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GPDRR2025 Highlights: Thursday, 5 June 2025

Finance is critical to implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), but investments have not kept pace with rising demands, and aid budgets are shrinking worldwide. In many sessions through the day, delegates focused attention on financing a wide range of needs, including school safety, measures to deal with extreme heat, and nature-based solutions (NbS).

High-Level Dialogue

What Will It Take to Scale DRR Financing Solutions at the National and Local Level?: Journalist Mayowa Adegoke moderated the session.

Stine Renate Håheim, State Secretary to Minister of International Development, Norway, emphasized DRR financing as a high priority, saying, “it is better to prevent than repair afterwards.” She noted that one in three people globally—most in cities or highly vulnerable areas—are not covered by Early Warning Systems (EWS).

Hans Sy, CEO, SM Prime Holdings, explained his company’s investment in resilient building construction, such as building on concrete pillars to allow free flow of floodwaters. He stressed that risk-informed decisions based on science and technology “makes good business sense.”

Fatima Yasmin, Asian Development Bank (ADB), said the Bank regards DRR as a critical priority investment, particularly through supporting policy making, planning, advising on innovative investments, and incentivizing preparedness. On scaling DRR investments, she said financing should be fast, flexible and forward-looking.

Rob Wesseling, CEO, Co-operators Group, said no path to net zero emissions is possible without investment in both prevention and recovery. He encouraged governments to utilize the risk information gathered by insurance companies over decades to assist with decision making.

On mobilizing private sector investment, Velenkosini Fiki Hlabisa, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa, stressed that every cent invested in resilience and preparedness saves lives and livelihoods.



View of the panel during the Multi-Stakeholder Plenary

Ministerial Roundtable

Inclusive Comprehensive School Safety—Strengthening Resilience for Children and Youth in All Hazards: The event, which convened 36 ministries, was co-chaired by Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head, UNDRR, and Paul Steffen, Deputy Director, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland.

In opening remarks, Kishore encouraged delegates to endorse the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2017 \(CSSF\)](#), noting only 80 countries have done so, and for countries to make schools heat-resilient.

On school **safety policies**, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Saint Lucia recognized the CSSF. Portugal highlighted its DRR working group on children and youth. Brunei Darussalam, Kenya, and Portugal recognized the fundamental rights of children to safe school environments. Colombia highlighted its [Law on Teaching for Sustainability, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management](#). Republic of Korea described its [2020 Child Safety Management Act](#).

Many countries identified **education programming** as fundamental to reducing risk and developing children as agents of change in their homes and communities. Malaysia, Uganda, Russia, Algeria and others described homegrown examples of



Leaders from around the globe express their shared commitment to making schools safer and more resilient to disasters.

such programmes, for example, student leadership groups and First Aid skills training.

Several countries, including Greece, Kenya and Cuba, recognized the importance of **social support** to children experiencing disaster and loss, and the ensuing mental and emotional health impacts. The Holy See flagged the need for spiritual care of those “who have seen whole lives swept away.”

Most countries discussed **sustainable and resilient school infrastructure**, including standards for new or retrofitted buildings. Belgium, Republic of Moldova, and Singapore highlighted energy efficiency and climate resilience. On heat stress in schools, Singapore flagged cooling strategies and energy-efficient fans. Tunisia described its sustainable school network that integrates climate change, disaster risk, and biodiversity objectives. Spain said new schools need to be “climate shelters.” Bangladesh noted the construction of more than 5,000 cyclone-resistant schools.

Multistakeholder Plenary

Investments in Reducing Risk and Building Resilience to Accelerate Investments in Sustainable Development: Kishore introduced the session, which was co-chaired by Paul Steffen, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, and Paola Albrito, UNDRR. Kishore noted less than 1% of national budgets is allocated to DRR.

Countries presented their national commitments, such as Australia’s Disaster-Ready Fund, which is providing up to AUD 1 billion (USD 648 million) over five years for locally-identified needs, and Switzerland’s DRR commitment of more than CHF 2 billion (USD 2.5 billion) annually. Many expressed appreciation for international support, including for Moldova’s local adaptation plans in 38 communities, and Samoa’s community-based disaster risk management activities. Peru highlighted its introduction of budget flexibility for regional and local authorities, enabling rapid response to imminent hazards.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) reported that only 3% of all development assistance is allocated to agricultural DRR measures, even while these deliver significant returns in ensuring food security. Swiss Re highlighted the role of insurance in informing risk and mitigation measures, noting the availability of parametric insurance, for example, against extreme heat events and flooding. The Resilience Action Fund showcased the work of the International Finance Corporation in developing the [Building Resilience Index](#) as a world-first metric for assessing the safety and risk of buildings for insurers and construction developers. The Latin America and the Caribbean Development Bank (CAF), India, and the UK welcomed innovative initiatives, such as a new center on extreme events, establishment of risk pools, and the use of AI to identify flood threats.

Delegates affirmed regional solidarity, demonstrated in Tunisia’s hosting of the Africa-Arab Platform for DRR in 2023, and Iran’s hosting of three regional organizations, including



Ministerial Roundtable



a Regional Center for Urban Water Management. Albania welcomed its responsibilities under the EU Civil Protection Code for cooperation among EU countries and other partners, which, he noted, enables access to advanced DRR solutions.

The International Organization for Migration highlighted its 2024 launch of Climate Mobility Innovation Labs for the Africa and Asia regions to develop solutions to climate-related mobility.

Steffen urged all present to accelerate investment in DRR, and to engage the private sector as key partners.

Special Event on Extreme Heat

Moderator, Juli Trtanj, Co-Chair, Global Heat Health Information Network, opened the session. Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), called heat a “silent killer” because it is the least managed of all climate hazards. She said 50% of countries have heat warning systems in place but only 26 have dedicated Heat Health EWS. She identified three priorities: integrating heat risk into climate and DRR governance, heat EWS, and implementation using risk information and data.

In his keynote, Pramod Kumar Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, India, said heat threatened public health, economic stability, and the ecological resilience of cities and communities. He underscored UNDRR’s [Common Framework on Extreme Heat Risk Governance](#) and drew attention to India’s national guidelines on heat wave management, which decentralized more than 250 heat action plans in 23 states. He called for scaling hospital and primary health care preparedness and resilience and noted India is adopting a long-term heat wave mitigation strategy, including roof-cooling technologies, passive cooling centers, revival of traditional water bodies, and improved thermal comfort and livability of informal settlements.

In a panel discussion, Benoît Faraco, Ambassador, Climate Negotiations for Decarbonized Energies and for the Prevention of Climate Risks, France, urged being modest since we are still discovering impacts and avoiding maladaptation. Ousmane Ndiaye, Director General, African Center for Meteorological

Application for Development, stressed the links between heat waves, energy crises, and health care demand. Rosa Galvez, Senator, Canada, spoke about lived experience saying, “We cannot adapt forever – we must work on the causes.” Jagan Chapagain, Secretary-General, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said extreme heat is a humanitarian crisis. On involving the financial sector, Mia Seppo, Assistant Director General, International Labour Organization, discussed climate risk insurance, just transition principles, and access to essential services. Mishra advised that industry protect labor from heat risk.

Special Session

Comprehensive Approaches to Reduce Loss and Damage— Bridging Climate Action and DRR: Fatou Jeng, Former Climate Advisor to the UN Secretary-General and Member of the Early Warnings for All Advisory Panel, moderated the session.

Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Climate Change, Adaptation, Meteorology and Geo Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management, Vanuatu, appreciated the support from the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) and the Santiago Network, which combined forces to launch the inaugural integrated loss and damage and DRR initiative in Vanuatu.

Kishore noted that, while many DRR practices are now in place, these need to be updated to deal with climate system changes and the associated risks, uncertainty, and volatility.

Benoît Faraco, argued that the distinction between loss and damage, and DRR, is theoretical, and remains irrelevant to people on the ground who want response, prevention, action, and solidarity to alleviate their situation.

Ibrahima Cheikh Diong, Executive Director, FRLD, emphasized the need to look at how interventions can be most impactful, stressing that solutions must be country-led, and recognize Indigenous groups and civil society participants. He expressed awareness that the FRLD must be “nimble, accessible, flexible and built on partnerships, always ensuring no one is left behind.”

Carolina Fuentes Castellanos, Director, Santiago Network Secretariat, elaborated on how the network is supporting countries to accelerate loss and damage, using Vanuatu’s experience to demonstrate how the Network can accelerate fund distribution and support with bold and transformative support.

Jagan Chapagain, Secretary-General, IFRC, cautioned that the terms loss and damage represent different meanings to communities, but the bottom line is to ensure the funds really reach the local level.

Thematic Sessions

Catalyzing Governance Solutions for Disaster and Climate-Related Displacement: Irwin Loy, The New Humanitarian, moderated this session.

John Mussington, activist and displaced person, Antigua & Barbuda, described his work of founding the community network,

Stronger Caribbean Together, with others displaced by “disaster capitalism”, as storm-damaged sites are cleared for tourism development.

Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, Fiji, highlighted the 2023 Pacific Regional Mobility Framework and Fiji’s own planned relocation guidelines.

Zahra Abdi Mohamed, Director-General, National Center for Rural Development and Durable Solutions, Somalia, described Somalia’s National Transformation Plan that prioritizes anticipatory action and climate-smart livelihoods, responding to the needs of long-term displaced communities.

Fatimah Zannah Mustapha, community representative, Nigeria, called for centering the voices of local women in decision making by removing barriers, “whether digital, linguistic, or cultural.” Claudinne Ogaldes Cruz, Executive Secretary, National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (CONRED), Guatemala, noted that many Guatemalan households are women-led and have the knowledge to inform decision making.

Robert Piper, former UN Secretary-General’s Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement, said line ministries responsible for decisions on land use and building codes—“those who are responsible for dealing with the failure to prevent”—must become deeply involved in the governance of disaster displacement.

Leveraging Values of Nature for Resilience: Moderated by Cecilia Aipira, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the session addressed the role of nature-based solutions (NbS) in DRR.

In his keynote, Mohammed-Yahya Lafdal, General Director, National Environment and Coastline Observatory, Mauritania, highlighted the increase in tree cover through reforestation and restoration, taking into account Indigenous knowledge and solutions, and the development of barrier systems for water distribution and management in desert areas. He emphasized how addressing land degradation and rehabilitation has been Mauritania’s best solution for increasing resilience.

Rodrigo Hernández Escobar, Representative of the Latin American and Caribbean Indigenous Knowledge & DRR Network, highlighted political will and respect for Indigenous cosmovision and territories as key elements for leveraging traditional knowledge into programmes supporting NbS. Isaac Luwaga Mugumbule, Head of Landscaping, Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda, stated that NbS are context-specific and require community involvement to be sustained.

Professor Satoru Nishikawa, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), stressed the need for scientific numerical quantification, analysis, and testing on the strengths and durability of NbS. Swenja Surminski, London School of Economics, noting that NbS “are not silver bullets,” stressed the need to work with nature, drawing attention to NbS co-



Thematic Sessions as visual summaries capturing key messages and insights.

benefits. Oliver Schelske, Swiss Re Institute, noting the absence of standardized values for nature, emphasized that even if “not everything is insurable,” investing in nature makes sense from an insurance perspective, as it reduces risks to the asset being insured.

On the prerequisites for NbS to be viable, speakers mentioned common sense, co-benefit considerations, identifying the number of protected lives, and conducting independent auditing.

Side Event

Inclusive Comprehensive School Safety—Strengthening Resilience for Children and Youth in All Hazards: This side event, organized and facilitated by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES), showcased school safety and resilience programmes from Central Asia, the Pacific region and the Caribbean.

Anja Nielsen, Co-Chair, GADRRRES, gave an overview of CSSF, noting the all-hazards, all-risks approach that includes environmental, climate change, and biological health risks, technical threats, and other everyday risks. She elaborated on the global school safety survey, representing 350 million school-aged children, and highlighted, among other concerns, that significant infrastructure investment is needed to better protect children and teachers from natural hazards, with most suffering from funding constraints.

Education administrators from Saint Lucia, Tonga, and Kyrgyzstan described CSSF activities and outcomes from their regions, and emphasized: involving the children actively in school safety is a game changer; collaboration is the essence of resilience, requiring whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches; and building capacity at all levels, particularly teachers, for comprehensive school safety is key.

IISD’s Summary: The summary report of the meeting will be available on Monday, 9 June 2025, at: enb.iisd.org/global-platform-disaster-risk-reduction-gp2025