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Introduction of the Secretary-General's Report on the Implementation of the
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/67/335)

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Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/67/335). The report provides an overview of progress on implementing disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action at national, regional and international levels, over the past 12 months, in response to the General Assembly resolution 66/199 on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. It also includes an update on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, in response to the General Assembly resolution 65/158.

Hurricane Sandy, which has devastated parts of the Caribbean and the east coast of the United States, has again highlighted that while significant and important investments in early warning and preparedness save lives, the **inadequate action, or even inaction, in addressing other components of disaster risk reduction**, continue to result in the all too familiar scenes of ruined homes, damaged critical infrastructure and economic assets, and impact on jobs and lives.

This is not unique to New York. Across the world, the **number of people affected by disasters, and the related economic losses, is increasing**. Since 1992, more than 4.4 billion people have been affected by internationally reported disaster and a total of \$2 trillion, or an estimated 25 years of total overseas development aid, in damages occurred. These numbers are alarming. They tell a story of lost opportunities, of wasted public and private investments and of destroyed lives.

Most worryingly, it is this inadequate action across the world, in both the public and private sectors, which is failing to address what is in evidence – **disaster risk is increasing**. The **special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** found that the principal driver of increasing disaster risk in the coming decades will continue to be the growing exposure of people and economic activities to natural hazards. Risk to both **public and private investments** continues to be concentrated in hazard-prone areas, and is growing most rapidly in low and middle income countries. The report also highlighted that **climate change will increase risks** in many weather-sensitive sectors, such as water and agriculture, with potentially far reaching impacts on food security, public health and livelihoods, among other sectors. If we are to meaningfully address this risk, concrete and comprehensive steps must be taken.

Challenges and opportunities

As reaffirmed and reiterated in the Rio+20 outcome, building **resilient cities and communities** is critical to achieving sustainable development. Over coming decades, trillions of dollars of investment, the majority from the private sector, will be made in low and middle income countries. How and where these investments are made will determine whether disaster risk continues to grow in the future, and how it will affect people.

Ensuring that **investment decisions** are evidence-based is the most cost-effective and efficient approach to underpin development, in light of the increasing levels of risk. However, only 44 countries have established national disaster loss databases which are now supporting both public and private decision makers in making evidence-based development planning and investment choices. Still over 150 countries need to develop these valuable tools that can help make safer development investments and thus contribute to sustainable development. Case studies from countries, such as Colombia, Mexico and Nepal have shown that investing in proactive disaster risk reduction, by including disaster risk considerations into land use planning, for example, can be up to four times more cost-effective than trying to fix the problem afterwards through retrofitting, or relocation of infrastructure.

What ever form the **post-2015 development agenda** takes Member States were clear at Rio. Reducing risk is a **core element of the post-2015 development agenda**. Addressing current, and future development, demands it. Therefore ensuring convergence between a bold and inspirational development agenda with a universal, action-oriented framework for disaster risk reduction will ultimately support the end goal – sustainable development.

While it is for Member States to determine how they see the **post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework**, the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, recognising the role of other stakeholders will be fundamental. The process has begun. Facilitated by the Strategy secretariat, a series of important milestone events, including **regional-level platforms** in every region, and the **Global Platform** for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Geneva from 19-23 May 2013, will ensure an inclusive, open and comprehensive process leading to the **Third World Conference on Disaster Reduction** in 2015, where a new framework will be adopted to support a safer and more resilient world. The Government of Japan has generously offered to host the World Conference.

The focus of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, in May 2013, is very much about continuing the momentum that has built-up around reducing risks and reinforcing resilience in our communities. I call on Member States to fully engage in this milestone event, and welcome high-level representation.

Recommendations

In light of the above challenges, the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report are clear:

1. Governments are invited to conduct national-level multi-stakeholder consultations to take stock of where they are in managing disaster risk and share this at next year's Global Platform.
2. Further, Governments are invited to share progress on the implementation of the broader disaster risk reduction agenda, including commitments undertaken at the previous sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in 2007, 2009 and 2011, which will be central to building the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.
3. Ensuring the broadest level of engagement in the consultation process for the development of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be critical to ensuring the vision for the 'Future We Want' is translated into action.
4. Establishing and further developing national disaster loss databases, disaster risk mapping and financial tracking systems are effective and important measures to support decision-making across all levels of society.
5. As Member States now consider the post-2015 development agenda, including Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring disaster risk reduction considerations are included will be critical to ensuring the overarching goal of resilience is achieved.

6. Strengthening the Strategy secretariat with the resources and support it needs to meet the challenges of the coming work on sustainable development and the development of the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework is essential.

Conclusion

The next 12 months will be critical in laying the foundations of the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2013 represents a unique opportunity for Member States, and other stakeholders, to contribute to the experiences and ideas that will shape the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework. Building on the extensive knowledge and lessons generated from the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, thus far, provides a significant body of knowledge to draw from.

The support Member States have provided to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) has been critical. I also wish to acknowledge the large number of Member States reporting their progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action through the HFA Monitor.

It is clear that the current development model is inadequate for the challenges and realities, both social and environmental, that we face today. The increasing levels of risk underscore this. Our priority must be to ensure that addressing risk, through practical and proven measures, underpins the development agenda going forward.

The cost of inaction – of failing to invest in disaster risk reduction – represents a burden that no society, regardless of how advanced, can bear. Sustainable development depends on us reducing risk across all areas of development.