

NGO statement at GPDRR 2019

17 May 2019

In this statement, we would like to define what makes for a “*REAL*” resilience dividend, one that is based on *rights*, that *empowers* communities, that makes everyone *accountable* to one another, and *leaves no one behind*.

Four years have passed since the adoption of milestone agreements in 2015, paving the way towards a more resilient and inclusive future. Progress has been made since then by the international community: we see communities being more engaged in policy processes including an increasing focus on gender equality, and we see commitments to strengthen links between resilience building activities, sustainable development and climate change adaptation, and a recognition that today’s challenges cannot be addressed in a siloed approach. Although focused on preparedness and response, recent talks of new modalities of funding (e.g. forecast-based financing) make us hopeful that disaster risk reduction (DRR) investments will extend their focus on prevention and risk mitigation.

Much more needs to be done to meet the targets articulated in the international frameworks endorsed in 2015.

Disasters are still occurring with increasing frequency and intensity around the world, and past disasters are still impacting populations where recovery and reconstruction is left unfinished. Now more than ever, it is clear that current structures and human actions are significant contributing factors to the impact of disasters. Limited disaster risk governance presents a major barrier to ensuring people’s right to safety; weak governance, corruption, uncontrolled demographic growth, and unplanned urbanisation and development, all play a role in putting individuals, communities and their assets at risk, coupled with global issues of climate change, environmental degradation and uninformed economic globalisation. Moreover, poverty is often the underlying factor that multiplies the impact of disasters.

Despite increasing efforts, international frameworks are still approached in silos, and human and financial resources are not effectively channeled to integrated action at local level or coherent policy implementation at national level. In particular, this is evident in contexts where issues of violence, conflict and fragility are not acknowledged in sub-national DRR strategies. This is in part due to lack of capacities to collaborate, and challenges faced by all actors to adapt their roles. It is also contributed to by the top-down approach to the design of policies and programmes, rather than first developing an understanding of the lived experiences of those most at-risk.

We welcome the theme of this year’s Global Platform (*Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies*) and we appreciate the focus on inclusive societies;

however, we stress the need to highlight that a dividend that resonates with us is an equitable one that focuses on people and planet.

Resilience building policies and activities are at risk of being ineffective. It's not too late to strengthen our ways of working. Mindful of the outcomes of the 2018 regional consultations, we would like to highlight the following issues, essential for sustainable and inclusive societies to thrive.

Local level engagement in all phases of DRR policy-making and implementation is a fundamental priority. Leveraging indigenous knowledge and local leadership, ensuring financial resources and technical know-how are accessible at local level and ultimately ensuring local communities as partners in inclusive policy making. All of society must work together locally to address these challenges. More efforts should be made to strengthen local actors' capacities to contribute to reduction of disaster risks.

- We call on government, the private sector and development partners to open spaces for policy dialogue that are inclusive, respect the rights of free speech and assembly of all community groups, and are transparent, for greater all-of-society collaboration.
- We want to see community engagement at all stages of the policy making process, especially in societies where trust between government and communities may be weakened by violence or conflict.
- We call on governments to strengthen the role of local authorities in developing resilience policies and allocating budget for DRR actions, as the main institutional connection between a community and its government structures.
- We commit to strengthen community engagement by always working *with* communities, and not only *for* them, and to reinforce the connection between the local, national and international level: we will support communities to act as their own agent of change. We have existing tools and lessons to share to implement this approach.
- We continue to highlight the need to enhance meaningful participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in local DRR action, with a recognition of the barriers and the key roles these group have in community-led DRR, and of the role of education and knowledge management in building the next generation of resilience champions.
- We call on governments to respect the rights of free speech and assembly by people and their local representatives including civil society organizations.

Inclusive DRR strategies should leave no one behind by promoting meaningful engagement of all. All community groups, especially those most at risk, should contribute to designing DRR actions at every level. This would ensure better understanding of what makes for community resilience at local level, taking into account the value of different livelihoods, including livestock husbandry, acknowledging communities' right to safety, considering holistic means of resilience such as social protection and mental health. Partnerships and platforms for collaboration with science, academia, private sector and local faith communities are key to achieve effective DRR

strategies and build resilience at community level. Gender-transformative and disability-sensitive approaches should be considered when designing DRR actions.

- We want to see a growth in effective partnerships among all stakeholders at all levels, where communities have an equal seat at the table and can take a role in policy-making for resilience.
- We call on governments to support decentralisation of responsibilities for DRR and development, and encourage the creation of local multi-stakeholder platforms for risk-informed development policies and actions.
- We call on United Nations agencies to support monitoring of inclusion of non-state actors in implementation of international frameworks by national and local governments.
- We want to highlight the unique knowledge, expertise and needs of various societal groups, with the hope that these are valued and duly considered in decision making processes that promote intersectional approaches to resilience building. We will create networks to facilitate this
- We commit to strengthening our accountability to the communities we serve, and put in place mechanisms to support governments to best respond to the needs of their citizens.

Localised and disaggregated data provide a truthful picture of the local realities: people have different identities, needs and capacities that change over time. Policy-making should be based on local evidence that is generated in collaboration with local actors and supported as much as possible by technical data. This is particularly important in risk assessment exercises. M&E processes should be made participatory and information about policy implementation should be made available and transparent. Local data should be high quality, uniform, freely accessible to all, and ensure the highest degree of disaggregation.

- We ask governments to ease requirements for CSOs to conduct data collection exercises at community level, and making data more accessible.
- We emphasise the particular the need for disaggregated data at all scales which accounts for gender, age, disabilities, and call for urgent action to fill this gap.
- We call on all development actors to integrate local evidence in decision-making and investment processes, to ensure that the real needs of people at risk are addressed. In particular, we want to see integration, interoperability, and standardization of all types of data in local and national early warning systems.
- We encourage the creation of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes that strengthen accountability of all actors at local and national level.
- We highlight the need to make use of all technology available for the collection of quality and uniform disaggregated data at all levels, but we also recognise that low tech solutions should be considered when necessary to ensure community ownership.
- We commit to continue collecting disaggregated local data, ensuring high quality and uniformity: we will strengthen peer review and data triangulation mechanisms to produce accurate information to support inclusive policy-making.
- We commit to harmonising our data collection processes to support long-term national and international policy processes.

- We commit to strengthen partnerships with science and technology groups, to foster research on communities' realities and to bridge the gaps in language and terminology between S&T and communities.

Coherence and integration should be the standard way to approach **DRR investments**, not the "novelty", to ensure that we effectively break down the silos. Investments in DRR should be driven by needs of those at risk, rather than be interests of financing institutions, and should be decentralised to better reach those most at risk. Once again, societal inclusion and participation should be at the basis of a more effective economic model for building local resilience.

- We strongly encourage all investment actors from the public and private sector to continue channeling financial and technical resources directly to the local level, by easing requirements for communities to access and report on funding.
- We highlight the critical value of skill-building initiatives that support communities' capacities to meet the standards required to access national and international funding.
- We call on donor agencies, national governments and partners to embrace this fundamental shift, and support it by allocating 20% of their aid budget for local resilience and coherent risk reduction actions.
- We reiterate the importance of all investments to be needs-driven and informed by long-term risk trends, to ensure resources are spent for effective actions that build resilience for all.
- We call on donors and governments to invest in medium and long-term programmes for meaningful and sustainable change at the local level, in a spirit of international cooperation that supports countries that suffer the greatest impacts from disasters.
- We commit to partner with all of society in an open and collaborative spirit, to overcome competition over funding allocation and build synergies for effective use of the limited resources currently available.

State and non-state development actors need to be held accountable for their actions, and mechanisms for ensuring accountability should be in place at all levels. Accountability mechanisms should contribute to a **risk-informed approach to development** that supports the fundamental transformation needed to address the challenges posed by climate change. A coherent approach to resilience should take into account issues of conflict sensitivity, environmental protection, resilient agriculture, shelter and settlements, water management, as well as cultural and natural heritage. South-south cooperation should be encouraged in development, as well as innovation for low-cost and scalable solutions to strengthening community resilience. Special attention should be given to resilience efforts of communities and CSOs in conflict and fragile states, as well as post-conflict and reconciliation situations.

- We call on all society, including private sector, to work together in strengthening accountability mechanisms for risk-informed development, that support a coherent approach to implementing and reporting on progress for international frameworks at local level.

- We encourage south-south cooperation mechanisms to leverage lessons learned and best practices in building resilience in a coherent manner.
- We call on resilience building actors to ensure continuity of systems and critical services which promote people's wellbeing, protection and security (particularly for women and children) before, during and after disasters.
- We reiterate the need for a bottom-up approach to risk-informed development actions, as communities are the primary custodians of local risk knowledge and DRR solutions.
- We will continue working hard to build trust between civil society and governments at all levels, to strengthen exchange of knowledge and all-of-society collaboration in building resilience.
- We commit to building collaborative capacities of all actors at local, national and international level, in recognition that only through collaboration can we achieve inclusive and sustainable societies.

We should not forget that resilience is a moving target, driven by higher-scale dynamics of climate change, environmental degradation, unsustainable development and urbanisation trends, as well as conflict and political instability: addressing resilience tomorrow will differ to how we address it today, and only those experiencing risks on the ground will be able to guide our actions.

We should recognise that the challenges of building resilience today will increase in the future if effective action is not taken now. Now is the time to act.

Together, we can achieve the REAL resilience dividend.

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