



Issues Briefs Template

Event title	Cities at the Forefront of achieving Inclusive Climate and Disaster Resilience
Rationale	<p><i>~500 words</i></p> <p><i>Why is this topic important and worth a Working/Special Session or High-Level Dialogue?</i></p> <p>Urbanization has been, and will continue to be, the defining trend of our time. Projections estimate that 70% of the global population will be urban by 2050. Around 90% of this urbanization will happen in Africa and Asia. In addition to recurring natural hazards, climate change is bringing a lengthy list of new and magnified challenges to dense urban areas: extreme weather events, environmental degradation and pollution, increased flooding, sea-level rise, drought, climate and conflict refugees, and resource shortages, to name a few. Therefore, the task for cities is to address today’s issues without further exacerbating tomorrow’s challenges.</p> <p>A vicious circle can be found nowadays: Urban sprawl coupled with development that is not risk-informed, poor governance and lack of coping capacity are catalysts to increasing vulnerability and expose urban dwellers to higher risks. Disasters are escalating with rising human and economic costs and it is estimated that disasters cause annual losses of USD 341 billion in the built environment alone. In addition, disasters in urban contexts have a proven capacity to develop in cascade with environmental and health issues that rapidly rise after the disasters, requiring thus additional response capacities and accelerated need for ex-ante risk management.</p>

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 stresses the responsibility of nations to prevent and reduce disaster risk. It also emphasizes the necessity to “empower local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk, including through resources, incentives and decision-making responsibilities, as disaster risks have local and specific characteristics that must be understood for the determination of measures to reduce disaster risk.” The role of local governments in addressing disaster risk has been increasingly acknowledged as they hold the responsibility to ensure resilience to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of their inhabitants as well as to promote sustainable development in their territories.

Disaster and climate change preparedness is essentially a local task. Thus, it is critical that local governments and other local stakeholders take the shared responsibility in reducing risk and building resilience. It must be done in a collaborative way that fully includes all members of the society and must include also measures that ensure that communities live in a respectful balance with the environment that supports their many critical services. Undisputedly, an integrated approach to resilience can create multiple co-benefits towards sustainability and the well-being of urban populations which in this way contributes not only to the Sendai Framework but also the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda. To achieve this, it requires the local ownership, political commitment, human and financial capacities, foresight and risk planning, policy integration, and inclusion of all stakeholders and different groups within urban populations. However, how ready are cities to implement such comprehensive approach in reality?

In past decades, an increasing number of initiatives at the international and regional level have been providing support to cities in different forms, from advocating on resilience, developing various useful tools for local diagnosis and planning, strengthening capacities of local officials on risk management and post-disaster response, to extending technical assistance, and providing funding support for implementation, and others. Such support has significantly made a difference in hundreds, if not thousands, of cities globally. Despite this, the number seems very small considering that there may be more than 250,000 local authorities around the world. Even the support has been on the rise, it is still largely insufficient. It is therefore critical to seek ways to ensure that cities are putting resilience on their agenda and it must happen in a much more accelerated way.

State of Play and Opportunities

~ 500 words.

What are the main challenges? What gaps need to be filled?

Building upon the outcomes of past global and regional platforms for disaster risk reduction and learning from the experience of cities and local authorities, there are four prominent challenge areas that shall be addressed to help accelerate the local progress for building inclusive climate and disaster resilience:

1) Inclusion and engagement of multi-stakeholders

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation require all-of-society engagement and partnership and must include all stakeholders of the cities. The local authorities must take the lead with engagement of different sectors, academia, private entities, civil society organizations, community representatives and must include vulnerable population, namely youth, children, women, people with disabilities, migrants, and elderly. This is the best approach not only because the locals, whether long-time residents or recent settlers, know about their cities the best, but they must also take shared responsibility to prevent and reduce the risks as much as they can within their own capacities.

Many cities that have advanced in resilience building such as *Greater Manchester (United Kingdom)*, *Amadora (Portugal)* demonstrated that the inclusion and engagement of multi-stakeholders in the resilience assessment process has helped them to initiate and retain the conversations with different stakeholders, improving awareness of resilience issues, strengthening wider understanding of how risks are linked with development issues, and increasing cooperation in the implementation of resilience. Additional, *Province of Potenza (Italy)*, under the #WeResilient campaign provides a 'state of play and opportunities' for local government to engage with local communities and indigenous group for resilience implementation and building trans-national partnership and networks with cities, stakeholders and major groups for a comprehensive sustainable territorial development.

2) Vertical coordination between national and local government

The role of local governments is highlighted to improve governance and promote sustainable and resilient cities. However, not all local governments are equipped with the necessary knowledge and capacities. Based on a study of 151 local governments globally by UNISDR in 2017, it was reported that, on average, 88% of local governments are 'fully or partially' responsible for undertaking risk analysis within their administrative

boundaries, while only 28% report having ‘full’ technical capacity to undertake disaster risk reduction actions and 25% reports ‘not having’ adequate and capable technical capacity¹. The national government plays a vital role to lead, provide guidance, and systematically connect local governments and encourage them to learn from each other.

While the linkage and coordination between administrations and spheres of government remains a challenge, many national governments have demonstrated a good practice in working closely with local governments in resilience building. For example, *National Emergency Management Agency of Mongolia (NEMA)* provides a series of capacity building programmes to local governments in the development and planning for DRR strategy implementation. Additionally, the *National Agency for Disaster Management of Indonesia (BNPB)* has made disaster risk reduction a national agenda and developed a mechanism for local authorities to include disaster risk reduction lens in the local development plan to secure annual development budget.

3) Financing for Resilience

Financing for resilience remains one of the most prominent challenges to realize local climate and disaster resilience. The State of the City Climate Finance report 2015² reveals that the current financing landscape does not provide cities with adequate access to affordable financing suit for climate resilient infrastructure and many cities face obstacles to access capital. Additionally, in 2018, UNISDR conducted an analysis of the Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities³ and found that the 169 local governments that participated in the study reflected ‘financial capacity for resilience’ as the area that needs the most improvement.

Local governments have limited knowledge of how to access and attract resilience investments. Their capacities must be strengthened to increase access to different sources of funding, both within the city and from outside, such as from the annual budgeting (if climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction lens are embedded in the local and sectoral development plans), from private sectors and investors, as well as financial institutions (if they are engaged and sensitized on the issue of resilience), etc.

¹<https://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/home/toolkitblkitem/?id=27>

²<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2201CCFLA-State-of-City-Climate-Finance-2015.pdf>

³<https://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/home/toolkitblkitem/?id=4>

	<p>4) Coherence between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development</p> <p>Local governments have the roles and responsibilities to collaborate with different stakeholders and government bodies to ensure social well-being and protect lives and society. They are responsible for reducing disaster risks, while also needing to take proactive actions towards climate resilience and sound ecosystem management to make sure local development is sustainable. This provides an opportunity to break the silos and bring all global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG11 Resilient Cities and Communities), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda, together. Disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and ecosystem management and restoration ultimately contribute to sustainable urban development. A mechanism and process to support cities with a holistic approach to creating policy coherence is needed, as many resilience building programs and projects due to their holistic and transformative nature go beyond administrative boundaries both geographically and organizationally. Resilience building in a multi-sectorial setting with many stakeholders at landscape scale requires a policy framework that enables and does not limit it.</p>
<p>Way Forward</p>	<p><i>~ 500 words.</i></p> <p><i>What innovative approaches should be considered?</i></p> <p>As the role of cities and local governments is acknowledged on the road to building inclusive climate and disaster resilient cities but there are still many remaining challenges faced by cities and local governments, there is strong the need to build a strategic dialogue and promote integrated solutions.</p> <p>The successful implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda will greatly depend on the engagement of cities and communities. Investing in risk reduction and resilience building will safeguard sustainable development and economic continuity of urban communities, and also lead to a greater trust by public and private investors.</p> <p>Collaboration within and between governments is key as well as active engagement from different stakeholders, local and regional leaders and international (development) institutions. While we must leverage the knowledge and capabilities of international and regional institutions, a great</p>

deal can be learned from the experience of national and local governments that have succeeded in institutionalizing resilience in their agenda.

To move forward, the working session “Cities at the Forefront of achieving Inclusive Climate and Disaster Resilience” will discuss existing good practices from experienced cities as well as current challenges in the implementation at different scales. The session shall identify priority needs and ways in which the global community can step up actions towards enhanced resilience in the following areas:

1. The direct involvement and active engagement of local governments and local stakeholders in strengthening awareness, creating policy commitments, and building local ownership to implement disaster risk reduction and climate resilience with multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participation applying a whole of society approach.
2. Vertical cooperation among government agencies especially the national government mechanism, as well as an enabling policy and legal frameworks to support and coordinate local climate and disaster resilience building.
3. The integration of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and ecosystem management restoration strategies in local and sectoral development plans, policies and budgets; with clear roles and responsibilities within the local government and seeking linkages among other government levels and spheres.
4. The identification of existing traditional national and international funding as well as the development of alternative funding sources to build inclusive and disaster resilient cities, including the regular local development and sectoral budgeting, insurance opportunities, financial and tax incentives to encourage private sector and other stakeholders to invest in disaster risk reduction, including payment for environmental services (PES) and Water Funds.