



Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

22-26 May 2017 - Cancun, Mexico

Leaders' Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Cancun High-Level Communiqué – 24 May 2017

Ensuring the resilience of infrastructure and housing

1. A Leaders' Forum was held on Wednesday 24 May 2017 in Cancun, Mexico, at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction chaired by H.E. Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, the President of Mexico with the participation of H.E. Mr. Jovenel Moïse, the President of Haiti, H.E. Mr. Taneti Maamau, the President of Kiribati, H.M. King Mswati III, Head of State of Swaziland, H.E. Mr. Robert Mugabe, the President Zimbabwe, H.E. Mr. Mattlan Zackhras, Minister in-Assistance to the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, H.E. Mr. Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia, H.E. Ms. Inonge Wina, the Vice President of Zambia, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Vice-President for Sustainable Development of the World Bank, executives of intergovernmental organizations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, parliamentarians, local government representatives, business and civil society executives and other stakeholders to determine and commit to practical measures for the reduction of economic losses to disasters and the resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets and livelihoods with a focus on infrastructure and housing.

The Challenge

2. We, the participants in the Leaders' Forum, recognize that globally, direct economic losses attributed to disasters are increasing significantly, having over the last decade reached close to US\$1.4 trillion. Indirect economic losses magnify the figure further. Losses to countries' capital stock, including housing, infrastructure, productive assets and livelihoods, and impacts on health and education have had major fiscal implications, hindering economic growth and development.
3. We note that global models suggest that the risk of economic losses is rising as a result of the rapidly increasing number and the value of the

assets that are exposed to hazards, inadequate maintenance and a globalized economy. In some regions the risk of losing capital stock in disasters may be growing at a faster rate than the capital being produced.

4. We understand that climate change affects the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards and presents greater challenges in disaster risk reduction and building resilience. We are aware that disaster, and particularly small-scale, slow-onset and recurring disasters, severely damage infrastructure, housing, work places, livelihoods, ecosystems and economic production which are key pillars of growth and development. The loss becomes itself a driver of further vulnerability and exposure, and thus of disaster risk, weakens resilience and increases the likelihood of disaster displacement. We further recognize the low penetration of risk transfer mechanisms, in particular for the poor.
5. We further identify the close nexus between climate change and water-related disasters which account for almost 90% of the 1,000 most disastrous events since 1990. Therefore, we acknowledge that Integrated Water Resources Management is an effective way to strengthen resilience for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change, and we invite other leaders and all stakeholders to join in this approach.
6. We recognize that the poor suffer disproportionately from natural and man-made hazards as poverty significantly undermines people's socio-economic resilience to disasters, and disasters further erode livelihood and wellbeing and deplete resilience, thus exacerbating poverty and non-economic losses. Moreover, low-income households affected by disasters have a cut on food intake, health care and education expenditures, threatening their prospect of escaping poverty and amplifying the transmission of poverty from parents to children.
7. Globally, about one in seven people live in overcrowded, low-quality housing. Low-income households are particularly at risk as they usually live in hazard-exposed areas with low land value, deficient or non-existent infrastructure and services, low-quality and fragile dwellings and within degraded environments.
8. We note that the public and private sectors are interdependent when it comes to the development, functioning, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure. Together they can reduce disaster risk and losses by ensuring that investment practices and regulatory frameworks are risk-informed, jointly planned, data are exchanged and an enabling environment is build.

9. Over the next 40 years, more investment in infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, urban road construction, water and sanitation, energy and transport systems, and housing will be required than ever before. Some 60 per cent of the area expected to be urbanized by 2030 remains to be built and trillions of US Dollars are expected to be invested in new infrastructure annually. Meeting the needs of a global population that will reach nine billion by 2050, achieving the SDGs by 2030 and responding to the adverse effects of climate change will require considerable investments in resilient infrastructure, including green infrastructure and housing. While the cost of retrofitting infrastructure and building is often high, making new investment resilient is not and pays off over the long term.
10. We recognize that reducing losses attributed to disasters has short, medium and long-term benefits and is essential to achieving economic and social development and environmental sustainability. Investing in disaster-resilient infrastructure, including disaster-reducing infrastructure, and adequate and safe housing as well as strengthening normative and regulatory frameworks, early warning and anticipatory forecast-based actions are an effective way to do so. Moreover, risk transfer mechanisms can help set the incentives for risk-informed investment.
11. We emphasize the urgency to take immediate actions to reverse the current trends of water scarcity, floods, degradation of sewer systems and sanitation, and water-related disasters. We reiterate our commitment to include water considerations in all of the development discussions at the global arena.
12. We underscore the societal need, and recognize the business opportunity, for increasing partnerships between public and private sectors and civil society in the development, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure and urban development, including housing, to reduce disaster risk.
13. We recognize the need to continue investing in education and awareness to maximize the opportunity at hand.

The Commitments

14. In the context of overall development investments, including Building Back Better following disasters and “building better from the start”, We resolve to work together and call upon all actors to:
 - a) Implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, in coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant instruments;

- b) Conduct a disaster risk assessment of existing critical infrastructure by 2019;
- c) Invest in collection of data and information on disaster risk and losses, taking into account the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and addressing intensive and extensive risk, underlying risk drivers, and ensuring that they are tailored to local contexts;
- d) Strengthen, as appropriate, normative and regulatory frameworks at all levels for disaster risk reduction, improved land use, building codes, enforcement and accountability as well as make resilience affordable, reduce the economic incentive for vulnerable development, foster private and public partnerships, allocate budget for disaster risk reduction and make resilient investment gainful;
- e) Make disaster risk assessments a prerequisite for infrastructure and housing investments, with time horizons commensurate to the life cycles of infrastructure and housing;
- f) Consider the risk of loss in infrastructure and housing and its consequences in the development of economic strategies and budgets;
- g) Pursue the development and expansion of risk transfer mechanisms, including social safety net schemes to protect the population, natural assets, livelihoods and infrastructure, enhance their penetration and coverage, especially for the poor and low-income groups, and strengthen community resilience;
- h) Promote people-centered, gender-sensitive, accessible and resilient urban development that supports all of society, including the vulnerable, poor and marginalized;
- i) Encourage and support the development of multi-stakeholder and socially-inclusive partnership initiatives for the development of resilient infrastructure and housing;
- j) Strengthen international cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to manage disaster risk in accordance with the Sendai Framework.
- k) And to take stock on progress at the next Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which will take place in Switzerland in 2019.