

**Eighth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
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**Concept Note for Thematic Session 3-4: Advancing DRR localization through
South-South and triangular cooperation, peer-to-peer exchange, and international
partnership**

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Overview of global progress made

The Target F of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 calls for enhanced global support through sustainable financing, technology transfer and capacity-building to complement national and local efforts. It highlights the critical role of international cooperation in strengthening disaster risk reduction (DRR), particularly in developing countries. Despite this emphasis, Target F remains the least reported among all Sendai global targets.

Data reported by the Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM) from 2015 to 2023 indicate that while significant funds have been allocated—over \$35 billion in total official international support including the official development assistance (ODA) and other official flows for national DRR actions, and approximately \$59 billion in bilateral flows—there remains a disproportionate focus on post-disaster relief and reconstruction. According to the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework, 10.9 percent of total international aid financing was allocated to post-disaster relief and reconstruction, while only 0.5 percent went to prevention and preparedness. In fragile contexts, this ratio is even lower. This starkly contrasts with the well-documented benefits of investing in disaster prevention and resilience, which can yield up to fifteen dollars in savings for every dollar spent¹—a significant lost opportunity for cost-effective disaster prevention.

In light of escalating climate challenges and geopolitical tensions, the UN Secretary-General has called for renewed multilateralism and increased cooperation to invest in a sustainable future of all². While traditional North-South cooperation has been instrumental in DRR efforts, expanding South-South and triangular cooperation empowers developing countries to lead by example, facilitate collaborative learning, and strengthen resilience through peer-to-peer exchanges. For instance, in 2022, Chile reported 23 capacity development initiatives on DRR under their South-south and triangular cooperation projects in SFM reporting. Similarly, in 2023, Jordan reported engaging in science and technology exchange with Palestine.

DRR happens at the local level, where communities directly confront daily financial, technical, and capacity challenges. The Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework highlights the urgent need for more equitable financial distribution, prioritizing direct support to local governments and at-risk populations to enhance resilience. International cooperation must go beyond national-level support and directly enhance local DRR efforts. However, the current data landscape has limitations in capturing how much international cooperation funding reaches sub-national and local levels. This underscores the responsibility of national governments to ensure that international cooperation not only strengthens national capacities, policies and practices but also translates into tangible support for local DRR initiatives.

¹ UNDRR. Investing in resilience. <https://www.undrr.org/our-work/our-impact>

² UN (2024). Resolve: Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization 2024. <https://www.un.org/en/delegate/report-secretary-general-work-organization-0>

Despite some progress in technology development and transfer and capacity building for DRR, challenges remain, including inconsistent implementation, scalability issues, and limited ability to sustain efforts particularly in at-risk regions with resource shortages. Addressing these challenges requires sustained international efforts to expand successful initiatives, enhance multilevel government coordination, and build human resources capacities at all levels. Successful initiatives may not necessarily rely solely on the use of high-tech solutions, but can also leverage accessible and low-cost solutions, such as artificial intelligence applications tailored to the needs, contexts, and capacities of recipient countries, local governments, and communities. Moreover, technology development and transfer should go beyond physical tools to include capacity building in knowledge and skills, as well as the establishment of appropriate policies and governance structures.

The integration of localized information into DRR efforts has improved due to advancements in data collection technologies and increased community engagement. However, significant challenges persist, including data gaps, limited local capacity, and coordination difficulties. While there is growing international recognition of the importance of localized and disaggregated data (by sex, age and disability), many regions still struggle to obtain and utilize accurate, up-to-date information, which is fundamental for local disaster risk management planning and pre-disaster investment. Addressing these challenges requires a more concerted effort to close data gaps, strengthen local capacities, and enhance coordination among international, national and local stakeholders.

Lastly, international collaborations among city networks and partners can accelerate replication and scalability through twinning approaches, city-to-city learning, and knowledge exchanges. Initiatives such as *Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030)*, the *Resilient Cities network*, and the *Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA)* provide platforms for cities and partners to collaborate, share best practices, strengthen capacities and foster peer learning. These networks highlight emerging successful models of North-South, South-South, and Triangular Cooperation that leverage existing expertise and resources and can be further replicated. For instance, the Resilient Cities Network has been instrumental in advancing urban resilience by facilitating partnerships between cities, private sector actors, and financial institutions, through programmes such as the Urban Ocean Initiative and Resilient Community Impact Funds. The CCFLA further strengthens the link between international cooperation, climate resilience, and DRR by providing a platform to convene and exchange knowledge among all relevant partners aiming to support cities in developing bankable climate resilience projects and bridging the investment gap. Meanwhile, MCR2030 plays a critical role in strengthening national-local linkages by supporting national governments in embedding urban resilience within broader national DRR and climate adaptation agendas. It also empowers cities to serve as *Resilience Hubs*, acting as catalysts for experience sharing and supporting other cities.

Course correction towards 2027 and 2030

The Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 acknowledges progress at the local level on DRR but stresses that more needs to be done with the support of national governments and international, regional, and sub-regional organizations.

Achieving significant progress by 2027-2030 requires urgent actions in several key areas, namely:

1. Ensuring that DRR is embedded in development assistance programmes
DRR must not be treated as a standalone intervention but embedded as a core element across all development assistance programmes. Integrating DRR at every stage—from planning and design to implementation and evaluation—ensures that development interventions align with medium- to long-term national and local strategic priorities rather than merely addressing short-term disaster response needs. Adjusting programs to reflect actual local and national risks enhances both resilience and sustainability. Additionally, earmarking dedicated DRR funding within broader development projects ensures consistent investments that strengthen long-term resilience and reduce disaster impacts. Embedding disaster risk considerations into infrastructure planning, climate action programs, and livelihoods development further safeguards investments from current and future hazards.
2. Expanding DRR international cooperation beyond North-South models
International cooperation must empower developing countries to lead in sharing knowledge, expertise, and resources, fostering collaborative learning and peer exchange. Strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation can complement traditional North-South partnerships by promote mutual learning and solidarity rather than reinforcing donor-recipient dynamics. By enabling countries and cities with similar contexts and risk profiles to share experiences and best practices, South-South and Triangular Cooperation not only empowers developing countries to lead by example but also serves as a channel for showcasing successful DRR initiatives—many of which may have been made possible with the support of North-South cooperation. These successes can then be replicated and scaled, offering valuable models for other countries and cities facing similar challenges, while further strengthening the role of collaborative partnerships in disaster resilience.
3. Ensuring international cooperation benefits sub-national levels and empowering local voices
Local actors, including governments, civil society, and communities, are essential for effective DRR. Empowering local voices ensures that DRR efforts address local realities and needs. International cooperation must extend beyond the national level to ensure it directly benefits sub-national and local actors, who are on the frontline of disaster response and resilience-building. This requires the inclusion of local governments, community

organizations, and grassroots stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes. National governments play a critical role in cascading international support to the local level by establishing the necessary frameworks which can be achieved through national urban DRR and resilience programs that provide the framework for local action. By providing targeted resources, technical support, and engaging with sub-national actors, national governments strengthen local capacities and ensure that international cooperation is aligned with localized needs, making interventions more effective and sustainable. This is particularly crucial for addressing the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups, including women, persons with disabilities, and other at-risk populations.

4. **Fostering peer-to-peer exchanges to expand DRR international cooperation**
Cities learn best from one another. By amplifying local voices and facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges, international cooperation can strengthen DRR advocacy, showcase practical solutions, and create catalytic effects. A city-to-city support approach fosters ownership, encourages active participation, and enhances resilience and sustainability. Empowering cities to support one another shifts the dynamic from recipients to contributors, amplifying their role as catalysts in DRR. Leveraging networks like MCR2030 and others provides platforms for cities to connect, share knowledge, and collaborate on best practices. Facilitating the connection of these dots—across cities, sectors, and regions—enhances the potential for replication and scaling of successful local solutions. When international cooperation prioritizes peer-to-peer support and taps into these valuable networks, it strengthens global DRR efforts by ensuring that knowledge, resources, and best practices are effectively shared and adapted across different local contexts.
5. **Accelerating technology development and transfer and capacity building for evidence-based DRR activities**
Speeding up the development and transfer of novel, low-cost, accessible, and easy-to-maintain technologies is crucial for advancing DRR cooperation. Along with technology transfer, building national and local capacities through targeted capacity-building initiatives is key to ensuring cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability. International cooperation must focus on building ownership and strengthening the capacity of national and local governments to ensure that skills, knowledge, and governance systems are sustained for the ongoing development, application, and scaling of these technologies and their impact.
6. **Ensuring international cooperation supports governments implement accessible, DRR-embedded spatial and infrastructure master plans**
As countries advance on infrastructure investments, often with international support, many fail to adequately consider disaster risk and accessibility in their planning. This oversight leaves them vulnerable to disaster impacts and can set back sustainable development. It is essential to incorporate DRR in national-level infrastructure and spatial planning, aligning these plans with local master plans. This will guide international donors in the design and selection, leading to more efficient financing for accessible infrastructure

and enhanced localization. *(Note: this point will be discussed in TS3-2: Safeguarding Resilient and Sustainable Infrastructure Investments)*

7. Enhancing targeting of DRR-related international cooperation and addressing systemic risk, especially at the sub-national and local levels
Disasters often exacerbate local vulnerabilities, particularly for at-risk populations facing gender inequality and intersectionality of risk. International cooperation should address both direct and systemic risk, focusing on interconnected and transboundary risk to build resilient systems capable of handling complex disasters, especially in fragile and conflict affected contexts. This includes addressing the unique needs of at-risk groups, such as women, boys and girls, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, while also targeting geographically specific regions including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDs), as well as middle-income countries. For a just transition for at-risk countries in the face of climate change like those in Africa and the Pacific, resources must be directed effectively to the regions that need them most. *(Note: this point will be discussed in HLD 1: Harnessing risk understanding for a safer future and TS1-2: Strengthened understanding of disaster impact data and its application in decision-making)*
8. Promoting non-traditional financial cooperation mechanisms and engagement of the private sector: International cooperation can scale up innovative financing approaches for DRR and resilience investments. This may include, for example, debt swaps for resilience investments where countries can redirect debt repayments toward DRR initiatives and climate adaptation projects. Leveraging insurance mechanisms tailored to most at-risk regions and investing in community-based adaptation funds can also mobilize resources and foster greater collaboration between public, private, and local stakeholders to enhance overall disaster preparedness and resilience. Additionally, private sector can also be encouraged to build and enhance financial solutions supporting local early action and/or anticipatory action in DRR and scaling these solutions for wider application through international cooperation and partnership. *(Note: this point will be discussed in HLD3: Strengthening national and local financing options in investing resilience, TS3-1: Integrating DRR in the global financial system, and TS3-3: Engaging with the private sector to scale up investments and resourcing in DRR)*

Expected outcomes

The session expected outcomes include:

1. Acknowledgment of existing innovative, sustained and scalable initiatives in various international cooperation efforts in DRR such as technology development and transfer, local capacity building, DRR financing, and engagement and support by non-traditional mechanisms such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

2. Recommendations of urgent key actions to scale-up international cooperation supporting localized DRR actions, including cross-cutting elements such as enhancing coordination between international, national and local stakeholders, enhancing and sustaining capacities, expanding beyond traditional cooperation models, leveraging existing networks and expertise, fostering peer-to-peer learning models, etc.
3. Provision of concrete actions for development partners, national and local governments, private sector and key stakeholders to intensify their commitments to DRR partnerships and localization. Recommendations will focus on increasing coordinated approach and collaborative multi-layer partnerships and enhancing support for and ownership of local governments.
4. Call for engagement and empowerment of key stakeholders, traditional and non-traditional ones, in advancing DRR with specific recommendations for their effective engagement, particularly in support of local level action on DRR. This includes fostering South-South and Triangular Cooperation, city-to-city partnerships, co-creation of solutions through community and at-risk group engagement, and private sector involvement.

Guiding questions

1. How can we accelerate localized DRR actions through international cooperation?
2. What are the most effective strategies for integrating DRR into broader development cooperation initiatives? How can these strategies be implemented to ensure that all development cooperation contributes to long-term resilience, supporting not just national actions but cascading to sub-national and local levels?
3. What key data gaps need to be addressed to enhance the localization of international cooperation?
4. What concrete actions has your national government taken to ensure that such international cooperation reflects local needs and effectively support strengthening local DRR and resilience?
5. What is the best approach to ensure that local needs and priorities are integrated into the design and development of international cooperation while aligning with national needs and priorities?
6. Similar question to the above: From the local government perspective, what is the best approach to ensure that local needs and priorities are integrated into the design and development of international cooperation while aligning with national needs and priorities?

7. From your experience, why is city-to-city learning and exchange important? What recommendations do you have to encourage more cities to move from being recipients of support to providing support to other cities? How can these collaborations be scaled up and supported through international cooperation to maximize their impact?
8. What are the best practices for advancing peer-to-peer learning and South-South and Triangular Cooperation, especially in terms of building capacities and transferring knowledge and technologies?
9. Same question as above: How can these collaborations be scaled up and supported through international cooperation to maximize their impact?

Reference documents

1. High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Midterm Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. <https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/media/88350/download?startDownload=20240905>
2. Making Cities Resilient (2030). <https://mcr2030.undrr.org/>
3. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. <https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/what-sendai-framework>
4. Snapshot of Sendai Framework Monitoring 2024. <https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/monitoring-sendai-framework>
5. The Policy brief: Accelerating financing and de-risking investment. <https://www.undrr.org/publication/policy-brief-accelerating-financing-and-de-risking-investment>
6. The Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. <https://www.undrr.org/publication/report-midterm-review-implementation-sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>
7. Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (2024). <https://www.undrr.org/publication/report-secretary-general-implementation-sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-7>
8. United Nations (2024). Resolve: Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization 2024. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/resolve-report-secretary-general-work-organization-2024-enarruzh>