

MEDIA STAKEHOLDER'S GROUP STATEMENT

The media has an unparalleled ability to reach broad and diverse audiences, which makes it a crucial player in promoting disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies, disseminating early warning messages and advancing national sustainable development agendas. Media organizations should be viewed as trusted partners for developing and implementing DRR policies at national, regional and local levels, thus making optimal use of their immense potential not only to communicate information but also to influence behaviour.

Since the launch of the Sendai Framework, SDG and Paris Climate Agreement, media organizations worldwide have embraced their duty of providing audiences (including vulnerable groups, who are often women, children, young people, the elderly, persons with disabilities and indigenous populations) with timely, accurate and easy-to-understand information before, during and after disasters. The media has also recognized the need to move from a reactive to a proactive mindset. This entails shifting from crisis reporting to, for example, climate change adaptation and disaster prevention, or from counting bodies and financial losses to educating communities and individuals about how to protect their lives and livelihoods.

Media organizations also realize that they lack the knowledge, expertise and skills to fulfil this duty. These 'messengers' must themselves be trained in translating the complex issues of climate change effects, mitigation and adaptation, and disaster prevention into captivating stories that inform, educate and inspire general populations. The Media Stakeholders Group strongly recommends establishing a cross-agency fund to build media capacity in the areas of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Such support is necessary for bridging the knowledge and skills gap in many radio, TV, print and online news media organizations worldwide. In some least developed countries, resources are needed to provide DRR journalists with essential equipment and to upgrade their skills so that they can function as independent, mobile journalists.

Following a day of meaningful and collegial dialogue with high-level representatives of UNDRR, WMO and ITU in Geneva, all participating media organizations now commit to implementing the following actions to achieve targets (D) and (G) of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction:

Target (D)

- Lobby national government DRR agencies to include media representatives in developing and implementing national DRR strategies and plans at national, regional and local levels
- Ensure that the physical infrastructure of radio, television, print and online media outlets is resilient and fully integrated into early warning disaster communication systems and plans at national and community levels
- Develop and implement a certification system for media organizations' standard operating procedures for emergency situations, ensuring that they are ready to fulfil their duties when disaster strikes
- Create a UNDRR Media Advisory Group (MAG) to provide UNDRR with professional advice on how to communicate global, regional and national disaster risk reduction and preparedness efforts more effectively to the general public
- Enhance coordination between national media organizations and specialized UN agencies dealing with crucial DRR information (WMO for weather forecasts and early warnings; ITU for emergency communication; various UNESCO sectors dealing with tsunamis, education and communication)
- Ensure that the radiocommunications spectrum is preserved to serve the public interest before, during and after disasters
- Create a repository of information and capacity-building resources containing all the relevant documents and handbooks produced by institutions active in DRR, to share among the various constituencies
- Include modules on communication for disaster prevention in the curriculum of mass communication and journalism schools

Target (G)

- Adopt a holistic approach in which governments, civil society, research institutions, international agencies and other parties develop partnerships with broadcasting organizations to ensure that scientifically sound concepts are conveyed through easy-to-understand and persuasive messages, prompting at-risk populations to take appropriate action
- Take adequate action to mainstream DRR in all content and, where possible, assist broadcasters in establishing specialized environmental units within their organizations and producing regular radio/TV programmes to inform and educate audiences about climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and sustainable development
- Develop content formats providing the most vulnerable citizens in our societies — often women, children, people with disabilities, the elderly, farmers, fishers and others in rural areas, and those with low socioeconomic status — with timely, relevant and easy-to-understand news, information and other programming tailored to their specific media habits. This will help them adapt to the effects of climate change as it relates to their food security and livelihoods and provide a platform for voicing their stories and concerns
- Develop a copyright-free global catalogue/repository of audio and video materials related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, produced by UN agencies, NGOs and public broadcasters
- Set up a global online platform for collecting and promoting good journalistic practices and tools to help journalists keep their DRR-related knowledge and skills up to date
- Update the UNDRR guidelines for journalists, entitled “Disaster through a different lens: Behind every effect, there is a cause”, with the latest findings

Supported by organizations present or represented at the GP2019

World Broadcasting Unions – ABU, AUB, EBU, ASBU, NABA, AIB/AIR

World Association of Newspapers – WAN-IFRA

World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters - AMARC

Disaster Risk Reduction Network of Africa Journalists - DIRAJ