



Background Document

Promoting Land Use and Spatial Planning for Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Why is this topic important?

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 in its preamble highlights the urgent and critical need “to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk in order to more effectively protect persons, communities and countries, their livelihoods, health, cultural heritage, socioeconomic assets and ecosystems, and thus strengthen their resilience” (paragraph 5). Furthermore the Framework stresses the need to reduce exposure and vulnerability while preventing the creation of new disaster risks by focusing on tackling underlying disaster risk drivers which includes unplanned and rapid urbanization as well as poor land management and considering as well the lack of regulation and incentives for private disaster risk reduction investment and limited availability of technology and the need to continue strengthening good governance in disaster risk reduction strategies at the national, regional and global levels (paragraph 6).

2. What gaps need to be filled?

Current gaps and challenges that are preventing the incorporation of land use plans and policies to support DRR include:

(1) Poor community ‘buy-in’ (caused in part by short lived community memory of disasters and related losses and damages) and low-level government-community engagement to demand development and adoption of land use plans and policies for DRR. From national planning/development actors, open-up communication as well as increase authority for local level planning and development. From local level planning/development actors, increase communication and collaboration with stakeholders including most vulnerable people to facilitate implementation of risk-informed planning

(2) The need to ensure that planners and other professionals working in urban and regional planning, development and management have knowledge of disaster risk reduction including specific knowledge of which types of planning and land use actions can contribute to reduce risks and increase urban and rural resilience. This extends to the need to ensure working with professional associations and planning schools to provide more and better courses and continuing-education/training opportunities for existing and future planners in the area of DRR. From professional

associations/academia and research: develop continuing education platforms to planners and increase risk-related classes in professional education. Research and academia should develop good-practices to be shared with planning and development actors/institutions

(3) The limited access to data, information, and knowledge needed to guide and support the development of land use plans and policies at the local level. Required data sets cut across administrative boundaries, sectors, and spatial and temporal resolutions and should include information about past events and performance, current trends, and future scenarios taking into consideration climate change, regional and economic development and urban growth. In particular there is a specific need to leverage on the increasing availability of aerial and space-based information, including defining pathways that will ensure that the data will be continuously collected, shared, and updated as part of regular urban planning and management process. As success stories have already demonstrated there is also a need to consider the need to leverage on traditional and indigenous knowledge as well as on local capacities.

(4) Build capacity at the local level to ensure the development and the enforcement of application of land use plans and policies that support sound DRR local strategies. Provide capacity to local level as needed. There is also a need of coordination between different territorial levels regarding plans and organizational-institutional functions.

(5) Close involvement and commitment of the Scientific and Technical community in supporting local governments, as well as the need to involve civil society and the private sector in the development and monitoring of effective land use plans and policies.

3. What commitments or actions are expected from the session?

The session will present good practices that address the challenges surrounding the incorporation of risk reduction in existing land-use planning and management practices at the local level, and also put forward practical recommendations on how to ensure that local governments have access to the information, tools and capacities necessary to develop and implement risk-sensitive land-use planning.

More specifically the session will focus on the need for:

(1) commitment of national governments to ensure inclusion of provisions on land use planning in the national DRR strategy and providing necessary support to local governments;

(2) commitment of local governments to develop, incorporate and enforce land use plans and policies to support Target E

(3) building technical capacity at the local level including ensuring access to relevant knowledge services and products and training courses (including capacity building specific for urban and regional planners), and also the establishment and strengthening of partnerships of the local government with the scientific and technical community and the private sector;

(4) building capacities among planners and decision makers regarding inclusion of DRR to land use planning and policies;

(5) access to required available data (with consideration also for Big Data, Imagery, Drones) information and knowledge, including hazard maps, topographic references, geospatial data on infrastructure/social services, land use, etc, and;

(6) communicating widely the need for land use plans and policies to support DRR strategies.

4. What factors contributed to the success, how can successes be brought to scale or accelerated?

The sharp increase in the number of disasters and their impacts are the result of increasing exposure due to population dynamics, poorly planned urban areas and increased vulnerability due to inadequate economic development models. Furthermore, increased intensity of climate hazards coupled with rapid urbanization are likely to lead to increasing the strain on the capacity of local governments as they try to address the vulnerabilities of the urban population, particularly the urban poor. All the aforementioned challenges lead to the need of adjustments in the urban planning paradigm. Incorporating the need to reduce risks (including future risks) at the very early stages of planning can mitigate socioeconomic and environmental impacts. In addition, institutional fragmentation and organizational deficiencies often constrain the comprehensive response to natural and climate related disasters.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is reflected in the '**New Urban Agenda**' which was adopted at the recent United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development wherein its 'commits to strengthen the resilience of cities and human settlements, including through the development of quality infrastructure and spatial planning by adopting and implementing integrated, age- and gender-responsive policies and plans and ecosystem-based approaches in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Section 77)'. The New Urban Agenda recognizes the unprecedented threats from natural and human-made disasters exacerbated through climate change and underscores the importance of having vulnerability and impact assessments to inform plans, policies and programmes that builds urban resilience.

The starting point for ensuring success in the development, implementation and consolidation of effective land use plans and policies that effectively support disaster risk management is the understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability,

capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment, as put forward for Priority 1 (paragraph 23). In particular, in order to ensure success there is a need to:

- (1) ensure access to data and information relevant to land use planning;
- (2) disseminate location-based disaster risk information, including risk maps, to decision makers, the general public and communities at risk of exposure to disasters;
- (3) promote real time access to land use related information, making use of aerial and space-based and in situ information, including geographic information systems (GIS), and leveraging on the use information and communications technology innovations to enhance the dissemination and land use data and information;
- (4) build the knowledge of the importance of land use plans and policies that support DRR with government officials, civil society, communities and volunteers, as well as the private sector, and;
- (5) strengthen and involve technical and scientific capacity to consolidate existing knowledge to support the development of sound land use plans and policies at the national and local levels.