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How the Sendai Framework and the application of the human security approach are helping to reduce disaster risks in Mauritanian cities

Nouakchott, Mauritania – Local government representatives from across Mauritania came together in an effort to enhance the resilience of their communities through localizing disaster risk reduction.

“Today five cities in Mauritania have taken concrete steps in integrating the human security approach in their overall city planning”, said Mr. Sujit Mohanty who heads the UN office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Regional Office for Arab states. Backed with evidence from disaster resilience assessments, these cities have initiated work towards drafting risk sensitive strategies and action plans, which will take into account social, environmental, political, health and economic risks as recognized in the Sendai Framework, he added.

Aiming to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities, UNISDR partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with support from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, launched a pilot programme with the focus of localizing disaster risk reduction through the human security approach in both Mauritania and Tunisia.

The importance and effectiveness of the principles underlying the human security approach have been acknowledged in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, a 15-year plan adopted by the international community in 2015. The framework which calls for a people-centered and community-based approach, recognizes the need to focus on communities especially the most vulnerable as a crucial element to ensure their survival, livelihood and dignity.



Fishing boats in Port de Peche lined up on the coast of Nouakchott

“Community participation and engagement is very important. The aim is to save lives therefore a people-centred approach has to be taken when implementing any disaster risk reduction activity”, said Ms. Fatimatou Abdel Malick, mayor of Tevergh Zeina - one of the beneficiary cities of this ongoing programme.

“We hope this programme can provide a notable example of the value the human security approach in localizing the Sendai Framework and, by extension, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, said Ms. Mehrnaz Mostafavi, Chief of the Human Security Unit.

Enhancing the resilience and capacities of local governments to natural hazards through the implementation of people-centered disaster risk reduction action plans will help communities overcome not only disasters but also improve their health, food, environmental and economic opportunities and progress, she added.

The programme entitled “Enhancing Community Resilience and Human Security of Vulnerable Communities in Urban Settings through the Implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030” started work in 2017 and will continue to 2019. The programme targets the cities of Boghe, Kaedi, Tevergh Zeina, Rosso, and Tintane in Mauritania, as well as Bousalem, Gabes, Kasserine, Mateur, and Siliana in Tunisia.

Experience from these cities will be shared at the Ministerial Arab-Africa Regional Platform in Tunis in October 2018, providing risk sensitive strategies and action plans that are evidence-based to improve the resilience and the sustainable development of these cities and beyond.



Local traders convene at a market in Nouakchott