

**Statement by Mr. Neil McFarlane - Chief, New York Liaison Office
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**49th Session of the Commission on Population and Development:
Strengthening the demographic evidence based for the post-2015
development agenda**

Agenda Item 5 – General debate on the contribution of population and development issues to the Economic and Social Council theme in 2016, on “Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results”

**Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly about the importance of disaster risk reduction for Population and Development.

In the twenty years between 1994 and 2013, 1.35 million lives were lost due to disaster. On average that is almost 68,000 lives lost each year. An additional 218 million people were affected annually in that same period.

Populations, whether young or old, rich or poor, regardless of gender or ability --- all want to be safe.

At the same time, the overwhelming evidence presented through Global Assessment Reports of Disaster Risk and

other analyses, is that the poor are disproportionately affected. Women are disproportionately affected as well.

Over twenty years ago, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development broke new ground with a comprehensive approach to development that recognized this correlation between population, poverty and environmental sustainability.

This message is even more relevant today. Disasters persistently cause loss of life and livelihoods. As long as disasters undermine progress towards inclusive development they will continue to negatively impact our best efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, development choices play an instrumental role in shaping disaster risk.

In many countries, uncontrolled urban development is overwhelming the capacity of city governments to manage growth. Higher population density in cities exposes larger numbers of people to hazards. Over consumption of natural resources and the degradation of environmental systems is creating even greater exposure and climate

change is, in many regions, increasing the frequency and intensity of climate related extreme events.

When viewed through the lens of disaster risk reduction, Agenda 2030 can play an instrumental role in addressing these drivers and, at the same time, reduce disaster's impacts on population and safeguard development investments.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, agreed in March 2015, provides guidance to meet these challenges. The Sendai Framework aims to reduce existing disaster risk and prevent the accumulation of new risk; it sets seven global targets including for reductions in the loss of lives, people affected and economic damages.

To reach this level of resilience, we need to improve our understanding of disaster risk and how populations are affected differently – and also to understand how different perspectives and capacities can contribute to reducing disaster risk.

The Sendai Framework:

- **offers guidance to integrate demographic data - disaggregated by location, sex, age and disability, and including geographical information systems and information and communications technology – into comprehensive and integrated disaster risk reduction policies;**
- **draws on the leadership of women;**
- **promotes the integration of disaster risk assessments into national and local strategies - including urban and land use plans informed by an understanding of risk, demographic and environmental changes;**
- **provides the rationale for investing in resilience through many of the same development sectors that underpin the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.**

A disaster should not plunge a family deeper into poverty. Governments, with the support of partners in the private sector and civil society, can build the resilience to disasters needed to achieve the goals of sustainable development.