

The Outcomes of the Arab Region Meeting on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, 8 to 10 November 2015

Background:

Since the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in 2005, progress has been achieved in disaster risk reduction, which led to a decrease in mortality in the case of some hazards. In general, the HFA has been an instrument for raising public and institutional awareness, generating political commitment in addition to focusing and catalyzing actions by a wide range of stakeholders at all levels. Over the ten years after the HFA adoption, disasters have continued to undermine efforts towards achieving sustainable development.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted by UN Member States on 18 March 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai City, Japan. The framework was also endorsed by the UN General Assembly in June 2015 under resolution #69/283. The Sendai Framework 2015 - 2030 uses a wide scale people-centered approach in disaster risk reduction that applies to both large and small scale disasters caused by natural or man-made hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological disasters. The Sendai Framework also aims to integrate multi-hazard management to disaster risk in development at all levels and across sectors. The implementation of the framework requires strong political leadership and commitment.

Following decisions of the League of Arab States (LAS), the 1st Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 (ASDRR 2020) was developed in collaboration between the technical secretariat of CAMRE at the League of Arab States, and UNISDR, The ASDRR 2020 was adopted by CAMRE resolution #345, in its 22nd session held at the League of Arab States 19-20 December 2010 and has been further endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League in September 2011 and later, in March 2012, the ASDRR was adopted by Arab Heads of States at the Baghdad Arab Summit.

The possibility of updating the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the action plan for its implementation came into light in response to the outcomes of the United Nations 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDDR), and in line with the adoption of the Sendai

framework, the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration for Disaster Risk Reduction and the CAMRE resolution (No. 444-of ordinary session# 26 dated 9 / 11/2014). UNISDR in collaboration with the League of Arab States convened a regional meeting on the implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the development of a “regional road map ” for the implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 in the Arab region in order to attain a substantial reduction in disaster losses.

The meeting brought together more than 120 participants representing 15 Arab countries from national and local governments, as well representatives from academic and scientific institutions, civil society, youth, NGOs, and international organizations.

Meeting Expected Outcomes:

- The outcomes of the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, including Sendai Framework and its priorities, shared, acknowledged and discussed with regional stakeholders;
- The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 reviewed and discussed in light of Sendai's outcomes and other commitments declared in two consecutive Arab Conferences for DRR in 2013 and 2014;
- Monitoring mechanism for disaster risk reduction in the Arab region discussed and elaborated in view of Sendai Framework targets and proposed indicators as well as the SDGs monitoring plans in the Arab region;
- The Arab Region Science and Technical Advisory Group on DRR launched;
- The Making Cities Resilient campaign re-introduced with improved tools and proposed local indicators to measure progress on disaster risk reduction.
- Champion of “Local Knowledge for Life”, the theme of 2015 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, celebrated.

Participants emphasized:

1. There is a need to reinvigorate the political will as well as the commitments made within the disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, and climate change frameworks, as well as the other related regional frameworks in this context.
2. The need to synergize the different Arab strategies to ensure progress in all areas simultaneously.
3. Good governance, transparency, accountability and clear roles and responsibilities are priorities for effective disaster risk reduction at all levels.
4. The need to build on the Hyogo Framework for Action as well as the achievements and progress in DRR in the Arab region for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, to further strengthen the implementation of the areas that was seen

as a challenge taking into account the specificity and priorities of the regions various political, economic, environmental, social and health challenges; including the observation that Arab states' capacities, achievements, challenges, and implementation mechanisms on disaster risk reduction varies from one state to another.

5. The Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ASDRR) should act as the link between the Sendai Framework and the national strategies In the Arab region, as well as contribute and strengthen effective implementation; including supporting DRR assessment, monitoring and follow up.

6. The importance of integrating disaster risk reduction into the development support mechanisms and processes.

7. The need to integrate disaster risk reduction into public and private investments by ensuring risk assessments are taken into account as an essential part of the evaluation process for investments and development plans.

Participants called for:

1. Making use of the available DRR best practices and the exchange of DRR knowledge and expertise in the Arab region and outside. In addition, ensure that national, local, and community practices and initiatives are documented.
2. The use of modern technological methods and techniques to reduce risks in the agriculture, industrial and energy sectors, as well as make use of nuclear technology in sustainable development.
3. Launching effective initiatives focusing on infrastructure, as well as building and updating on the existing Safe Schools and Hospitals campaign and the Making Cities Resilient campaign "My City is Getting Ready".
4. Involvement of the private sector and the insurance sector in disaster risk reduction policies and processes including post-disaster recovery and building back better.
5. Make use of the inter-linkages between the 2015 agendas to support the implementation of disaster risk reduction, as well the monitoring, financing and follow up mechanisms. (The Sendai framework, financing for development and the outputs of Addis Ababa, the 17 targets for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Conference of Education for Sustainable Development, as well as future conferences such as the World Humanitarian Summit and HABITAT III)
6. Calling on the National Statistical Agencies to cooperate and contribute to the development of strategies and support the data collection for the preparation of various reports and assessments according to the international indicators.
7. Involve specialized Arab organizations, universities, academic and scientific research centers and institutions in raising awareness and supporting the decision-making process through the promotion of the role of science in risk reduction --- Welcoming the launch of the Arab Science and Technology Advisory Group on DRR.

8. The League of Arab States to reactivate the existing Arab coordination mechanism on disasters (adopted in 2007) in order to strengthen its coordination role between the Arab States as well as the relevant stakeholders and contribute and support the implementation of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.
9. Arab states to establish and/or update disaster losses databases covering the Arab region and completed before 2018.
10. Arab states to review and develop national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction by 2020, in line with Target number 5 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
11. Arab states to integrate disaster risk reduction in their national strategies for sustainable development, climate change plans, and plans that address man-made disasters including issues related to human displacement and infrastructure destruction.
12. Arab states to effectively participate and engage with the Arab Center for the Prevention of Earthquakes and Other Natural Disasters that was recently established in 2015.
13. Encourage relevant departments within the League of Arab States to integrate disaster risk reduction in their recommendations to the specialized ministerial councils through detailed and technical supported decisions that reflect the Sendai Framework. In addition, also to contribute to the implementation of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.
14. Arab States to develop and update national and local laws for disaster risk reduction. Participants welcomed the initiative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that could contribute to capacity-building and technical support in this topic.
15. Strengthening the youth and the role of women, and civil society organizations to benefit from existing non-governmental capacities and initiatives and emphasize on their role in towards raising public awareness.

Based on the consultations that took place to review and strengthen the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and in light of the context of the Sendai Framework; participants recommended that the priorities of the Arab strategy are to be in line with the Sendai framework with a focus on the following:

Priority 1: Understanding disaster risks: (in addition to the external factors such as occupation).

- Understand variations in vulnerability, exposure, risks and disaster losses, according to gender, age, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Understanding extensive and intensive risks.
- Understanding the social, economic and institutional factors in addition to the natural and physical factors that contribute to the vulnerability and the accumulation of risks.

- Scientific and community assessment taking into consideration the views and opinions of those active organizations that are operating in the most vulnerable countries to disasters.
- Interaction with the main disaster risk factors –i.e. poverty, environmental degradation, rapid urban development, poor governance, and in particular, the weak risk governance.

Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk:

- Identify financial mechanisms for the implementation of national, local and sectorial plans as well as identifying potential funding sources for disaster risk management policies from the public (i.e. Public debt, taxes, treasury bonds, financial aid, etc.) and the private sector (i.e. investments, remittances,...) including developing an action plan for implementation.
- Develop and activate regulations and legislations that promote accountability (for risk formation) and risk transfer to the relevant sector.
- Develop a risk governance framework to promote transparency and accountability of the decisions taken during all phases of risk assessment (pre-assessment, scientific and community assessment and classification and management of disaster risks).
- Institutionalize national and local forums for disaster risk management across different sectors.

Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience:

- Develop and implement programs that aim to increase the resilience of all national critical infrastructures including those of cultural and natural heritage, work areas, and the education and health sectors.
- Reducing the existing risks and preventing new ones.
- Take economic, social and institutional measures in addition to physical measures to reduce risk and vulnerability.
- Reduction of vulnerability of livelihoods and investments.
- The integration of disaster risk reduction into rural development policy.

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction:

- Ensuring the continuity of basic and essential services, including the continuity of operations, as part of the sectorial resilience programs.
- Benefiting from the various sectorial regional plans for preparedness and emergency response (i.e. the Arab plan for nuclear and radiological emergencies).
- Institutionalize the efforts of the post-disaster needs assessment and correlating them with sectorial programs to increase the resilience.

- Institutionalize databases for disaster losses in a systematic way for it to be updated regularly after a disaster.
- Develop procedures and strengthen capacities for psychological and social support for the affected people communities after a disaster.
- Plan for pre-disaster recovery and develop recovery plans apart from the response plans.
- “Building back better” to avoid the risk re-formation during the reconstruction phase.

The outcomes of this meeting and the recommendations on the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction was submitted to the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) at their meeting at the League of Arab States headquarters in Cairo on November 19, 2015 which issued its Resolution #473- Ordinary Session # 27 dated 19 / 11/2015.