

High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Midterm Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

18-19 May 2023

Summary

1. Introduction

In accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/76/204 and A/RES/77/164, the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (HLM) was convened in-person by the President of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly (PGA) on 18-19 May 2023, with participation of Member States, United Nations entities and stakeholders.

The HLM examined challenges experienced in preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk, explored context shifts and new and emerging issues, with the view to identifying renovations to risk governance and risk management approaches to contend with 21st century challenges, accelerating action in all sectors and at all scales through to 2030, in pursuit of the outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework towards risk-informed sustainable development.

The HLM was convened under the theme “*Working Together to Reduce Risk for a Resilient Future*” and consisted of an opening segment, a plenary segment for general discussion under the theme “*Charting liveable pathways for humans and nature*” and four Multi-stakeholder Panels entitled:

- From managing disasters to managing risk: risk governance fit for the 21st century
- De-risking investment and reconfiguring the global financial system – moving from risk generation to risk reduction
- Strategic foresight and risk reduction to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and
- A collective responsibility – localizing disaster risk reduction.

A continuation of the formal meeting was facilitated on 31 May and 6 June to accommodate statements of Member States and intergovernmental organizations, reflecting the strong engagement in risk-informed development.

In the opening segment, the President of the General Assembly, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction stressed the need to reconsider approaches to risk governance; policy coherence to address the planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution; rising costs of living and inequality; and economic and financial fragility in the face of systemic risks and shocks.

The adoption of the *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*¹ (hereinafter referred to as the political

¹ A/RES/77/289 - Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

declaration) demonstrated strong commitment to the agenda and highlighted the need for urgent action at the highest levels in support of accelerated action. It stressed the urgent need to integrate risk reduction in all decision-making, investment, and behavior in alignment with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Sendai Framework) and encouraged the adoption of a risk-informed and prevention-oriented approach, through multi-sector practices on disaster risk management (DRM) in addition to resilient and inclusive development planning. Taking place at “a defining point in history,” and against the backdrop of many global crises, Member States called for better governance, greater investments in resilience, integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the work of financial authorities, and a focus on disaster prevention.

The high-level Meeting was attended by Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the UN system, parliamentarians, the private sector and other stakeholder groups. Through plenary sessions and multistakeholder panels, 126 statements were issued by heads of State and government, government ministers and other high-level officials which emphasized the critical importance of DRR in their countries and regions. Representatives shared national perspectives on implementation of the Sendai Framework and activities to advance risk-informed action, they also reflected on challenges encountered in the past seven years and proposed recommendations for the way forward.

2. Opening Segment

The **President of the General Assembly, H.E. Csaba Kőrösi** opened the High-level meeting, declaring that disasters “are connected to each other and to us through our actions and inactions”, and that to better manage disaster risks “we must understand why and how disasters are connected, and address our role in perpetuating them”. He identified this as an inevitable priority for all countries regardless of geography.

Quoting Robert Louis Stephenson’s observation that “the mark of a good action is that it appears inevitable in retrospect,” he stated how in calling for “the critical shift to proactive management of risk, before the onset of a disaster” in 2015, the Sendai Framework was ahead of its time.

However, he expressed deep concern that we are not on track to achieve its aims, with disasters increasing significantly since 2015. He identified how the shocks experienced because of unattended risk have left millions homeless and starving, upended supply chains, and “laid bare the gross inequities of an international financial order that has often prized profit over people”.

In identifying that “our decisions on how we consume, produce, fuel, finance and plan” are not synchronized with nature’s finite resources, he urged Member States to move rapidly beyond “extractive and transactional behaviours”, “widening the lens of gross domestic product (GDP)”, to cease undervaluing the environmental and others costs of our actions, and build resilience of human, social, natural and built capital, embracing inclusion and solidarity.

Identifying this Review as the last chance for course correction before 2030, he called for “planet-smart and people-centred” choices and urged Member States to evolve “risk governance and management in ways that are proportionate to the challenges at hand”. He challenged Member States “to account for risk in every decision that impacts how we live, consume, build and invest”, and to “shift the temporal frame from short-term decision-making” to include long-term perspectives, and to “value resilience in the global financial system by redressing how disaster risk is treated, to increase and incentivize investments in prevention and rapid response”.

He urged everyone to “anticipate risk, calculate, factor in, prepare, prevent, respond rapidly, and build the lessons learned into the next action plans” and “renew the drive for a multilateral system ready for a new risk landscape” essential for the “transformation towards resilience”.

Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, said we must acknowledge that progress on the Sendai Framework has been inadequate, costing hundreds of thousands of lives and adversely affecting millions more. She drew attention to the COVID-19 pandemic, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as rapidly growing inequality, conflict, and “structural governance omissions within banking and global financial systems” that threaten economic and financial stability in the face of systemic risks and shocks.

Highlighting the critical importance of DRR, she urged systemic thinking in building resilience at every scale and in every sector, improving our understanding of risk drawing on “science, strategic foresight, and fully integrating local, traditional and Indigenous knowledge”, and upgrading our governance and financial systems, moving away from short-termism.

Referencing the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future, she called for a “dramatic shift from managing disasters to managing risk and investing in prevention”, anticipating emerging environmental, biological, and technological hazards and risks. “Sustainable development and the future of this planet is depending on it.”

Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, commended the efforts of Member States to date and emphasized that the *Midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (hereinafter referred to as the Midterm Review) showed the need to better understand risks and their cascading impacts, and demonstrated the important role of civil society, scientific and academic communities, and businesses, professional associations and private sector financial institutions.

She urged focusing on the local level, increasing multilateral cooperation, and enhancing preparedness and effectiveness of responses. While recognizing some progress, Ms. Mizutori expressed concern that it remains unequal across geographical and income levels, and that as “risks are left unattended, disasters are materializing faster, surpassing our ability to cope”. In emphasizing “the imperative to realize the outcome, goal and targets of the Sendai Framework”, and highlighting the key calls to action of the political declaration, she identified this as a moment of opportunity, calling for risk-informed investments and behaviour for a future “filled not with fear but with hope.”

Ms. Mwanahamisi Singano, of the Women and Gender Stakeholder Group and Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), noted the historic achievements of 2015 that saw the adoption of the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement. Stressing that the Sendai Framework is “a crucial pillar of our collective vision,” she emphasized that the Report of the Midterm Review demonstrates that work has fallen short of the scale and pace required. Ms. Singano underscored that while there are many challenges to implementation, it is imperative, as inaction comes at a significant cost. She underlined the centrality of the development and roll-out of a gender action plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Mr. Mustafa Kemal Kiliç, Türkiye earthquake survivor, discussed his experience from the recent earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. Describing the acute sense of vulnerability and shock following the disaster as well as the challenges facing the search and rescue teams, he described how he and his family were alive today thanks to the application of high standards by the building contractor to make

his home earthquake resistant. He expressed gratitude for all the countries and organizations that offered support and hoped that renewed commitment and work for implementing the Sendai Framework would result in fewer disaster victims globally.

Adoption of the Political Declaration

The PGA introduced the *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030* which was adopted by Member States and is now available as document [A/RES/77/289](#).

3. Plenary

The plenary segment included 126 statements from Member States of the United Nations and observers of the General Assembly – 5 Heads of State and Government, 49 Ministerial-level representatives, and 72 other high-level representatives. Addressing the theme - Member States recognized the *High-level meeting of the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (HLM) as a timely opportunity to assess progress, identify gaps, and accelerate implementation in the remaining seven years. They acknowledged that the HLM takes place amid severe impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, food insecurity, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Other human-induced risks such as cyber-attacks, armed conflicts, terrorism, and insecurity were also highlighted as emerging challenges.

Although bold steps have been made in specific areas, Member States expressed deep concern over the lack of progress in achieving the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework. They emphasized the urgency to accelerate and amplify implementation, considering the Midterm Review as the final opportunity for course correction before 2030.

During the discussions, Member States reiterated their commitment to the Sendai Framework and highlighted various initiatives and plans undertaken to integrate DRR into respective national strategies and policies. They emphasized the importance of regional cooperation, all-of-society engagement and inclusion of persons most at risk in disaster risk management, financial and technical support, and the strengthening of early warning systems (EWS) and local DRR strategies.

Member States made commitments to support collaborative efforts at the global, regional and national levels, in support of accelerated and amplified action in pursuit of the expected outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework and risk-informed sustainable development. The Global and Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction that will take place in the remaining period of implementation of the Sendai Framework, provide the opportunity for follow-up and review of these commitments.

The main issues addressed included the following:

The risk landscape has changed markedly since the adoption of the Sendai Framework.

The HLM was convened against the backdrop of multiple, compounding crises, severely affecting many countries and regions by. The adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, geopolitical tensions and conflicts, and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified inequalities and poverty across regions, undermining inclusive risk governance and development gains.

Almost all Member States, including from least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), described changes in climate and recent increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, ranging from drought and floods to heatwaves and cyclones, as

posing huge challenges to development efforts. These, they highlighted, had caused significant impacts across the globe, including derailing many DRR efforts.

Countries shared examples of how disaster impacts have eroded sustainable development, posing significant threats to infrastructure and livelihoods, provoking chronic food insecurity, interrupting education trajectories and compromising learning opportunities for children. Noting the causal relationship between climate change and the rise in disasters, Member States stressed the urgent need for corrective action, systemic and innovative solutions.

In the face of increasing shocks, deepening vulnerabilities and inequalities, there is a growing recognition among Member States of the need to enhance the application of risk data and information, and strategic foresight. Offering examples, some Member States and observers highlighted climate change and human-induced hazards and shared how they are planning ahead in developing foresight capacity and capabilities to identify potential risks and opportunities. They called for accelerated action to reduce the underlying drivers of risk.

Application of risk data and information, and strategic foresight capacity and capabilities are identified as essential to guide and support future-proof national development plans, sector-specific plans, and related investments by both the public and private sectors to strengthen resilience. The ability to plan, anticipate, and prepare for change and uncertainty was identified as crucial in informing effective measures to build resilience.

On the impact of new or emerging risks and shocks, many representatives referred to the immense impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the notion that traditional linear thinking about disaster management must be left in the past, as the changing risk landscape requires building resilience across social, economic, political, financial and ecological systems. Preventing risk at the same time as capitalizing on opportunities from rapid technological change and other frontier risks is a case in point, and will benefit from the replication of good practices.

Several Member States called for greater climate action as well as reforms to the financial architecture, to inter alia address losses and damages. They highlighted the importance of policy reform, legal and regulatory frameworks, and comprehensive DRM strategies.

Against this background, the importance of comprehensive risk management (CRM) was also emphasized, calling for a better understanding of the root causes of risk and disasters, and the development of a multi-sectoral approach to DRR. Capacity-building of communities, incorporation of local, traditional and Indigenous knowledges in planning, and evidence-based programming are deemed essential steps to be taken.

Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.

Member States reiterated their support for the political declaration and underscored their concern with the slow pace of Sendai Framework implementation. Examples were shared on the progress made at the national level, and calls were made for accelerated action to strengthen national multi-hazard risk governance, with the full engagement of all State institutions and an all-of-society approach.

Several Member States and regional intergovernmental bodies highlighted that some progress on the integration of DRR into sectoral and development planning has occurred, whilst also recognizing that more needs to be done to truly move towards risk-informed and resilient sustainable development, including breaking down structural silos at all levels. In particular, some Member States called for climate change adaptation and DRR strategies to be further integrated as both are critical to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Improving knowledge sharing among countries and initiatives.

Considering the increasingly systemic nature of risks, Member States highlighted the need for all-of-government and integrated approaches at local, national, and regional levels. They emphasized the sharing and implementation of good practices across governmental levels, the support to local governments with necessary resources, and the structural changes required to address health and technological risks, socio-economic inequality, climate change, food insecurity, and inclusivity for all, including people with disabilities.

Furthermore, Member States emphasized the importance of sharing best practices, data, training, and resources to strengthen capacities for effective DRR at all levels. They stressed the importance of integration of scientific and local knowledge, technical expertise, and nature-based solutions into national planning processes and policies. Many countries underscored the significance of leveraging innovative technologies, ensuring access to quality risk information for all, and improving the usefulness and utilization of risk data and information for risk-informed decision-making and community action.

Calls were also made for increased focus on transboundary and regional cooperation, leveraging high-level political engagement and considering geopolitical contexts and ongoing conflicts. Long-term climate projections should be taken into account to expedite investments in prevention.

Resilience must be put at the centre of legislative action, policies and plans.

To enable the implementation of risk-informed sectoral and development plans and DRR strategies, several countries stressed the imperative of having strong legislative and regulatory frameworks for DRR in place. Several Member States shared achievements in establishing new DRR laws, policies, strategies at national and local levels aligned with the Sendai Framework, some targeting specific sectors and stakeholders, and/or with long term horizons that aim to reduce vulnerability and economic losses. Numerous countries shared successes in establishing or enhancing national and local institutions and institutional frameworks, that in some instances have facilitated coordination of efforts at all levels of government.

All of State institution and all-of-society approaches are imperative.

The importance of multi-stakeholder involvement, gender perspectives, inclusivity, and collaboration through a "whole of government approach" was underscored. Risk awareness raising at various levels of government and society was recognized as a key aspect.

Several countries and regional intergovernmental bodies shared elements of how they are realizing an all-of-society approach: from the participation of persons with disabilities in national platforms for DRR, to youth participation in ministerial level meetings, to operationalizing an all-of-State institution and all-of-society approach in the design of DRR strategies and policies.

Several countries called to urgently prioritize community resilience and the development of strategies that transfer responsibility to the community. Noting that only 99 countries reported having local DRR strategies, with SIDS and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) identifying a near complete absence of local government and community involvement in DRR planning, the sense of urgency was stark.

Several countries called for increased participation of the private sector, civil society and local communities. Some countries called for the acknowledgement of the value of local, traditional and Indigenous knowledges and practices, and for the engagement of the private sector - particularly in respect of financing.

Inclusion in DRR remains a critical gap.

Inclusive DRR efforts were emphasized, with Member States calling for the involvement of vulnerable communities and populations in the planning and implementation of interventions, including women, girls, and persons with disabilities. Some stressed the importance of disability disaggregated data, gender equality and the development of a gender action plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework, as well as strengthening local level DRM capabilities to ensure no one is left behind. The utilization of local, traditional and Indigenous knowledges, involvement of marginalized groups, private sector, academia, and scientific communities in evidence-based risk knowledge and solutions, as well as facilitating financing and technological transfers, were highlighted.

Reliable, timely, interoperable data remains a challenge.

Sustainable development, driven by risk informed planning, relies on the availability of high-quality data across domains. While actions to reach the targets of the Sendai Framework and SDGs have generated high quality data to support disaster resilience and development planning, enhanced coordination and greater investment are needed to strengthen a multi-stakeholder approach to managing the increasingly complex risk landscape.

Member States identified that countries must scale-up investments in risk analysis capacities to be able to contend with the evolving risk landscape, including the increasingly severe and frequent impacts of climate change. This includes updating multi-hazard mapping and risk information systems to guide actions to better anticipate, prevent and reduce disaster risks, as well as respond to, and recover from disasters. Technological innovations must be leveraged to better equip people, communities, businesses, and the public sector with the tools required.

States identified that data governance and legislative frameworks must be strengthened to define mandates and develop capacities for both governmental and non-governmental actors to access, share, and analyze risk data, with a focus on strengthening risk data collection, analysis, and decision-making systems at local levels. Data and terminologies should be standardized to facilitate more comprehensive DRM across national and local levels, whilst such practices must remain sufficiently dynamic and adaptive to ensure they are fit for purpose and adapted to contextual needs.

Incentivizing investment in risk reduction and resilience.

Recalling Sendai Framework Priority for Action 3 on Investing in DRR for Resilience, Member States reiterated that measures, investments and activities that avoid creating new disaster risks and reduce existing disaster risks before they manifest as shocks, are often much less costly than disaster relief and response, and that this holds true across all geographies.

Member States noted the need to strengthen legal and political institutions and frameworks to mobilize risk-informed public and private financing and investments in resilience and enhance DRR capacities, driven by the call to encourage financial authorities to integrate risk reduction into their work.

The private sector was identified as crucial in both directing investment towards projects and companies that avoid the creation of new risks and correctly manage existing risks to society, as well as financing DRR. To promote this would require policy support and actions, where the right policy incentives can foster longer-term investments that factor in DRR as a key performance indicator, and address the impediment that is limiting revenue streams for investment in resilience.

The need to improve companies' disclosure related to disaster risks, address inadequate pricing of negative externalities, and revise accounting practices to enable investors to incorporate this type of information into their investment decisions was also identified.

Countries emphasized the necessity of expanding access to innovative financing and partnerships at the sub-national level, and access to pre-arranged financing and pre-allocated funds to enhance preparedness, prevention, and response efforts.

Risk-informed development through contextualized, holistic and integrated investment.

Member States warned that risk-informed sustainable development cannot be achieved if financing remains piecemeal and called for holistic approaches. Many countries called for the urgent review of the international financing system.

Member States asserted that funding for risk reduction must be made more sustainable and responsive to national priorities, and must move away from the project focus that prevails. Moreover, many identified that it is crucial to move beyond mainstreaming DRR to adopt integrated and comprehensive risk management approaches.

The lack of integration of disaster and climate action was frequently cited as an example. The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) was welcomed in several statements and some donor countries highlighted their increased contributions to funding for adaptation, including on losses and damages.

Many Member States highlighted the increasing cost of disasters and called for greater Official Development Assistance in support of preventing new, and reducing existing risk before they manifest as shocks. They noted that financing for DRR remains a major challenge for countries with small economies.

Several Member States emphasized the need to scale up financing for DRR and urged the international community to operationalize funding mechanisms, including the establishment of a dedicated DRR fund separate from climate-focused funding mechanisms. Several countries quoted international commitments in the design of risk management approaches, with some countries calling for the USD 100 billion per year commitment on climate financing to be urgently implemented. Calls were made for the operationalization of a loss and damage funding mechanism at the upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-28).

Proposals for addressing such challenges included: installing permanent risk assessment and risk management at national, federal state, and regional levels; integrating user-centred design in planning of risk management approaches, also involving the most vulnerable; linking national and global risk reduction governance; and developing coordinating bodies for pre- and post-disaster management phases.

Investment in resilient infrastructure, multi-hazard early warning systems, and disaster risk insurance and risk transfer.

Building risk-informed infrastructure was identified as an opportunity to expedite implementation in urbanizing areas, including both major cities and growing urban settlements in SIDS. Indeed, some countries reported significant domestic investments in DRR and emphasized that infrastructure investments, guided by robust risk assessments, contribute to long-term resilience. Nevertheless, some representatives reiterated that limited financial and technical resources compromise States' ability to invest in resilient infrastructure to reduce disaster risk.

While some Member States – notably developing countries – highlighted inadequate investment for effective and comprehensive early action, others identified opportunities to accelerate implementation. Highlighting the importance of accessible multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS), the Secretary-General's Early Warning for All Initiative was given as one such opportunity. Member States shared experiences in developing early warning systems, and presented challenges related to technical capacities and access to technology. Others highlighted the necessity for the transfer of technology – including for early warning systems – with accurate and timely information that reaches all people.

New funding arrangements on losses and damages – including through climate finance, risk transfer and insurance mechanisms that strengthen responses to risks driven by the climate crisis – were also welcomed. Overall, addressing the financing gap was widely recognized as a crucial aspect to reducing disaster risk.

The urgency to integrate risk reduction in the implementation and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the intergovernmental outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields.

Several Member States stressed the need to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and noted the approaching SDG Summit and the Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement, as immediate opportunities. Member States called for enhanced international support in integration of DRR in implementation of sustainable development policies.

Several Member States stressed the links between DRR, water resources management, and climate mitigation and adaptation, including more explicit address of water-related risks in Sendai Framework implementation.

Almost all countries highlighted climate change and the exacerbated risk that this presents, with particular emphasis on impacts on SIDS. Many articulated that countries who have contributed the least to climate change are most impacted by it, with some Member States calling for climate justice in meeting climate financing commitments.

Many Member States called for solidarity and cooperation among nations to ensure that no one, no place, and no ecosystem is left behind. Stressing the intersectoral and transnational nature of crises, and noting the need for a wider vision in international collaboration in crisis management, there were calls to “move forward together” to tackle the challenges of disaster risk, ensuring that vulnerable communities and regions receive the necessary support and resources.

The unique challenges faced by the most vulnerable countries

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) called for concrete economic and financial support, welcoming the adoption and rapid implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. They also appreciated the Early Warning for All Initiative and encouraged its expansion to include more LDCs.

Similarly, LLDCs highlighted the need for coherence among agendas, conventions, frameworks and strategies, emphasizing the importance of nature-based solutions, safeguarding and supporting livelihoods, and technical and financial support.

SIDS highlighted the disproportionate impact of disasters on their economies, with one country identifying having lost 30% of the country's GDP in a recent event. SIDS highlighted that greater investment is needed in resilient critical infrastructure and transfer of technology and capacities, but

that access to concessional financing is hampered for SIDS classified as a middle-income countries (MICs).

Need for preventative approaches in disaster management.

Countries recognized the need for greater emphasis on preventative approaches in disaster management, including investing in monitoring capacities and cross-ministerial coordination, the establishment of local to national level committees on specific hazards, implementing integrated DRM programs, and establishing disaster response funds.

Demonstrating the added value of prevention is critical in contexts of protracted crises, where long standing, structural vulnerabilities collide with the impact of disasters. Governing disaster risk in fragile contexts cannot be treated as a “one size fits all.”

States reiterated the need for renewed commitment and effort in advocating for the added value of prevention in such contexts so as to convince all actors to invest more in prevention, including through integrated and multidimensional risk assessment to guide resilience building. Multidimensional risk assessment, developing local partners and leadership, and building local adaptation and resilience are critical for the implementation of national strategies.

Localizing national and global risk reduction efforts is considered important, and early warning and anticipatory action tied to pre-agreed financing frameworks are critical in fragile settings.

Investments in infrastructure and adequate systems are critical, but DRR stakeholders must also invest in local communities, so that individuals are able to build their own resilience.

Disaster displacement and human mobility.

Several statements highlighted the increasingly concerning aspects of displacement and human mobility as a result of realized disaster risks - including climate risks - and called for greater focus and integration of such aspects within planning and action on DRR.

4. Multi-stakeholder panels

Multistakeholder Panel One:

From Managing Disasters to Managing Risk; Risk Governance fit for the 21st century

The main issues addressed included the following:

Need to evolve risk governance systems: integrating risk management as a core element of decision-making is necessary to avoid the cycle of short-termism. Risk is a function of human activities: poor decisions of today create risks for tomorrow or result in unintentional transfer of risk to other sectors, communities or generations. Access to data remains a challenge and impedes risk governance and early warning. Hence, risk-informed development, for which foresight is a critical component, is key to making development sustainable.

Often silos are created for ease of operations, but these silos create challenges in implementation. To ensure long-term resilient development, alignment of plans, policies and legislation is important, including for climate change adaptation and DRR. National coordination across ministries needs to be further strengthened and vulnerable sectors like agro-food should be prioritized. Ensure political ownership and political will first and foremost, coupled with stakeholder engagement, then policy coherence and integration can occur.

Parliamentarians have a critical role to play in providing the right policy and regulatory basis for implementation. Synergies between policy domains, e.g., DRR and climate action, can assist in defragmenting finance.

While, the Sendai Framework has expanded international and regional cooperation, and the number of national strategies has increased, implementation at the local level remains an ‘Achilles Heel.’ Urban expansion has often happened organically with little planning, creating additional risks for exposed populations. Coordination at the regional and national levels should be strengthened with greater engagement of local authorities and their networks.

As communities bear the brunt of disaster impacts when risks are left unattended, including as a result of the climate emergency, communities should be at the forefront of the decision-making process. To enhance transparency, accountability and inclusion of human rights-based approaches, all-of-society engagement and partnership is essential. At the same time, structured discussions with the private sector are essential to better understand their needs and work in collaboration to address short-termism in decision-making.

Capacity development and technology transfer play an important role in enhancing sustainability of actions. The role of youth in innovative actions should be highlighted and replicated.

In summary, while there have been some developments in normative frameworks, much greater progress is required in how we govern risk to guide public and private investment. Risk-informed decision-making is impeded by inadequate access to, and application of data and risk information, compounded by institutional and sectoral silos that impede coherence and coordination, lack of legislative and regulatory authority, and incentives for harnessing private investment. Parliaments are crucial in addressing this, as is all-of-society engagement and empowerment of local authorities.

Multistakeholder Panel Two:

De-risking investment and reconfiguring the global financial system to move from risk generation to risk reduction

The main issues addressed included the following:

The panel acknowledged that the world is confronted with a rising number of interconnected and correlated shocks that pose challenges to our financial system. The impact of these shocks on the private sector's operating environment is significant. The increasing correlation of risks necessitates different and innovative approaches to building resilience.

There is a need to integrate disaster risk accounting into financial modelling and balance sheets, requiring awareness raising among fund and asset managers. The private sector has a vital role to play in de-risking economies and investment. Some progress is observed in integrating various dimensions of risk, in addressing resilience in infrastructure investments, for example, but greater emphasis on prevention and DRR is urgently needed.

Business leaders are increasingly considering long-term risks and climate resilience in their investment prospects. However, there are gaps in applying these considerations to inform investment decisions effectively. Enhanced analysis, longer term models, and the availability of data are crucial to assessing potential impacts and empowering informed decision-making.

Panellists emphasized that as the value of information lies in its application, it is crucial that financial instruments are closely aligned with DRR strategies and plans to ensure that information translates into actionable measures.

Enhanced risk quantification is considered the foundation for the development of comprehensive risk management strategies and corresponding financing approaches. It was acknowledged that financing solutions must be tailored and chosen based on specific contexts, taking into account factors such as political will, awareness, and financial barriers that hinder access to existing finance.

Participants called for increased awareness raising, capacity building, research, and innovation to foster the creation of policy, regulatory, and technical solutions. They identified DRR strategies and plans as mechanisms to ensure that financial instruments effectively provide support and reach those most in need. Engagement with private entities was emphasized as essential to design financial instruments that incentivize and promote improved DRR practices.

Noting that while integrating risk reduction in the work of financial institutions and authorities is highlighted in the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, the Global Biodiversity Framework, one participant stated that the global financial system - which is aligned with a 3-degree Celsius temperature rise - is contributing to our failure to achieve these targets.

The dialogue highlighted the establishment of the Investment Advisory Board by UNDRR on the day prior to the HLM. This group, comprising private sector professionals from investment banking, venture capital and sovereign wealth funds, impact and infrastructure investing, insurance and actuarial domains will inform public-private partnerships, private capital, and private sector funding for the Sendai Framework.

Panellists also discussed how disaster risk finance supports DRR with a range of tools, integrating the concepts of risk layering and informed decision-making. The multifaceted nature of risk financing and the need for tailored approaches that facilitate effective DRR implementation and address local priorities was emphasized. Above all, it was noted that the insurance industry should shift its focus from reactive measures to prevention and resilience, leveraging its capabilities to drive risk-informed

decisions and practice.

In summary, investment and financing is found to be making some progress in integrating risk dimensions. However, insufficient consideration of the negative externalities of the impacts of investments where disaster risks are often discounted, exacerbates vulnerabilities, threatens financial stability, with potentially wider macroeconomic shocks. Shifting to risk prevention and reduction is crucial.

Multistakeholder Panel Three:

Strategic foresight and risk reduction to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

The main issues addressed included the following:

Panellists discussed new and emerging risks, including technological risks. While technological hazards are covered under the Sendai Framework, engagement from the DRR community in technological risk has thus far been limited.

Panellists encouraged the DRR community to apply strategic foresight in current decision-making and planning, and to incorporate and advocate for technological risk management approaches. As one panellist stated, *“with climate change we are altering our operating environment, with biotechnology we change our biology, with artificial intelligence we start changing our language. If we change all at the same time, we threaten our own existence.”*

Noting that technological development may drive the creation of risk, panellists discussed artificial intelligence (AI), which poses both opportunities for society, as well as being a present and future risk that demands greater attention from the risk management community.

Panellists also addressed the use of nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecosystem-based approaches to ensure more disaster- and risk-proof societies and ecosystems. The need for building trust in an inclusive approach was highlighted, providing relevant incentives, and focusing on monitoring, review, and verification. They further underscored the need for: involving the scientific community in decision-making; customizing local-specific solutions; raising awareness; filling data gaps; and enabling people-centred approaches through local consultation and needs-based assessments.

Panellists stressed the need to embrace long-termism and a systems improvement approach. They highlighted how strategic foresight activities have been gaining ground in multiple strategic planning and policy-making contexts at national, regional and global levels, and described how when efficiently implemented, such approaches can explore different plausible futures to identify trends, emerging issues, and pathways at different scales.

According to some panellists, strategic foresight is not considered a policy option, rather essential due diligence in an increasingly complex and changing world. Panellists noted that technical capacity and resources for future thinking is required urgently for SIDS and many other developing countries, not least in accelerating achievement of the SDGs, and that strategic foresight approaches could feature in the upcoming 4th International Conference on SIDS.

The panel discussed opportunities for the multilateral system to mitigate and prevent technological risk. This would require a specific focus and awareness of the risk posed by technology – including AI – and recognition that development often drives new risk. It implies strengthened multilateral coordination for technological risk management, with strong partnership and engagement with the

private sector and civil society, placing people at the heart of initiatives that are compatible with the human rights agenda. Inclusion is considered key, particularly bridging the global digital divide among and within countries, including supporting access to electricity and the internet for enhanced risk communication.

In moving forward, panellists suggested different activities, including to: (a) conduct future impact assessments of major policies and programs; (b) convene foresight and planning experts across the United Nations system and its multilateral partners, and (c) regularly report on megatrends and catastrophic risks – including technological / AI risk – and work to strengthen strategic foresight, preparedness for catastrophic risks, and anticipatory decision-making that values the future instead of discounting it.

In conclusion, the panel identified that the increasing frequency and scale of shocks calls for the better application of risk analytics and strategic foresight to guide future-proof development strategies, as well as sector-specific plans and associated investments by public and private sectors. Panellists underscored that the ability to plan, anticipate and better prepare for change and uncertainty – including through strategic foresight approaches – will be essential for informing effective resilience-building measures.

Multistakeholder Panel Four:

A collective responsibility – localizing DRR, restoring context

The main issues discussed were the following:

The Panel highlighted how an enhanced involvement and participation of communities, youth, women's groups, grassroots organizations and local authorities in understanding and managing disaster risk – both at the subnational and local level – is critical, given our collective responsibility.

Panellists discussed how disaster prevention measures often neglect the valuable insights, wisdom, and capabilities of communities most familiar with their context, and who are generally the first responders when risks manifest as disasters.

The Sendai Framework explicitly acknowledges that disaster risks possess unique local characteristics which necessitate localized measures to be mitigated. Effective DRR calls for the adoption of a 'whole-of-society' approach that harnesses local knowledge and capacities to develop and scale up such measures to ultimately prevent risks, minimize the impact of disasters, and foster resilience. The panel explored how contextual specificities can be systematically integrated in risk understanding and management, and how when this is not done, less informed, less inclusive, and ultimately less effective approaches to reducing disaster risk ensue. While localization has been recognized, its progress is not sufficiently monitored. Participants stressed that "we must move from political will towards political obligation to implement DRR on the ground," including earmarking necessary funds at all levels

The panel discussed the value of partnerships and leveraging expertise and knowledge from multiple stakeholders across various sectors – including the research community, the private sector and from local, traditional and Indigenous Knowledge – to enhance risk governance and accelerate DRR implementation.

The key role of communities, grassroots organizations, civil society and women's organizations in addressing DRR gaps by developing resilient community initiatives and advocating for a better understanding of disaster risk priorities at the national level was discussed. The development of a

gender action plan for the Sendai Framework was also recognized as key to empowering women's engagement and leadership in DRM, and to addressing gender equality.

Noting that one out of five people are disabled in most countries, one panellist emphasized the importance of localized approaches that consider the specific needs of people with disabilities, as powerful agents of change, to overcome barriers to inclusivity by encouraging the accessibility of readiness, response and recovery processes. Disability and inclusive DRR can work well, if the needs of disabled people are taken into account from the onset.

The importance of tackling the lack of financial and technical support allocated to community initiatives and local authorities was emphasized by panellists and participants alike. The need to invest in strengthening the capacities of such actors to ensure that DRR is no longer underfunded and underprioritized at the local level is considered crucial. Enhancing international cooperation and assistance between stakeholders to improve DRR capacities and funding of local communities and authorities was identified as a critical step forward.

In summary, exclusion of local, contextualised perspectives of inter alia women, youth, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, grassroots organisations, local authorities and communities impedes effective risk reduction. Engaging these and other members of society, including the private sector and the research community, and assuring appropriate financial and technical support, allows for better identification of risks, and improved design and implementation of effective approaches to preventing and reducing risks.

5. Closing segment

Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction thanked Member States, the UN system and all stakeholders for having contributed to the Review and the High-level Meeting, and extended her gratitude to the PGA for having convened the Meeting, and to Australia and the Republic of Indonesia for having facilitated the negotiations of the political declaration.

She reflected that the Midterm Review and the political declaration demonstrate that risk-informed sustainable development is at the centre of the global political agenda and there is global recognition of cascading impacts of disasters.

Pointing to the outcomes of the Meeting and the Review and of the need to move from managing disasters to managing and reducing disaster risk, she invited Member States and stakeholders to be bold in responding to these calls in the needed changes to risk governance frameworks, in shifts in our approaches to investing in risk management.

She highlighted the calls for Member States to assign responsibility for multi-hazard risk reduction to all ministries, institutions and sectors rather than single centralized agencies. She emphasized the calls for allocating increased domestic resources to ensure DRR is mainstreamed in public budgeting, expenditure, investment, and procurement processes. She highlighted the recommendations for reorienting international assistance from reaction to prevention, developing incentives for private investment in risk reduction and integrating DRR in the work of financial authorities, addressing market short-termism and failures.

In closing, Ms. Mizutori urged collective commitment and visionary leadership in responding to the calls of the Meeting and the political declaration across all of State institutions and all-of-society, with clear lines of accountability between vision, commitments, resources, actions and results.

H.E. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the General Assembly (PGA) drew the Meeting to a close by calling upon Member States and stakeholders to translate rhetoric into transformative action, and invoked decisive action if a pathway to a sustainable future is to be charted.

He urged understanding of the interdependencies between water, energy, food, health, trade, the financial system, and the environment, as well as the dynamic nature of risk, and encouraged the address of the realities of unsustainable consumption and risk-blind investing.

He emphasized that we possess the knowledge, the expertise, and the resources required to prevent and avert the destructive impacts of disasters, and urged Member States to move away from reactive and short-term thinking towards proactive policies that address vulnerabilities and uncertainties.

Stressing that in “failing to prepare we prepare to fail,” he proposed two ‘game-changers’, the first calling on Member States to develop permanent risk assessment and management capabilities at the highest national level by 2030, so as to harness local, traditional, and Indigenous expertise, alongside scientific knowledge, and the innovative spirit of young people, and connect local and national initiatives to global risk reduction, investing in human and institutional capacities.

The PGA also called for the establishment of a facility for de-risking the financial system, which would promote the integration of DRR into the decisions of financial institutions, allow for collaboration through lending, debt support, financing streams and grants, support policy development and capacity building on de-risking investments in all countries, while mobilizing much needed financing for DRR, and initiate reforms that ensure disaster risks are accounted for, priced, and disclosed in economic, financial and investment decisions.

He concluded that in responding to the calls of the Meeting and the political declaration, Member States and stakeholders can contribute to reconfiguring growth to account for both planetary boundaries and human well-being, as opposed to wealth concentration and risk accumulation, and in so doing propel us to a risk-informed, sustainable, equitable and inclusive future.