

Official Statement for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019 by the Overseas Development Institute

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The Overseas Development Institute would like to thank the Government of Switzerland for hosting the 6th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. We would also like to thank the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for convening this important stocktake of progress against the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 ('Sendai Framework').

This is the last global conference before the deadline for achieving Target E of the Sendai Framework. Achieving Target E will undoubtedly be a success, but we must aim beyond having DRR strategies in place by 2020: we must ensure that these strategies are ambitious, robust and implementable.

Evidence generated by ODI shows that this is achievable if governments: put in place comprehensive and reliable policy and risk financing instruments; promote inclusive and equitable policies and programmes to build resilience; and champion the need for special financial, technical and operational support to achieve DRR outcomes in contexts of violence, conflict and fragility.

First, governments need to do more to incentivise public and private investment in DRR. As a start, they need to establish 'risk ownership': DRR strategies will be ineffective unless governments, businesses, international agencies and civil society agree on the key disaster risks or contingent liabilities, who will be responsible for addressing them and how this will be paid for. DRR investments can generate multiple benefits, and calculating these 'resilience dividends' will drive more robust investment decisions.

By deploying existing financial policies, laws and regulations, fiscal levers and public finance, governments can shift financing away from risk-generating sectors and locations, and towards investments to reduce risk. Strong public policy instruments and financing are needed to help implement the ambitions of national DRR strategies.

Second, governments must do more to promote policies and programmes that build resilience for all. People's experiences of natural hazards, climate change and climate variability are dependent on their social, economic, cultural, political and environmental context. There is a need to understand how different factors or identities interact, such as gender, age, disability and ethnicity, to create exclusion, inequalities and vulnerabilities, to ensure that policies and programmes respond to the local context. Governments and agencies must develop effective intersectional approaches to vulnerability reduction and resilience-building. They can start by ensuring systematic collection of data, disaggregated by sex, age, economic status, ethnicity, caste and disability as a minimum, to identify the needs of marginalised groups and devise locally appropriate solutions.

Governments must invest in long-term integrated programmes that consider the full disaster management cycle and ensuring that systems and services such as education, water, sanitation and hygiene, health and employment opportunities continue despite shocks and stresses. They should also encourage coordination between national, sub-national and local levels, and between different sectors and organisations to scale up action on disaster risk management.

Third, evidence collated by the Overseas Development Institute reveals the heightened vulnerabilities and disproportionate impacts of disasters in contexts affected by violence, conflict and fragility. Conflict vulnerabilities are part of the construction of disaster risk and need to be factored into efforts to reduce disaster impacts, including in the design and delivery of DRR strategies.

We also need to advance DRR sufficiently to understand what types of risk management actions are appropriate and viable under different conditions of violence, conflict and fragility. For DRR to remain relevant, we need a deeper understanding of the implications of conflict for policy, practice and financing. Agenda 2030 and the UN Secretary-General's sustaining peace and prevention agenda could open up spaces where humanitarian, development and peace needs and ambitions can converge.

Let me close by saying that quantitatively achieving Target E would be a major achievement. However, delivering DRR outcomes will require strong policies and funding, a commitment to promote policies and programmes that build resilience for all, and a deeper understanding of the implications of conflict for DRR. The Overseas Development Institute is working in partnership with UNDRR, governments, donors and civil society to produce robust evidence that supports the attainment of Target E and the delivery of the Sendai Framework by 2030.

Thank you for your time and consideration.