



GNDR

Global Network of Civil Society
Organisations for Disaster Reduction

Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Zero-Draft 20th October 2014

**Consolidated comments from the
Global Network
of Civil Society Organisations
for Disaster Reduction**

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GNDR Discussion Paper:

The following paper is intended as a contribution to the development of the Post-2015 Disaster Risk Reduction Framework that is currently being drafted by the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction March 2015. The discussion paper should be read in conjunction with the Zero-Draft of the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction dated 20th October 2014.

GNDR discussion papers are written to contribute to policy debate and to provoke discussions on disaster risk reduction issues. They are “work in progress” papers which may contribute towards developing civil society and government policy position. The views and recommendations expressed are those of the GNDR Secretariat and although drawing from contributions and comments received from GNDR members they do not necessarily reflect a negotiated position within the broader GNDR membership.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction and Preamble

The Zero-draft of the Post-2015 DRR Framework (20th Oct 2014) is a notable improvement on the Pre-Zero draft and provides a good basis for future negotiations for a post-2015 framework. It is encouraging to see the incorporation of new elements that were either missing or incomplete within the HFA, including:

- a. Strong set of guiding principles
- b. Emphasis on underlying risk factors
- c. Stronger commitment to social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable people
- d. Stronger domestic and international legal arrangements including human rights references
- e. Commitment to enhanced monitoring mechanisms including global targets
- f. Recognition of the substantial impact of small scale recurring disasters
- g. Recognition of the strategic importance of the post-disaster recovery

Despite these additional elements, there remains a significant number of areas where the zero-draft could be further strengthened. A review of the effectiveness of the HFA in achieving a substantial reduction in disaster losses identifies major achievements, gap and challenges to be addressed within a successor framework. Specific challenges include:

- a. Limited effectiveness in integrating DRR into sustainable development policies and planning;
- b. Limited progress in reducing underlying risk factors;
- c. Weak policy coherence and ownership outside of the DRM community;
- d. Limited public accountability for fulfilment of responsibilities and obligations;
- e. Policy relevance in contexts of complexity, poverty, informality, fragility and insecurity;
- f. Implementation gap between national policy and local practice.

These challenges are not highlighted in the zero-draft *preamble*, which would benefit from a more concise problem definition that draws out critical issues, lessons learnt and comparative advantages of a DRR framework in preventing and reducing disaster risk. Importantly, the preamble requires a stronger narrative outlining that the prevention of disaster risk is primarily a development issue and strategically frames the DRR agenda as a means to both *protect* and *enhance* a sustainable development goal. This would strengthen policy coherence and ownership with other post-2015 processes and foster collaboration and partnership, which is a prerequisite to making progress in addressing underlying risk factors.

B. Expected Outcome and Goal

The stated goal of the framework is a statement consisting of a mix of objectives and a purpose and should be simplified into a concise statement e.g. “*To strengthen the resilience of people, communities and countries to disasters*”. **Global targets** remain primarily trailing indicators focused on disaster losses although there is no target for “environmental losses”. These targets could be complemented by forward-looking action-oriented targets focused on resilience outcomes. In order to strengthen coherence with the sustainable development and climate change agendas, the framework **timeframe** should be synchronised with other post-2015 frameworks i.e. fifteen years.

C. Guiding Principles

In general, the zero-draft outlines a strong set of guiding principles although several of them encompass and repeat a number of distinct issues and would benefit from being redrafted to reduce duplication and increase conciseness and clarity. Despite an extensive list of principles, there remains some notable omissions that should be incorporated within the post-2015 framework:

1. Rights-based framework grounded in domestic and international legal arrangements
2. Building on existing knowledge and capacities
3. Environmental Integrity
4. Prioritise marginalised and vulnerable people

D. Priorities for Action

Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk

The zero-draft calls for a more inclusive people-centred approach. This requires an understanding of disaster risk and how it is created from the perspective of affected populations. The strong emphasis on science and technology within the zero-draft could be interpreted as downplaying the value and relevance of local risk information, indigenous knowledge, and community-based capacities and practices that have evolved to cope with a complex and uncertain risk landscape. This includes the need to invest in and strengthen the ability of local practitioners and local knowledge networks (with the support of science and technology) to identify, develop and share appropriate models, quality standards, certifications, tools and methodologies to map, assess, record and reduce intensive & extensive risk in the context of complexity, climate change, poverty, informality, fragility and insecurity.

Building on the holistic inclusive approaches that communities use to self-manage a complex array of risks, greater emphasis should be given to ensuring disaster risk knowledge, associated risk reduction models and tools are relevant and coherent with the actions of non-DRR development actors. This will involve working with people-at-risk, practitioners, science and academia to develop holistic conceptual models, integrated risk management

approaches and harmonised policies and practices that take into account critical inter-dependencies, social-ecological boundaries and limits of resilient communities and societies. Such approaches are essential to build a shared vision, political ownership and leadership to break down policy silos and foster partnerships to tackle underlying risk drivers.

Priority 2: Strengthening Governance and Institutions to Manage Disaster Risk

Guiding principles of inclusion, transparency, participation and accountability provide a strong steer for strengthening the governance of disaster risk. In line with comments made in Priority 1 *Understanding disaster risk* greater emphasis should be placed on actions that directly strengthen **local governance capabilities** and build on sources of resilience both within and outside of the state, particularly in LDCs and fragile states. Moreover, mindful of the political-economy of development, particular attention should be given to addressing differential vulnerabilities amongst different social groups - primarily related to structural inequalities, exclusion and marginalisation within governance processes.

Strengthening political commitment for the implementation of HFA2 requires **greater accountability** on the part of governments and other stakeholders. Given the challenge of strengthening accountability within a “voluntary framework”, it is important that public and legal obligations for the protection of persons from disasters are grounded in popular awareness and participation so that *rights holders* are able to exert pressure on the *bearers of political mandates*. In this respect rights-based approaches can help define the relationship between states and citizens and formalise individual and institutional responsibilities, accountabilities and liabilities. Importantly, stated actions to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, quality standards and public scrutiny must co-evolve with actions to strengthen appropriate remedy and redress mechanisms for non-compliance.

Priority 3: Investing in Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Resilience

Strengthening resilience in complex societies requires a *whole-of-society* approach where its different parts –institutional architecture, public policies, prevailing norms, values, culture and individual capacities– interact in ways that are mutually reinforcing in support of the required changes. Accordingly, the zero-draft would benefit from adopting an implementation strategy based more on a “*systems-wide perspective*” that connects actions in support of changes in institutional policies and procedures with actions aimed at cultural changes in people’s behaviour, norms and attitudes based on an understanding of individual and societal levels of “acceptable risk”.

Priority 4: Enhancing Preparedness for Effective Response and Recovery

Disasters can serve to expose development deficiencies and deepen understanding of how risk is created. In so doing, the post-disaster recovery phase offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate how these insights and lessons learnt can be applied to build back in a safer, more resilient way. Experience has shown the post-disaster recovery can also be used to advance the wider adoption of risk reduction and resilience principles within development policies and planning outside of the affected area to the benefit of the broader society. In this way DRR can serve both to *protect and enhance* sustainable development.

The strategic significance of the post-disaster recovery phase is partially reflected in the zero-draft guiding principle “J” although the priority actions outlined under this Priority Area 4 are primarily aimed at realising the benefits of enhanced preparedness (planning) for the

response and recovery phases ahead of a disaster. Accordingly, additional actions are required to systematically undertake post-disaster analysis to understand the causes of the disaster and explicitly utilise the political leverage that disasters provide to mainstream risk reduction and resilience thinking into sustainable development policies and practice – the single most important weakness of the HFA.

E. Role of Stakeholders

In general, this section would benefit from a short narrative outlining the main roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders including clear commitments and accountabilities for specific actions.

The zero-draft calls for a more *people-centred, people-focused* framework which puts at-risk men and women (as the primary bearers of risk) at the forefront of efforts to strengthen resilience. This would require the formulation and execution of the post-2015 framework to reflect the needs, priorities and perceptions of at-risk populations and empower local actors to manage and reduce risk by having access to the necessary information, resources and authority. Accordingly, the zero-draft should provide greater recognition and support to **local-level implementers** i.e. **organised communities, community practitioners, local authorities, civil society and non-governmental organisations** who will be the primary stakeholders in the post-2015 framework implementation.

F. International Cooperation and Global Partnerships

General

The zero-draft should place greater emphasis on ensuring that financial resources, technical expertise and capacity building support are tailored to strengthen *local resilience* as the basic building block and foundation of a resilient society. In Least Developed Countries and fragile states, the strategic emphasis should be placed on strengthening sources of resilience outside of the State.

Implementation and Follow-up

Strategies to strengthen resilience must take existing sources of local resilience as the starting point with greater recognition and emphasis on the means to identify, collate, access and transfer local knowledge, practitioner expertise and local practices. To ensure a more balanced multi-stakeholder engagement, it is recommended that UNISDR establishes other stakeholder advisory groups (to complement the science group).

Resource Mobilisation

Financial resources are a fundamental element of effective implementation and it is recommended to be a dedicated sub-section. This section could outline existing and future domestic and external funding mechanisms, including potential linkages with related trust funds (e.g. Climate Adaptation Fund; Global Environmental Facility) which could leverage in resources for strengthening resilience.

CONSOLIDATED COMMENTS FROM GNDR

Introduction

The zero-draft provides a good basis for inter-governmental negotiations for a post-2015 DRR framework. In particular, GNDR is encouraged to see, and strongly supports, the following new and/or strengthened elements identified as critical issues to be incorporated within a successor framework:

- Strong set of guiding principles;
- Increased emphasis on addressing underlying risk factors (risk creation);
- Explicit recognition of the critical roles and responsibilities of state, public and private sector actors;
- Greater emphasis on social inclusion and the empowerment of marginalised and vulnerable people, including participation of women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, community practitioners, and older persons;
- Explicit recognition of the need for disaggregated information based on gender, age, disability and cultural criteria;
- Increasing recognition of the need for stronger international and domestic legal arrangements for citizenry safety and protection, including references to international human rights frameworks;
- Commitment to an enhanced monitoring mechanism, including developing global targets;
- Recognition of the substantial impact of recurring small-scale disasters;
- Recognition of the strategic importance of the post-disaster recovery phase.

Notwithstanding the above, and based on consultations and feedback from GNDR members, there are a significant number of areas where the zero-draft would benefit from further strengthening. Following the basic structure of the zero-draft this paper outlines a range of issues and suggestions for the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee to take into consideration for the development of a concise, focused and forward looking and action-orientated outcomes document.

A. Preamble

The experiences, lessons learnt and gaps identified in the HFA implementation are the starting point for developing a successor framework. In this respect, whilst there are some excellent suggestions and points outlined in the narrative, the problem analysis explaining the continued upwards trend in disaster losses remains incomplete with some key gaps and challenges notably missing. These include:

- An understanding of the reasons for the limited effectiveness of the HFA in addressing ***underlying risk factors***

- The **weak policy coherence** and **lack of ownership** of the DRR agenda outside of the DRM community
- The challenge of **strengthening public accountability** within a voluntary “adopted” framework
- The challenge of **uncertain complex risk realities** that affected populations live, often in the context of poverty, informality, fragility, conflict and insecurity.
- The implications of the **implementation gap** between national DRR policy and local practice

These gaps and challenges have implications for a successor DRR framework designed to have a stronger focus on ensuring accountability for preventing the creation of risk at all levels, whilst continuing to reduce existing risks. For example, global and local partnerships with other development actors and frameworks are essential to collaboratively tackle underlying risk drivers and strengthen resilience. It is therefore important to understand the “added value” of the HFA2 in advancing what are primarily development issues.

In order to strengthen collaboration and policy coherence the preamble would benefit from a stronger narrative outlining that **disasters are a manifestation of deficiencies in socio-economic development processes, where “resilience” is a defining characteristic of “sustainable development”**. Moreover, to build political ownership outside of the DRM community, the DRR framework would benefit from being conceptually and operationally seen as part of a broader integrated risk management strategy framed under an overarching sustainable development goal (nested hierarchies).

B. Expected Outcomes and Goals

Timeframe

To support overall coherence and harmonisation with the post-2015 sustainable development and climate change agendas, it would appear logical to synchronise the timeframes of the different frameworks. This would require the successor DRR framework to be implemented over a **fifteen years timeframe**.

Goal

The current goal of the framework is a statement consisting of a mix of objectives and a purpose. It would be helpful to clearly state what the framework is trying to achieve i.e. the purpose of the post-2015 DRR framework is **“to strengthen the resilience of people, communities and countries to disasters”**

Global Targets

The suggested global targets are primarily “trailing indicators” focused on disaster losses although there is no global target for “environmental losses”. The five global targets would benefit from being complemented by forward-looking, action-oriented targets that could guide progress based on resilience building outcomes.

C. Guiding Principles

General

The zero-draft outline a strong set of guiding principles that provides the underpinning philosophy informing the strategy development. Several of the principles encompass a number of distinct yet inter-related issues which are repeated across a number of principles. In general tightening the language would serve to reduce duplication and increase conciseness and clarity.

Notwithstanding the above, despite an extensive list of principles, there remain some significant gaps and/or missing principles that need to be incorporated within a successor framework:

Additional Principles:-
<p>1. Rights-based; The protection of persons, property and assets is a legal obligation recognised</p> <p>in domestic legal arrangements and linked to international human rights obligations</p>
<p>2. Build on existing capacities, Taking into account indigenous knowledge and local sources of resilience</p>
<p>3. Environmental Integrity; Promote ecosystems-based solutions that respect, protect and enhance the absorption and regulating functions o eco-systems.</p>
<p>4. Prioritise marginalised and vulnerable people who are disproportionately affected by disasters</p>

D. Priorities for Action

Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk

General

The priority area of *understanding disaster risk* needs to give greater emphasis and recognition of the value of local risk information, indigenous knowledge and community-based practices. This will require investments in gathering, developing and sharing evidence-based methodologies and good practices by local practitioners (supported by the scientific community) that are able to blend local expertise and know-how with science-based approaches. These tools must be relevant in contexts of complexity, poverty, informality, fragility, insecurity and climate change to which the majority of the world's vulnerable populations are exposed.

Moreover, in the context of increasing global interdependence, concerted international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels are critical to prevent new risks

and reduce existing risks. This will require research in the development of integrated approaches and alternative risk models, methodologies and approaches that consider the wider picture by taking broader systems-wide perspectives that better represent local risk realities. Such approaches can develop inter-linkages between different work areas, avoid policy silos and compartmentalisation of actions.

National and Local Levels – recommended additional actions

- Systematically undertake community risk profiles and “all hazards” risk assessments to provide high-quality information for better decision making
- Develop disaster loss databases to record the social, economic and environmental impact (i.e. non-economic losses) of large and small scale disasters, with information disaggregated according to socio-economic criteria
- Strengthen national and local capacities to identify, gather, develop and share traditional and indigenous knowledge, community-developed solutions and culturally-sensitive practices
- Determine public perceptions of “acceptable levels of risks” and maximum bearable losses at sub-national / local levels
- Improve local access to risk information, policies and practices for local risk bearers and duty bearers

Global and Regional Levels – recommended additional actions

- Innovative partnerships between science and practitioner groups (including organised communities) to develop methodologies, standards and tools that better represent community solutions and approaches to coping with complex and uncertain risk landscapes
- Strengthen knowledge and understanding of social-ecological limits, boundaries and thresholds, including critical inter-dependencies and relationships
- Develop systems-wide perspectives and holistic risk models in support of trans-boundary collaboration and integrated approaches across related development frameworks and inter-connected risks.
- Strengthen political leadership and shared vision for a more holistic and harmonised programming
- Promote harmonised programming that strengthen inter-linkages between different work areas, avoid policy silos and compartmentalisation of actions.
- Collection, distillation and sharing of risk information and knowledge to inform policy development through innovative knowledge exchange networks and practitioner platforms
- Develop global and regional targets & indicators for measuring environmental losses, including livestock

Priority 2: Strengthening Governance and Institutions to manage disaster risk

General

Greater emphasis should be placed on actions that directly strengthen local capacities and resources and support local activities, with a particular emphasis on those who are disproportionately affected by disasters. This section must address issues of exclusion and marginalisation within governance processes that underpin differential vulnerabilities. Using rights-based notions of “duty bearers” and “rights holders” can help clarify individual and institutional roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and liabilities. Legislative-focused actions should prioritise those countries that have made least progress in establishing an “enabling policy environment”. In areas of informality, fragility and insecurity, increased emphasis should be given to strengthening the governance capacities of non-state and/or informal institutions.

National and Local Levels – recommended additional actions

- Decentralisation and clarity of institutional and individual authorities, responsibilities, accountabilities and liabilities
- Establish legislative environment and appropriate methodologies to support social inclusion of marginalised groups
- Identify, prioritise and support appropriate actions to meet the needs and priorities of marginalised and vulnerable high-risk people and social groups
- Development of contextually appropriate quality standards and mechanisms with the active participation of science, civil society and practitioners groups.
- Community-focused financial mechanisms to access and mobilise financial resources to strengthen local capacities and support local action
- Training to enhance the leadership and governance capacities of local men and women
- Strengthen social networks to support community organisation and strengthen social capital and trust between state and citizenry
- Local compliance and redress mechanisms including conflict resolution

Priority 3: Investing in Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Resilience

Strengthening societal resilience will require an optimal balance of structural and non-structural measures. This involves changes in physical infrastructure and policy legislation, together with “cultural” changes in individual behaviour, norms and attitudes. In general, throughout the zero-draft very few priority actions relate to understanding cultural norms and practices related to public perceptions of safety and protection.

Closing the gap between policy aspirations and local practices requires different parts of a society – its values, culture, institutional architecture and socio-political realities – to interact in ways that are mutually reinforcing. Accordingly the zero-draft would benefit from the adoption of a strategic approach that supports mutually reinforcing supply- and demand-side actions that connect changes in institutional policies and procedures with cultural changes in individual behaviour, norms and attitudes based on an understanding of societal levels of “acceptable risk”. Such an approach would need to encompass elements of self-help, mutual support and state assistance.

National and Local Levels – recommended actions

- Invest in mutually reinforcing supply- and demand-side actions to support the widespread incorporation of risk reduction and resilience principles within institutional and individual practices
- Raise critical awareness, promote public debates and foster *social demand* amongst the general population for the protection of persons from disasters
- Promote an ecosystems-based approach including the conservation and restoration of ecosystems
- Promote economic development opportunities and provision of basic services in rural areas
- Support risk-sensitive poverty alleviation programmes, including diversified livelihood / income options for households in high-risk areas

Global and Regional Levels

- Develop resilience markers within sectoral programmes (UNDP to champion?)
- Develop resilience markers with public investment portfolios of international development banks (World Bank / GFDRR to champion?)
- Disaster risk / resilience markers within Environmental Impact Assessments (UNEP to champion?)
- Develop resilience / DRR markers within related multi-lateral trust funds e.g. Green Fund; Global Environment Facility; Climate Adaptation Fund and Least Developed Countries Fund

Priority 4: Enhancing Preparedness for Effective Response and Recovery

National and Local Levels

- Disaster loss databases to include losses to livelihoods and productive assets (including livelihoods, seeds and tools)
- Promote response and recovery interventions that ***protect and enhance*** lives, livelihoods and assets
- Systematically undertake post-disaster forensics (utilising common analytical tools) to identify development deficiencies
- Lessons learnt and resilience principles to inform sustainable recovery and embed within sustainable development policy and planning
- Actions to increase uptake and compliance with planning and construction standards

E. Role of Stakeholders

Within a people-centred action-orientated framework there is need for more explicit recognition and support to key ***local level implementers*** i.e. local authorities, local civil

society organisations, organised communities and community practitioners – all critical stakeholders for implementation.

For each of the key stakeholders (institutional and individual; state and non-state), the framework would benefit from having clearly articulated roles, responsibilities, **accountabilities and liabilities** anchored to public commitments in support of the implementation of specific aspects of the framework.

F. International Cooperation and Global Partnerships

General

The Least Developed Countries have very limited state capacities outside of major urban centres, particularly in areas of informality and fragility. In these situations, the strategic emphasis should be placed on utilising capacities and sources of resilience outside of the state.

Financial resources, technical expertise, capacity-building assistance and an enabling policy environment are particularly needed to strengthen local institutions, mechanisms and capacities to strengthen community resilience.

Implementation and Follow-up

Strategies to strengthen societal resilience must take existing sources of resilience (particularly local capacities) as the starting point. Least Developed Countries and fragile states cannot afford not to utilise its state and non-state sources of strength to the full. The zero-draft would benefit from placing greater emphasis on accessing, developing and transferring local knowledge and practitioner expertise.

In support of developing a more balanced multi-stakeholder approach to implementation, it is recommend that in addition to an enhanced Scientific and Technical Advisory Group, UNISDR establishes equivalent advisory groups for other critical stakeholder groups.

Resource Mobilisation as a specific sub-section; Mechanisms to mobilise financial resources are a fundamental element of effective implementation and are of sufficient importance to warrant a dedicated concluding sub-section as was the case in the HFA. This section could outline existing and future domestic and international funding mechanisms to financially support DRR-related actions, including elaborating on potential linkages with the related trust funds e.g. Green Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund and Least Developed Countries Fund that could leverage in additional resources to strengthen resilience.