



Risk Reduction Hub Event: Scaling up resilience and reducing disaster risk in LLDCs

Date: Friday, 19 May 2023, 1:15pm – 2:45pm

Venue: Conference Room 8, United Nations Headquarters, New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Building resilience and disaster risk reduction are key enablers to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in particular suffer from developmental challenges and geographies that leave them disproportionately vulnerable to natural hazards. The impacts of climate change, including droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, floods, and melting glaciers, among others, negatively impact people's livelihoods, access to water and sanitation, agricultural production, infrastructure systems, biodiversity and, ultimately achievement of the SDGs. Not only are LLDCs affected by disasters within their own border, their supply chains and economies are also impacted by disasters in neighboring transit countries. Moreover, desertification and land degradation, dependency on natural resource-based commodities, border closures, rising food and energy costs, and debt burden, as well as social economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, all have a dramatic effect on the resilience of LLDCs.

Over half of LLDCs' land is classified as dryland, making them more vulnerable to water stress due to climate change and drought. Heatwaves and wildfires exacerbate desertification, deforestation and land degradation in LLDCs, reduce groundwater recharge and increase water stress and food insecurity. Changing rain patterns, in particular in Africa, have led to recurrent droughts in some areas and increased floods in others. Melting glaciers and changing climate have increasingly exposed the mountainous landlocked countries of Asia to worse windstorms and flooding and higher risk of landslides.

The impact of disasters is both immediate, resulting in short-term losses and damages, and long-term resulting in displacement and economic insecurity. Food security across LLDCs is being impacted through lowered agricultural productivity as a result of increased land degradation, more off-seasonal rain/drought, increasing duration of hot periods, and shallowing of river basins. The impacts of COVID-19 and current commodity price shocks have worsened this situation, exposing LLDCs to higher risks of food insecurity.

Implementation of the Sendai Framework by LLDCs

At the midpoint of the Sendai Framework implementation period, 75 per cent of LLDCs reported having national disaster risk reduction strategies¹ and 59 per cent reported having access to multi-hazard early warning systems. From 2012 to 2021, disaster mortality rates averaged 2.54 deaths annually per 100,000 population in reporting LLDCs, significantly higher than the 0.84 per 100,000 population global average. In addition, LLDCs reported economic losses attributed to disasters of over 3 per cent of their GDP, in comparison to a global average of 1 per cent².

While LLDCs have been making efforts to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, they continue facing numerous resource and capacity challenges that limit the fulfillment of their commitment to disaster risk reduction. One of the greatest challenges relates to funding. According to Voluntary National Reports submitted as part of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework, LLDCs are only able to allocate a minute percentage of their national budget to disaster risk management activities. At the same time, between 2010 and 2019 less than 5 per cent of disaster related official development assistance was allocated to ex ante prevention and preparedness, with the vast majority allocated to emergency response and relief³.

LLDCs also have limited capacities to address disasters and the Voluntary National Reports to the Sendai Framework Midterm Review from the 11 LLDCs that submitted Voluntary National Reports underscore the common need for capacity building focused around modern risk awareness methodologies and gender inclusivity. There has been a reported challenge of ensuring that the response efforts are able to reach vulnerable groups such as women, the disabled and the elderly. There is also a noted challenge for LLDCs in collecting data about disaster damage and losses. LLDCs lack the information infrastructure to capture in-depth data about disasters to meet targets of the Sendai Framework. They also lack investments into improving their monitoring capacity which is a critical component of Early Warning Systems and response mobilization.

LLDCs need consistent engagement and support from development partners - in the North and South - to complement national and regional efforts towards building regionwide resiliency. Additional support is required for improving access to finance for resilient infrastructure projects including building of resilient ports and transport systems and improving capacity for risk management. Greater efforts are also needed to mobilize stakeholders and to create proactive plans for addressing future risks. A focus on regional collaboration is not just a means to mitigate risk but an opportunity to improve cooperation and build long-term partnerships with transit countries.

The vulnerability of LLDCs to disasters and the need to build their resilience has been discussed prominently in the LLDC ministerial meeting held in the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly in 2022. Member States noted that over the period of implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, such disasters have brought increasing challenges to their achievement of the SDGs. It is important that the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs reflects this reality.

¹ As of March 2022.

² All figures from Sendai Framework Monitor: <https://sendaimonitor.undrr.org/>

³ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "Sendai Framework Voluntary Commitments Synthesis and Analysis Report" (Geneva, 2022).

It is against this background that this side event is being held.

Objective

This side event will review the progress made by LLDCs in implementing the Sendai Framework; and identify actionable solutions and strategies that can be adopted, adapted or scaled up in LLDCs to improve resilience and reduce disaster risk with a focus on promoting financing, resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, data availability and cooperation with neighboring countries.

The event will encourage participants to exchange national and local experiences and practices, and suggest recommendations on how the successor of the Vienna Programme of Action can adequately address resilience building of LLDCs to disasters in coherence with the Sendai Framework and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and taking forward the findings of the Sendai Framework Midterm Review voluntary national reports from the LLDCs.

Expected Outcome

The event will increase awareness on the special vulnerabilities of LLDCs and the need for strengthened national commitment and international support to pursue a risk-informed approach to development.

The outcome will contribute to the preparatory process of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2024.

Participants

Participants will include Member States, United Nations entities, as well as representatives from other international and regional organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society.

Organizers

Botswana Chair of Group of LLDCs, UN-OHRLLS and UNDRR.

Language

The event will be held in English.

Possible questions for discussion:

- *What key challenges is your country/region facing in addressing disasters?*
- *What successful solutions are available for LLDCs to sustain and scale up?*
- *What type of technical and financial assistance is needed to build the capacity of LLDCs?*