

# Reflections from the 2019 UNDRR Global Platform

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The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience joined the Australian delegation in Geneva for the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction that took place in Geneva, Switzerland.

The second Multi Hazard Early Warning Conference, the fourth World Reconstruction Conference, the Stakeholder Forum and the Science-Policy Forum were held in conjunction with the Global Platform as well as a number of other side events including Official Statements, Ministerial Round Tables, High-level Dialogues, Working Sessions, Special Sessions, Side Events, Learning Labs, Field Visits, the Innovation Platform and the Ignite Stage.

The Australian delegation included Emergency Management Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Red Cross, Geoscience Australia, Bureau of Meteorology, Tasmania Latrobe and Kentish councils, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Torrens Resilience Institute, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience and the National Resilience Taskforce.

Participants attended from 182 countries. Half of the panellists were women and 40 per cent of participants were women. More than 120 people with a disability were in attendance.

Attendance at the Global Platform provided an opportunity for Australia to showcase its work on disaster risk reduction in Australia and the work of the National Resilience Taskforce established in 2018 under the Department of Home Affairs. Director-General Emergency Management Australia, Rob Cameron, presented Australia's Official Statement reporting that Australia had published its first data to the Sendai Monitor covering 2015–2018 that confirmed more Australians are being affected by natural hazards. The statement outlined more frequent and more intense natural hazards across Australia, including unparalleled heatwaves in scale and duration, unprecedented bushfires, severe flooding and destructive tropical cyclones.

Mr Cameron reported on Australia's new National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, informed by the Sendai Targets and co-designed across government and the private and community sectors, to set out the need to proactively reduce risk now and into the future. He also reported on Australia's investment in greater preparedness capabilities, for example, the National Fire Danger Rating System.

## Progress on the Sendai Framework

With the theme for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction being 'The Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies', the case was made for inclusion of social, environmental and economic considerations in disaster risk reduction with examples and research-based evidence detailing the multiple dividends of risk-informed decision-making to build resilience, and not only to avoid loss.

The Global Platform highlighted the importance of disaster risk reduction and the contribution of the Sendai Framework towards the Paris Agreement and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>1</sup>

Progress has been made in implementing the Sendai Framework, based on data submitted by 116 countries currently reporting against the Sendai Framework Monitor. The *United Nations 2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, which was launched at the Global Platform, and other recent reports such as the Global Warming of 1.5°C report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, also provided information on progress against the Sendai Framework.

## Key takeaways

- A better understanding of risk, and the drivers of disaster risk is needed.
- The availability of and access to data is critical.
- An increase in the capacity of individuals, communities, countries and systems to participate in disaster risk reduction is needed.
- Disaster risk reduction strategies must target drivers of inequality to consider at-risk and marginalised people.

<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly 2015, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

- Children and youth are leading the way in disaster risk reduction and climate action and we must make greater efforts to engage with them.
- The role of the media should be strengthened noting their critical role in providing information to people.
- Transboundary risks, those that cross borders, must not be forgotten.
- Local disaster risk reduction strategies must be developed and supported at the national level, and be locally led and guided by community knowledge, local solutions and city-to-city learning.
- Health planning and investment in resilient health facilities must be strengthened.
- Climate and disaster risks must be considered as factors of migration and displacement of people.
- Financial allocations must be made for disaster risk reduction with prevention as a core element.
- The private sector is a strategic partner and public-private partnerships are essential to achieve the scale of investment and innovation required to achieve disaster risk reduction targets.
- There is an interplay between disasters, climate change, environmental degradation and fragility, and there are also security implications associated with climate change.
- Increased technical, capacity building and financial support is a priority in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.
- Improvements to early warning systems will support achieving disaster risk reduction targets.
- International cooperation, multilateral action and inclusive local action in managing disaster risk and its cascading effects are essential to manage the global and systemic nature of disaster risk.

## Global Assessment Report 2019

The Global Assessment Report 2019 provides the first update from countries on progress against the seven targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and highlights ten observations and corresponding actions. The report highlights that change is inevitable, and that we are in an environment where hazards are less predictable, exposure is growing and vulnerability is compounding. The Global Assessment Report summarises that:

- surprise is the new normal
- risk is growing in a shrinking world
- risk is complex, let's deal with it
- the cost of vulnerability is high
- disasters undermine progress towards sustainable development
- the costs of disasters are not equally shared between low- and high-income countries with the poorest bearing the highest toll and greatest costs

- climate change amplifies disaster risk
- robust, timely, accurate, disaggregated, people centred and accessible data will realise risk-informed sustainable development
- government investment in disaster risk reduction is non-negotiable
- risk is everyone's business.

The overarching message of the Global Platform was that the resilience dividend pays off and that risk-informed investments are essential for sustainable development and inclusive societies.

Participants reaffirmed the Sendai Framework as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and called for greater political commitment to fully integrate disaster risk reduction in its implementation. Participants also called for the Climate Action Summit 2019 and the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to affirm the catalytic role of disaster risk reduction in scaling up action on climate adaptation and resilience.

## Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2020

In 2020, Australia will host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. The conference, co-hosted with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, will be held in Brisbane and will provide an opportunity to draw greater attention to the particular challenges faced by island and remote populations in the region.

### Resources

Global Platform: [www.unisdr.org/conference/2019/globalplatform/home](http://www.unisdr.org/conference/2019/globalplatform/home)

Global Assessment Report 2019: [www.preventionweb.net/sendai-framework/gar](http://www.preventionweb.net/sendai-framework/gar)

Global Platform document and reports: [www.preventionweb.net/collections/gp2019-publications](http://www.preventionweb.net/collections/gp2019-publications)

Australia's National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and Profiling Australia's Vulnerability: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/collections/disaster-risk-reduction/>