

## Global Platform Highlights Wednesday, 15 May 2019

The 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2019) opened in Geneva, Switzerland, on the theme of “Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies,” after two days of preparatory events, forums, and conferences. Two high-level dialogues and a ministerial roundtable took place during the day, besides many working sessions and side events. Delegates discussed the progress made toward implementing the Sendai Framework at the national and local levels, and shared country experiences. At mid-day, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) launched the 2019 Global Assessment Report (GAR 2019).

This bulletin covers the plenaries and high-level events, and a selection of other sessions.

### Welcome session

Co-Chair Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for DRR, noted that the Sendai Framework expanded the DRR constituency to include all of society. Co-Chair Manuel Bessler, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, described his country’s history in the area of DRR and resilience, arguing that, while investing in DRR has a price, its results pay off in the long term.

Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), said that Early Warning Systems are the “engine” of DRR.

Laura Tuck, World Bank, called for integrated and inclusive solutions to achieve the common goals of the Sendai Framework, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement.

Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), described outcomes from the Fourth Meeting of the Small Island States Resilience Initiative (SISRI) Practitioners, which took place from 13-14 May.

Shaila Shahid, UNDRR Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism, stated that resilience of the global financial system should not be at the cost of local communities.

### High-Level Dialogues

**Progress Made in Implementing Sendai Framework - Global and Regional Perspectives:** In the morning, moderator Beatrice Marshall, Kenyan news anchor, opened the dialogue and introduced the five regional platforms for DRR that took place in 2018. In a keynote speech, Malini Mehra,



At the opening ceremony, actors from the Theatre Breaking Through Barriers troupe present a dramatization of the Sendai Framework targets, highlighting the importance of Target E on developing national and local strategies for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Chief Executive, GLOBE International, outlined statistics on the increasing number of disasters, which have caused the displacement of some 265 million people since 2008, more than three times as many as those caused by conflict. She called for addressing not only natural hazards but also the man-made risks of technologies such as artificial intelligence and geoengineering. Kirsi Madi, UNDRR, further commented on the impacts of disasters in displacing millions of people and costing USD 500 billion to economies worldwide.

Marshall introduced the panel of speakers representing regional platforms. Ulziisaikhan Enkhtevshin, Deputy Prime Minister, Mongolia, summarized his regional platform’s emphasis on resilient infrastructure and risk-informed development. Feliks Tsolakyan, Minister of Emergency Situations, Armenia, highlighted the relevance of reducing risk to promote further infrastructure development. Edoardo Rixi, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Italy, announced the establishment of a regional coalition to discuss safety of infrastructure and emerging risks such as threats to cybersecurity. Ambassador Walid Doudech, Tunisia, highlighted two regional ministerial declarations and the focus on dedicated funding to advance implementation of the Sendai Framework. Eduardo José González Angulo, Director-General, National Unit for Disaster Risk Management, Colombia, highlighted work in his country and region on financial protection and the reduction of financial vulnerability in the face of disaster. The session closed with panelists’ call for collaboration at all levels to ensure success in meeting the Sendai Framework targets.

**Advances in national and local DRR strategies (Target E):** Chandran Nair, founder and CEO, Global Institute for Tomorrow, moderated the session. In a keynote address, Puan Maharani, Minister for Human Development and



(L-R): **Chandran Nair**, moderator; **Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary General, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); **Anna Giacometti**, Mayor of Bregaglia, Switzerland; **Akihiro Nakamura**, Vice Minister for Disaster Management, Japan; **Ronald Jackson**, Executive Director of Caribbean Disaster and Emergency, Management Agency Barbados; and **Fatimetou Abdel Malick**, President of the Regional Council of Nouakchott, Mauritania

Cultural Affairs, Indonesia, highlighted her country's interest in cooperating with other countries on disaster management through joint research, studies, and empowering local communities, noting that less than one year remains to achieve Target E of the Sendai Framework.

Asako Okai, Assistant Secretary General, UN Development Programme (UNDP), congratulated the 56 countries who have reported progress made at the national and local levels so far, and noted the challenge of undertaking multi-stakeholder consultations to develop DRR strategies that are fully owned by government and stakeholders.

Akihiro Nakamura, Vice-Minister for Disaster Management, Japan, gave an overview of DRR policy in his country, noting that all 1,700 local government authorities have developed their own DRR strategies. He stressed the importance of ensuring that national land use plans are consistent with DRR strategies.

Anna Giacometti, Mayor of Bregaglia, Switzerland, described the DRR actions taken after rock slides of August 2017 killed eight people and displaced the entire population of her village. She detailed preparedness measures implemented since then, including improvements to hydraulic systems, early warning, and an urban plan that identifies danger zones.

Ronald Jackson, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster & Emergency Management Agency, described the use of diagnostic tools to frame all-of-government priorities for action on DRR, which then are turned into country work programs. He noted that the agency's 18 Member States can access funding based on developing a "strategic pathway" to resource contribution.

Fatimetou Abdel Malick, President of the Regional Council of Nouakchott, Mauritania, said that urbanization leads to greater risk, and thus, the role of local government is more important than ever in ensuring social cohesion through economic and land-use planning. She stressed that sustainable, inclusive growth will depend on local economies and the empowerment of local and regional authorities.

### Opening Ceremony

**Opening:** The 45-minute ceremony took place at mid-day, opening with a video on "locking in resilience," and a live dramatization of the Sendai Framework targets by the Theatre Breaking Through Barriers troupe.

Michael Møller, Director of the UN Office at Geneva, affirmed the meeting's focus as being "squarely on implementation," noting that achieving the 2030 Agenda will not be possible unless DRR is mainstreamed across all activities.

Manuel Sage, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, related Switzerland's development successes through its historic investments to increase the arable land in its floodplains, while undertaking risk management in mountain areas, ultimately allowing its tourism industry to develop. He informed delegates that the Chair's summary from GP2019 outcomes will be submitted to the July 2019 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

In a video message, Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary General, underlined that joining forces could leverage an enormous "resilience dividend" from nature-based and technology-enhanced solutions.

Jayathma Wickramanayake, UNSG Special Envoy on Youth, urged leaders to tap into the potential of young generations and respond to their calls for action.

Mizutori highlighted the launch of the Sendai Framework Monitor to facilitate reporting against the Sendai Framework targets, and the existence of UNDRR's stakeholder engagement mechanism.

**Global Assessment Report (GAR) launch:** Nazhat Shameem Khan, Fiji, introduced the 2019 GAR, commenting that the report challenges readers to think about the plurality of risk rather than only address individual hazards, and warning that the world is approaching the point beyond which it may not be possible to repair systemic and cascading risks in the global system.

Mizutori presented the main findings, noting that the report provides a first update on governments' progress on the Sendai Framework's seven targets. She drew attention to the risks created by unplanned urbanization, particularly in low and middle-income countries.

Aromar Revi, Director, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, offered comments on the report, noting that the impacts of global warming of more than 2°C are unknown and could bring "an explosion of risk." He called for implementing the five "critical agendas" contained in the Sustainable



(L-R): **Kirsi Madi**, Director, UNDRR; **Michael Møller**, Director, UN Office at Geneva; Mami Mizutori, SRSG for DRR; **Manuel Sage**, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation; **Jayathma Wickramanayake**, UNSG Special Envoy on Youth; and **Manuel Bessler**, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on climate, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda in an integrated manner, also emphasizing that bottom-up processes can provide the speed and scale required to achieve these agendas in an integrated manner, given that fewer than 4,000 days remain to achieve the Sendai Framework targets by 2030.

### Working Sessions

**Global Assessment Report 2019:** Ricardo Mena, UNDRR, introduced the report. Jacqueline McGlade, Masai Mara University, Kenya, stated that “environmental degradation is a relentless silent killer,” and drew attention to extensive systemic risks from climate change and the impacts of over-development, stating that air pollution is one of the largest causes of non-communicable disease, and that the cascading effects of air, water, and chemical pollution are a challenge of our time.

Roger Pulwarty, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, noted that this GAR reports on the systemic risks of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. He announced upcoming reports and research on the complexity of drought and disaster links to security and conflict. Kamal Kishore, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), India, highlighted India’s success in making disaster risk management people-centered, saying that this approach had reduced mortality from the recent Cyclone Fani by 96%.

Juan Pablo Sarmiento, Florida International University, urged collective accountability and action aimed at compound events. Mandisa Kalako-Williams, South Africa, noted the improvement in reporting with 47 countries now reporting progress on Sendai targets. She reminded participants that they should analyze the accessibility of the policies on DRR for local community members.

Panelists recognized the “far field” effect of disasters, whereby locations further away from the center of disaster events tend to receive less attention. This tendency, panelists concluded, can exacerbate inequality, and should be addressed in the next GAR.

**Sendai Framework implementation:** Timothy Wilcox, UNDRR, introduced moderator Marcie Roth, CEO, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies. Ricardo Mena, UNDRR, presented data collected by the Sendai Framework Monitor,

a tool through which Member States report back on progress in implementing the Sendai Framework. He reported that: disaggregated data shows that lower-income, African, and Asian countries, are disproportionately affected by disasters; and that Member States are most frequently reporting on Targets A and B, with A displaying the most progress globally. Kamal Kishore, NDMA, India, said there was a reasonably good chance Targets A, E, F, and G could be achieved by 2030, and that single-hazard approaches should not be dismissed as they are sometimes helpful. Mohamed Hassaan Felfel Abdelsameaa, Egyptian Cabinet, said his country was primarily vulnerable to climate-related disasters that impact economic development, and presented Egypt’s new DRR strategy. Martha Herrera Gonzalez, Global Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, CEMEX, described her company’s various sustainability strategies, such as partnerships with the public sector and civil society, and urban community transformation projects. Maria Veronica Bastias, Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction, presented ‘Views from the Frontline,’ an independent review of progress towards the implementation of DRR, which elicits responses from organizations in over 50 countries.

### Special Session: Women Leadership in DRR

Tarja Halonen, former President of Finland, moderated this session in the afternoon. In opening remarks, Mami Mizutori, SRSG for DRR, recounted her experience witnessing female leadership in creating resilient cities in Kenya, and said women were essential in achieving the Sendai Framework Target E.

Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Deputy Prime Minister, Malaysia, noted the vulnerability of women in disasters, citing, as an example, that four times as many women than men died during the 2004 tsunami. She described Malaysia’s efforts to remove gender-discriminatory policies and empower women in DRR.

Saber Hossain, Member of Parliament, Bangladesh, said his country was first in gender equality among South Asian nations, and that this has been an essential driver of the country’s overall economic development.

Laura Tuck, World Bank, said international organizations should make it a requirement to integrate a gender perspective in all investments and programs.



(L-R): **Saber Hossain**, Member of Parliament, Bangladesh; **Laura Tuck**, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank; **Tarja Halonen**, former President of Finland; **Mami Mizutori**, SRSG for DRR; **Minata Samate Cessouma**, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union; and **Dolores Devesi**, OXFAM, Solomon Islands

Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union, spoke of her organization's efforts to promote gender parity in DRR, despite sometimes facing cultural hurdles.

Dolores Devesi, Oxfam, Solomon Islands, called for addressing structural inequalities that disadvantage women, and for better tracking of gender indicators in DRR.

### **Ministerial Roundtable**

Mizutori opened the roundtable, which addressed the theme of DRR, climate change, and the SDGs, noting the importance of coordinating DRR implementation with national adaptation plans, in light of the impact of extreme events caused by climate change. Tarja Halonen, former President of Finland, congratulated ministers on their successful monitoring of progress on the Sendai Framework targets, and urged them to scale up action on climate change.

Many ministers highlighted the impacts from climate change that their countries face, such as wildfires, glacier ice melt, and extreme drought, with some requesting financial and technical assistance from the donor community. Ghana reminded participants of the negative correlation between poverty and resilience to disasters. Portugal highlighted his country's 'Safe Village, Safe People' program which decentralizes aspects of DRR and mobilizes local communities to play an active role.

Zambia reported progress on community-level disaster management, farmer insurance, and climate-smart agriculture. Romania drew attention to the need for citizen education in the face of new kinds of extreme weather events, adding that a mobile app has been deployed to convey alerts and educational messages. The Republic of Korea announced that 171 local governments have participated in a campaign to incorporate disaster risk into their urban development plans.

Italy introduced plans to increase cultural awareness of disaster risk, including through schools. Botswana highlighted government partnerships with mobile phone companies, which have improved the delivery of early warning messages to citizens around the country.

Canada noted that her country is warming at a rate two times the global average, and has developed an action plan that incorporates all of government, stakeholders, and civil society. Colombia said that protecting ecosystems has been a successful strategy in dealing with natural disasters. The World Bank announced USD 50 billion in direct financing for adaptation and resilience, a new set of metrics to aid countries in building resilience, and its work on cross-sectoral issues, such as the role of ecosystem services in reaching climate change and disaster risk management goals. The WMO urged implementation of the Paris Agreement, noting that global warming of more than 2°C will exacerbate disasters.



Ministerial Roundtable participants discuss DRR, climate change, and the SDGs