

Applying the Sendai Framework for a prevention-oriented and risk-informed approach to the 2030 Agenda: guiding questions for the 2022 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

It is imperative that development is risk-informed to reduce losses, enhance resilience, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The General Assembly has recognized the “urgency of implementing the Sendai Framework as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda,” and that “the interrelation of risks across multiple dimensions and scales and potential unintended negative consequences should inform development policies and investments, emphasizing that these policies should be oriented towards building resilience and achieving sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals.”¹ Incorporating disaster risk reduction in the preparation of a Voluntary National Review is an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of risk governance and management mechanisms, as well as how disaster risk reduction has been integrated across development policies and investments. It is also an opportunity to examine how disasters and disaster risk impede the attainment of sustainable development, and the steps that therefore must be taken to reduce the vulnerability and exposure of people and assets and thus protect progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

COVID-19 and the climate emergency demonstrate the systemic nature of risk and the potential for cascading social, economic, environmental, and political impacts across systems and borders, and thus the need for urgent action to reduce disaster risk. In 2019, the General Assembly recognized disaster risk reduction as one of 10 areas for urgent action in the Decade of Action in the political declaration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.² In the 2021 ministerial declaration, Member States reaffirmed their commitment. The Ministerial Declaration of the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development recognized “that the Sendai Framework, including its core provision to “build back better”, provides guidance relevant to a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and also to identify and address underlying drivers of disaster risk in a systemic manner.” It further recognized “the health aspects of the Sendai Framework and stress the need for resilient health systems.”³ Risk governance and management mechanisms and approaches for dealing with complex, interconnected multi-hazard risks, guided by the Sendai Framework, are imperative to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Recovery and rehabilitation from COVID-19 are an opportunity to ensure a prevention-oriented and risk-informed approach to the 2030 Agenda.

The importance of considering the outcomes of other major United Nations conference and summits in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was also recognized by the General Assembly in the resolutions on the format and organizational aspects of the High-level

¹ A/RES/75/216

² A/RES/74/4

³ E/HLS/2021/1

Political Forum,⁴ and the Sendai Framework invites the General Assembly to consider the review of the Sendai Framework within the High-level Political Forum.⁵ General Assembly resolutions on disaster risk reduction⁶ underscore the importance of considering disaster risk reduction, including data from the Sendai Framework Monitor, in the deliberations and outcomes of future HLPFs, and of engaging Sendai Framework focal points⁷ early in the national review processes. The Sendai Framework global targets are used to monitor the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.5, 11.5, 11.b and 13.1, of which UNDRR is the custodian agency. These shared indicators respond to the underlying principle of the 2030 Agenda to enhance coherence and simplicity and reduce the reporting burden for countries.

The General Assembly has decided to hold “a midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework in 2023 to assess progress on integrating disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels, identify good practice, gaps and challenges and accelerate the path to achieving the goal of the Sendai Framework and its seven global targets by 2030.” As an input to the midterm review of the Sendai Framework, Member States are encouraged to produce voluntary national reports of the findings of their national midterm reviews. To guide their preparation, UNDRR has compiled a list of questions. Applying these questions, as well as a disaster risk reduction lens, as an approach to the 2022 and 2023 Voluntary National Reviews can further reduce the reporting burden and enhance coherence between the 2030 Agenda and Sendai Framework. Such an approach may be effective towards the increased integration of disaster risk reduction in the 2030 Agenda, towards a future where disaster risks are prevented and reduced, and resilience enhanced.

Towards this aim, UNDRR is pleased to present the following list of questions for consideration when preparing Voluntary National Reviews, which were also circulated with the Concept Note for the Sendai Framework midterm review:

Purpose

- a) How have (development) decisions in public and private sectors, as well as civil society, been made more sustainable through implementation of the Sendai Framework?
- b) Are the root causes and underlying drivers of disaster risk better understood, and more systemically addressed across all sectors, scales and disciplines? When analysing trade-offs and co-benefits between development pathways, reflective of the interconnections across the Sustainable Development Goals, how is their impact on underlying disaster risk considered?
- c) What do governments and other stakeholders consider to have been the major achievements, challenges and barriers to implementation of the Sendai Framework, and lessons identified?

⁴ A/RES/75/290 B

⁵ A/RES/69/283

⁶ A/RES/73/231, A/RES/74/218, A/RES/75/216

⁷ The Sendai Framework focal points are the designated government focal points for disaster risk reduction and sit in the nodal ministry responsible for this portfolio.

- d) What have been the major changes to the contexts within which governments and other stakeholders have been implementing the Framework since 2015? What major changes / emerging issues / topics of concern are anticipated in the period to 2030 which will need to be considered in prioritising, accelerating and amplifying action?
- e) What adjustments are required in policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks, strategy, epistemology, organisation or investment to capitalise on opportunities or to mitigate new / emerging threats to the achievement of the expected outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework?
- f) What deliverables would bring the greatest reduction in disaster risk and the greatest increase in the resilience of people, assets and ecosystems in the remaining period of the Sendai Framework and beyond 2030?

Expected Outcome

- g) Has there been a reduction of disaster risk and the impacts of natural- and man-made hazards on persons, businesses, communities, countries and ecosystems, as a result of actions taken and approaches adopted in implementing the Sendai Framework since 2015?
- h) What is the trend for the achievement of the expected outcome of the Sendai Framework for the period to 2030?
- i) In respect of people and assets in your country, business, community or organisation, what progress has been made in: reducing exposure to hazards? Reducing their vulnerability and augmenting their capacity for risk reduction? Where relevant how have hazard, vulnerability or exposure characteristics been modified / their threat reduced (e.g. man-made hazards)?

Goal

- j) What do governments and other stakeholders consider to have been the major achievements, challenges and lessons identified in: preventing the creation of new risk? reducing the existing stock of risk? strengthening resilience?
- k) What are the prospects for the achievement of the goal of the Sendai Framework by 2030 based on progress since 2015 and expectations for the period 2023 to 2030?

Global Targets

- l) How have quantitative targets supported efforts to realise the goal and outcome of the Sendai Framework?
- m) How important has the establishment of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies and plans of action been to the realisation of the remaining targets, goal and expected outcome of the Sendai Framework? And how are national and local strategies being integrated within plans and actions supporting the realization of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement?

Application of the Guiding Principles

- n) How has national and/or regional public policy, legislation, planning and organisation changed to align with the Sendai Framework? How must it change in the period to 2030?
- o) How has the principle of shared responsibility between central and local authorities, sectors and stakeholders been applied? What enabling measures have countries taken to enable integrated management of disaster risk across institutions, sectors, the private sector and other stakeholders?
- p) What enabling measures have been implemented to integrate disaster risk reduction and management with actions addressing climate change, sustainable development, biodiversity, and other relevant domains?

Priorities for Action

- q) Since the adoption of the Sendai Framework, to what degree has understanding disaster risks, their root causes and their incorporation in public and private decision making and investment become a 'due diligence' requirement by law?
- r) What do governments and other stakeholders consider to have been the major achievements, challenges and lessons identified since 2015 in developing disaster risk governance mechanisms and approaches?
- s) Given the systemic nature of risk, and experiences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (including its cascading, indirect impacts), what adjustments are required to existing disaster risk governance and management approaches at the national and local, international and regional levels?
- t) Have increases been observed in investments in resilience since 2015, are investments by public and private sectors increasingly risk-informed, and if yes, by what measures? Are disaster risk reduction considerations and measures integrated in financial and fiscal instruments? Has there been an increase in guidance for risk-informed public and private investment?
- u) How has the resilience of business and industry sectors to disaster risk, including from natural and man-made hazards, evolved since 2015? What further actions are required through to 2030?
- v) How has preparedness for response⁸, as well as preparedness for recovery, rehabilitation and recovery, improved or deteriorated since adoption of the Sendai Framework? And how has this manifested in terms of "Build Back Better"?

Stakeholders – Integrated, inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement, action and partnership

- w) What partnerships and initiatives have proved most successful? How and why?

⁸ including through enhanced multi-hazard early warning systems

International cooperation and global partnership

- x) How has collaboration in risk reduction across mechanisms and institutions in the implementation of relevant international instruments evolved since the adoption of the Sendai Framework?
- y) How important have been regional and subregional disaster risk reduction strategies and plans in supporting national and local efforts to implement the Sendai Framework?

Member States and stakeholders may also wish to include the following additional guiding questions in consultations and dialogues.

Progress, Achievements, Gaps and Challenges

General:

- What do Governments and other stakeholders consider to have been the greatest advances to date in implementing the Sendai Framework? What are the principle reasons for progress made? For instance, what structures, policies or processes have proved the primary enablers of progress?
- What have been key barriers to implementation of the Sendai Framework?
- How could your country / city / community / business / organisation / partnership / sector have been better supported in the implementation of the Sendai Framework?
- In which areas has progress been easiest, and in what areas has it been most difficult?
- How has implementation of the Sendai Framework been supported by other international agreements, conventions or frameworks (e.g. 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Plan, SAMOA Pathway, Convention on Biological Diversity, etc.) ?

Targeted:

- To what degree has multi-hazard / all risk management been incorporated in public sector decision making and investment at all levels, as well as within and across all sectors?
- How have approaches – including integrated, multisectoral approaches, as well as those adopted through local, national and regional DRR strategies and plans – succeeded in addressing disaster risks posed by both natural and man-made hazards and related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks?
- To what degree are risk assessments systematically undertaken to assure risk-informed decision making? Do they consider trade-offs and co-benefits in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals? Are methodologies and data regularly reviewed and updated? Has there been an increase in the availability of loss data, including economic loss data?
- To what degree have approaches to pre-disaster risk assessment – for prevention and mitigation and for the development and implementation of appropriate preparedness and effective response to disasters – been developed based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment?

- To what degree are traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and communities, in addition to scientific and technological insights, participating and guiding risk assessment and risk-informed decision making and investment?
- How have genuine and durable partnerships been established? How were they developed? How are such partnerships governed? How are they funded? What are the leadership roles and partnership evaluation methods? What challenges have been experienced in implementation? In which priority areas are more partnerships required for risk-informed sustainable development to be possible?
- What have been the trends in financial resources provided to developing countries for disaster risk reduction through international cooperation since 2015? Likewise technical cooperation, capacity building and technology transfer? Including through bilateral, multilateral, north-south, south-south, and triangular cooperation.

Priorities and options for the way forward:

General:

- What priorities must be set in order to ensure the implementation of the Sendai Framework by 2030?
- What new initiatives and partnerships will become available to governments and other stakeholders going forward?
- How can development partners and the international community better support the realisation of the expected outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework?
- At a national level, how must policy planning change to facilitate implementation?
- What more needs to be done to hasten the shift from disaster management to integrated and anticipatory disaster risk management; from managing events to managing the processes which create risk?
- What are the adjustments or key measures that must be taken to ensure that disaster risk management is no longer treated as a 'sector' in itself, but is a practice applied across all sectors?

Targeted:

- What must be prioritised to ensure that responsibilities for disaster risk reduction are shared by central Governments and relevant national authorities, sectors and stakeholders so as to facilitate multistakeholder risk management and transdisciplinary, multiscale risk governance?
- What adjustment or strengthening is required to make more effective the institutional framework at international, national and local levels, including compliance mechanisms?
- What priority actions can be taken to empower local authorities and local partnerships including institutions, the private sector, civil society, academia, scientific and research institutions to strengthen risk reducing action at the subnational and local levels?
- What are the priority capacity deficits that should be prioritised for development if implementation of the Sendai Framework is to be accelerated?

- What are the key measures that must be taken to build the resilience of critical infrastructure, including health systems, food systems and financial systems?