

## **Official Statement for the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 by the Overseas Development Institute**

*This statement responds specifically to the AMCDRR call for contributions on: ‘Challenges in implementation and specific recommendations’*

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

The Overseas Development Institute would like to thank the Government of Mongolia for hosting the 8<sup>th</sup> Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. We would also like to thank government representatives and 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’).

The Overseas Development Institute is a global think tank. Our vision is a sustainable and peaceful world in which every person thrives, where we harness the power of evidence and ideas through research and partnership to confront challenges, develop solutions, and create change.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the important contributions made by multi-stakeholder groups to the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and the current Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which emphasised how issues of violence, conflict and fragility were underlying drivers of disaster risk in Asia.

Research by the Overseas Development Institute revealed that between 1997-2016, 55% of climate-related disaster deaths in Asia occurred in 4 countries which rank highest on the Fragile States Index for the region.<sup>1</sup> This is a conservative estimate as disasters are often unreported and underreported. The strong correlation between the number of people killed and affected by

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, K. (2018) *Accelerating Sendai Implementation in Asia: Disaster Risk Reduction in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts*. Overseas Development Institute, London.

disasters, in contexts which experience violence, conflict and fragility, signals that a holistic approach to risk management is needed urgently.

Achieving Target E of the Sendai Framework, especially the attainment of local Disaster Risk Reduction strategies - as a contribution to the disaster-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals - requires local, national and regional actors to show strong political will and leadership to prioritise Disaster Risk Reduction in the most difficult to work operating environments. This is especially necessary in contexts which experience sub-national conflict - the most common form of conflict in Asia.

Governments delivering and monitoring local and national Disaster Risk Reduction strategies could consider further how to tailor strategies to different conditions of violence, conflict and fragility. For example, by prioritising and accelerating outcomes for poor and marginalised groups across Asia - especially those which experience intersecting inequalities. Specifically, the Overseas Development Institute strongly urge governments to place special emphasis on the need to prevent sexual and gender-based violence in post-disaster situations.

Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction within domestic budgets will also be critical to creating sustainable mechanisms to reduce disaster impacts and build resilience. In complement to government efforts, international donors must rethink the role they play. The reality is simple. In order to be prepared to deal effectively with disasters, measures need to be put in place before the disaster occurs. In most cases, this is by far the most cost-effective approach, with the potential to save billions of taxpayer's dollars, and reduce the ever-increasing burden on the humanitarian system - a burden that stretches it beyond its means.

Our research finds that, for the period 1997-2016, the distribution of official development assistance in Asia's top 5 fragile states remains weighted towards emergency response, rather than supporting long-term disaster prevention and preparedness. This region-wide trend requires redress in order to support sustainable disaster resilience.

Let me close by saying that issues of violence, conflict and fragility are part of the discussion on how, where and when disasters happen. We would like to request that governments of the 8<sup>th</sup> Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction consider the inclusion of these underlying drivers of vulnerability as part of the conversation about how disaster risk can be reduced across Asia.

The Overseas Development Institute is committed to improving understanding of the relationship between violence, conflict and fragility, as an underlying driver of vulnerability to disasters. We are working in partnership with governments and civil societies to produce robust evidence that supports improved delivery of Disaster Risk Reduction across the region. Our findings will be released in a flagship report at the 2019 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important and neglected issue.

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