transform how we tackle and reduce risks to human and ecosystem health and wellbeing.

Working with nature is one way to address interconnected and systemic risks. The power of nature for enhancing our planet’s resilience is already recognised by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and of course the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In particular, the UN General Assembly resolution on the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment\(^2\), the UN Environment Assembly Resolutions on Nature-based Solutions for Supporting Sustainable Development\(^3\) and Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure\(^4\), the Sharm-el-Sheikh Implementation Plan\(^5\), the Sharm-el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda\(^6\), as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework\(^7\) emphasise the importance of rethinking our relationship with nature and the need to live within planetary boundaries by valuing nature as a solution to building resilience.

Nature-based solutions\(^8\), including ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, are recognised as a scalable and effective option to reduce disaster risks, build resilience and simultaneously provide human well-being, ecosystem services and biodiversity benefits.\(^9\) Leaders are increasingly calling attention to the connections, benefits and potential of working with nature for resilience. Still, more needs to be done to deepen synergies and enhance cooperation across international agendas and processes, to address existing barriers that prevent action, to increase investments in nature-based solutions, and to address risks in an integrated manner across sectors, scales and levels of governance, by applying an all-of-society and comprehensive risk management approach.

---


\(^2\) The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (un.org)

\(^3\) UN Environment Assembly Resolution on Nature-based Solutions for Supporting Sustainable Development

\(^4\) UN Environment Assembly Resolution on Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure

\(^5\) Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan

\(^6\) Sharm-el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda

\(^7\) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

\(^8\) for the definition of nature-based solutions, please see the UN Environment Assembly Resolution on Nature-based Solutions for Supporting Sustainable Development

\(^9\) Words into Action: Nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction | UNDRR
**Objectives**

- Reflect on the barriers, gaps and opportunities for strengthening the role of nature in policies and strategies related to disaster risk reduction as well as the implementation of the Sendai Framework.
- Highlight linkages between the implementation of nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction as part of the Sendai Framework and the achievement of other international agreements and agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.
- Identify the policy, governance and financial transformations needed to mobilise support for long-term nature-positive sustainable and resilient development for people and the planet, including through the application of nature-based solutions.
- Promote and highlight concrete actions and partnerships for risk-informed implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and frameworks, including by clarifying the roles of governments, people at risk and the private sector.

**Format**

The event will be organised in two segments:

- **Part 1** will consist of a call to action, inviting high-level support from Member States as champions for strengthening the role of nature for disaster risk reduction, including through nature-based solutions. Member States are invited to make statements, highlighting ongoing and planned efforts and pledges, demonstrating their commitments over the next seven years of Sendai Framework implementation.
- **Part 2** aims to shed light on the barriers, gaps and opportunities for increasing the role of nature for resilience. It will be structured as an interactive moderated discussion and panellists will represent different perspectives (government, civil society, private sector and stakeholders such as women, indigenous people and youth).

**Participants**

The event is aimed towards ministers and policymakers and provides an opportunity for perspectives by the UN system, civil society and the private sector. Highest level participation will provide opportunities to encourage support from various actors towards strengthening the role of nature for disaster risk reduction, including through nature-based solutions.
Guiding questions

- How can implementation of the Sendai Framework over the next seven years contribute to the transformative change needed towards nature-positive sustainable and resilient development? What is needed to integrate nature as an ally for disaster risk reduction and reducing people’s vulnerabilities to disaster and climate impacts?
- What are examples of governance arrangements that enable and recognise the multiple benefits of integrating nature’s value for disaster risk reduction and resilience? What are some of the barriers and constraints to integrating nature-based solutions and comprehensive risk management approaches in governance frameworks and structures?
- How can we operationalise the broadening of risk-informed approaches to other policy domains? What concrete steps and actions are needed over the next seven years to ensure integration of the Sendai Framework with other relevant international agendas and processes, especially the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the 2030 Agenda etc.?
- One of the transformations needed relates to aspects of financial systems, macroeconomic policy and public and private financing that contribute to creating disaster risk around the world. Which concrete steps must be taken to reverse the current trend of private and public financial flows that contribute to ecosystem degradation outstripping those that enhance natural assets? What are the challenges of harnessing private capital towards nature-based solutions for resilience?

Contact Information

For further information, kindly contact Kristin Meyer (kristin.meyer@un.org) and Martina Müller (mullerm@un.org), or visit https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/.

Programme

Moderator: Ms. Malini Mehra, Secretariat CEO, Non-Executive Board Member, GLOBE International

Welcome Remarks

- Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR, UNDRR
- Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Director, UN Environment Programme New York Office

Part 1 – Member States interventions (30 min)
• H.E. Ivete Maibaze, Minister of Land and Environment, Republic of Mozambique (TBC)
• H.E. Bill Blair, MP, President of the King’s Privy Council and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Canada
• Mr. Johann Saathoff, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister of the Interior and Community, The Federal Republic of Germany
• Mr. Shri Kamal Kishore, Member Secretary, National Disaster Management Authority, Republic of India

Part 2 – Panel discussion (45 min)

• Mr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (video message)
• Mr. Emmanuel Marfo, Member of Parliament, Republic of Ghana and Chairperson, Climate Vulnerable Forum Global Parliamentary Group
• Ms. Gwendolyn Pang, Secretary-General of the Philippine Red Cross
• Ms. Swetha Stotra Bhashyam, Global South Focal Point, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN)
• Ms. Rebecca Benner, Deputy Director of Global Climate, Tackle Climate Change Division, The Nature Conservancy
• Ms. Moira Gill, Chair, UN Principles of Sustainable Insurance Board and Associate Vice-President for Environment, Government and Industry Relations, TD Insurance
• Ms. Shalini Dhyani, Principal Scientist, CSIR-National Environment Engineering Research Institute, India
Speakers' bios

Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Mami Mizutori is the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, and head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Ms. Mizutori served for twenty-seven years in various capacities in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to joining the UN, Ms. Mizutori was Executive Director of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, University of East Anglia, UK, since 2011. Ms. Mizutori graduated in law from Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo and obtained a Diploma in International Studies from the Diplomatic School of Spain. A Japanese national, Ms. Mizutori speaks Japanese, English and Spanish.

Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Director at UN Environment Programme in New York

Mr. Jamil Ahmad is Director at the New York office of the UN Environment Programme. Prior to joining the UN, he worked as a senior career diplomat of Pakistan, accumulating vast experience of environmental policy making and multilateral negotiations.

He joined UN in 2008 as head of the Secretariat of the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi. He was lead negotiator on Climate Change for G77 & China in 2007. A passionate advocate of sustainability, he regularly engages with governments, academia, civil society, and others. He contributes to newspapers on current environmental issues. Jamil Ahmad holds a master’s degree in Political Science.

H.E. Ivete Maibaze, Minister of Land and Environment, Republic of Mozambique

Ms. Ivete Maibaze was appointed Minister of Land and Environment in 2020 and holds a master’s in environmental education. Ivete Joaquim Maibaze was born in Maputo, in the year 1976. Concluded her bachelor’s degree in science of Education in 2003 by the Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa and finished the master’s degree in Environmental Education by the Johannesburg
University, in 2009. She has worked at the Ministry of Environment since 1998 in numerous roles.

The Honourable Shawn Tupper, Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada

Mr. Shawn Tupper was appointed Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada effective October 17, 2022.

Prior to his current appointment, Mr. Tupper was the Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Operations) at the Privy Council Office, a position he held since May 2021; Associate Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada; Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet (Economic and Regional Policy Development) at the Privy Council Office; and, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy) at Transport Canada.

Mr. Johann Saathoff, SPD, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community

Mr. Johann Saathoff is the Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community of Germany. He is a specialist in public administration.

Elected First Mayor (full-time) of the municipality of Krummhörn in February 2003; re-elected mayor of the municipality of Krummhörn in September 2011; elected chair of the Aurich subdistrict branch of the SPD in August 2013.

Member of the United Services Union (ver.di), National Association for Workers' Welfare (AWO) and the social organisation Sozialverband Deutschland. Chairman of the group of parliamentarians from Lower Saxony and Bremen in the SPD parliamentary group at the Bundestag since 2018; leader of the SPD Coastal Group from 2014 to January 2022; Coordinator for Intersocietal Cooperation with Russia, Central Asia and the Eastern Partnership Countries from 26 August 2020 to 8 December 2021.
Mr. Shri Kamal Kishore, Member Secretary, National Disaster Management Authority, Republic of India

Mr. Kamal Kishore is a Member Secretary of India’s National Disaster Management Authority and has worked on disaster risk management issues at the national, regional and global levels for over thirty years.

Since 2015 he has been a Member of India’s National Disaster Management Authority where he leads on policy and planning issues. Since 2020, he has been the India co-chair of the Executive Committee of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, an initiative launched by the Prime Minister of India in 2019. Prior to NDMA, from 2002 to 2015, he worked with the United Nations Development Programme in New York, Geneva and New Delhi. At UNDP headquarters he led global advocacy campaigns to address disaster risk reduction concerns in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. He has advised more than ten national governments on disaster risk management issues and supported post-disaster recovery in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Earlier he worked with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre where he led a regional programme on extreme climate events covering Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Mr. David Applegate, Director, United States Geological Survey

David Applegate is the 18th Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, sworn in by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland on Aug. 15, 2022.

Prior to assuming his official role, he exercised the delegated authority of the USGS Director beginning on Jan. 20, 2021. He served as the Associate Director for Natural Hazards since 2011, leading USGS emergency response activities and overseeing the bureau’s geologic hazards and coastal and marine programs. He co-chairs the interagency Science for Disaster Reduction working group and chairs the interagency Civil Applications Committee.

Applegate is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Geological Society of America and is a past president of the Geological Society of Washington. Applegate has a B.S. in geology from Yale University and a Ph.D., also in geology, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Mr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Dr. David Cooper is the Acting Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and has more than 30 years of experience in environmental and agricultural science and policy, and international negotiations.

Before joining the CBD Secretariat, he worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, for the non-governmental organisation Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), the United Nations Association (UK) and in the Agricultural Research Council of the United Kingdom. David was a lead author for the third, fourth and fifth editions of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the Convention’s flagship publication. He has also contributed to various assessments of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and was a lead author for the Biodiversity Synthesis of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. He has edited four books on agricultural biodiversity and has written numerous papers on biodiversity science and policy, including papers in high-impact journals. He holds an MA in Agricultural and Forest Sciences and a DPhil in Plant Physiology, both from the University of Oxford.

The Honorable Emmanuel Marfo, Member of Parliament, Republic of Ghana and Chairperson, Climate Vulnerable Forum Global Parliamentary Group

The Honorable Emmanuel Marfo is a Member of Parliament, Chair of the Environment, Science and Technology Committee of the Parliament of Ghana, and Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum Global Parliamentary Group under the CVF Presidency of Ghana.

Currently a second-term Member of Parliament for Oforikrom Constituency in Ghana, Hon Marfo holds a PhD in Environmental Policy. He has worked for 15 years as a Research Scientist, University Lecturer and Consultant mainly in the natural resources and environmental sector, rising to the rank of Principal Research Scientist (Associate Professor). With over 50 publications, he has extensive policy research and analysis experience. He has substantial experience in project design, proposal writing, project management and impact monitoring and evaluation and has led many national research teams with a wide international professional network. He served for two terms as Constituency Chairman for NPP from 2009-2015 until his election as a Parliamentary candidate. He was sworn in as MP in 2017 and served on key parliamentary committees including Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Environment, Science and Technology; and Lands and Forestry in the 7th Parliament of Ghana.
Ms. Gwendolyn Pang, Secretary-General of the Philippine Red Cross

Dr. Gwendolyn Pang has over 25 years of leadership experience in the humanitarian field and is the Secretary General of the Philippine Red Cross. She is highly regarded for her skills in organizational transformation and has transformed the Philippine Red Cross into an organization that is ‘always first, always ready and always there’.

Prior to her present role, she has held various leadership positions in the Red Cross/Crescent movement, including: Member of the Board of Governors of the PRC, Deputy Regional Director for Asia Pacific of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Adviser and Guest Professor to the International Academy of Red Cross and Red Crescent based in Suzhou, China, Interim Head of Country in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, IFRC and Head of East Asia Cluster Delegation, IFRC (covering China, Japan, South Korea and Mongolia).

Ms. Swetha Stotra Bhashyam, Global South Focal Point, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN)

Ms. Swetha Stotra Bhashyam is the Global South Focal Point of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and has over 11 years of experience working with grassroots and international organizations. Swetha Stotra Bhashyam is dedicated to empowering and mobilizing youth to take action in biodiversity conservation. With a background in wildlife biology and conservation, she has helped build a strong movement for biodiversity within the youth community. Swetha has played a key role in coordinating the creation of 50 GYBN regional and national chapters. She is working to build strong partnerships and create space for critical dialogues with Civil Society Organizations, Indigenous People, Governments, IGOs, and private sectors. In 2022, she was also appointed as the Chair of the IUCN CEESP Inter-generational Partnerships and young professional groups. She aims to continue working on international projects and movements that are meaningful, just, and impactful on the ground.

Ms. Rebecca Benner, Interim Managing Director, The Nature Conservancy

Rebecca Benner, Becca, is the Interim Managing Director and the Deputy Director for the Global Climate Change Team at The Nature Conservancy. She has worked with numerous organizations in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

She joined the team in October of 2021. Prior to this role, she was the Director of Conservation and Science for TNC New York and before that the Director of Science for TNC North Carolina. In these roles, Becca focused on developing and refining conservation strategies, integrating science and knowledge into conservation approaches, and managing diverse teams of conservation and science experts. From 2010-2012, Becca worked for the Inter-American Development Bank in their natural resources and agriculture division focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem services projects in Latin America and the Caribbean including living in
Kingston, Jamaica for part of a year. Becca started her career at TNC in 2008 as a senior scientist on the Global Science team where she focused on water funds in Latin America spending extensive time in Ecuador and Colombia. Becca grew up in the Philippines, Ecuador, Bangladesh, and India. She earned her PhD at Stanford University in the Emmet Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources and got her B.A., with honors, in biology and environmental science from the University of Virginia. Becca lives in the Hudson Valley of New York with her husband and daughter where they love hiking the Shawangunk Ridge.

Ms. Moira Gill, TD Insurance

Ms. Moira Gill is responsible for Environment, Government and Industry Relations at TD Insurance. Under her leadership TD Insurance developed a climate strategy, employee environmental engagement program and joined the UNEP insurance pilot on climate change risk reporting.

Moira’s focus on strong, long-term, industry and government relationships has led to a track record of successful collaboration and resolution of political and regulatory issues. Her responsibilities extend over the Life and Health and General Insurance businesses and the company’s environmental commitments. Moira is Chair of UNEP Principles of Sustainable Insurance Board, as well as Board members of the Canadian Association of Direct Relationship Insurers, and chairs committees for the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the Canadian Life and Health Association. Through the UN PSI she has contributed to white papers and thought leadership on life and health ESG underwriting risk, protection gaps, and nature positive insurance. A graduate in International Relations from the University of Toronto, Moira also has an MBA from the Rotman School of Management. Moira is an active supporter of the United Way, the Ride to Conquer Cancer, and local environmental initiatives.

Dr Shalini Dhyani, principal scientist at the CSIR-National Environment Engineering Research Institute, India

Dr. Shalini Dhyani is a principal scientist at the CSIR-National Environment Engineering Research Institute, India and serves as the Asia Vice Chair in the Commission on Ecosystems Management of IUCN. Shalini works on interlinkages between socio-ecological systems and on implementing nature-based solutions (NbS) for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

Shalini is experienced in multi-sectoral integration in climate-sensitive restoration for developing resilient landscapes, by improving corporate-community partnerships. She has been the lead author of the IPBES global thematic assessment on the sustainable use of wild species and the Asia-Pacific regional assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services. She has published many research papers, edited books, and popular articles on mainstreaming NbS in reducing biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, and disaster risks.)
Malini Mehra is chief executive of GLOBE International, the environmental legislators organisation founded by Al Gore and John Kerry. An award-winning sustainability leader, Malini brings more than three decades of international experience on governance for sustainable development, policy and social entrepreneurship, advice and advocacy spanning government, parliaments, business, UN bodies and civil society. Having worked within government, led international civil society campaigns, founded NGOs, and advised the world’s leading corporations, Malini brings a unique multi sectoral, institutionally aware, politically astute, and interdisciplinary perspective across geographies to real-world problem solving.