

# UNDP 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ministerial Meeting

UN Conference Building, New York, 24 February 2016, 11.25h – 13:00h

VERSION AS OF 22 FEBRUARY 2016



## **SESSION OUTLINE**

### ***IV. Thematic Break-out Session Managing Risk, Building Resilience***

#### **Introduction**

Over a ten-year period to 2014, disasters have caused an estimated US\$1.4 trillion in damages, killing 700,000 people, displacing more than 250 million and affecting a further 1.7 billion. This reality does not affect all groups equally with women and children 14 times more likely to die in a disaster than men due to their lower socio-economic status and gender inequality. These disasters have eroded development gains by devastating agriculture, infrastructure, education and governance systems.

Meanwhile, a rapidly changing climate is having deep and far-reaching consequences, with hydro-meteorological and climatological hazards<sup>1</sup> accounting for close to 90 percent of all these disasters. Evidence of this can be seen worldwide: drought is causing major strain on livelihoods and food security in the Sahel; climate change is expected to cause an additional 250,000 deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress; environmental degradation and pressures on resources is driving more and more people to migrate, internally and externally, with considerable consequences. For some countries, such as vulnerable small-island developing states (SIDS), the impacts are particularly devastating.

The evidence is clear: climate and disaster risk have the potential to heavily impact every aspect of life and living. Issues of risk and development are therefore one and the same. A failure to ensure that risk informs development will mean that development will be unsustainable, and will negatively impact all sectors. Therefore, this issue goes to the heart of sustainable development and is essential to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

---

<sup>1</sup> Hydro-meteorological and climatological hazards include, for instance, hurricane, flooding, typhoon, high temperatures, droughts and wildfires.

For developing countries, which are particularly susceptible to risk, this is of major concern. Weakness in infrastructure and governance, health and education, finances and economy ensure not only are they most likely to be affected by climate and disaster risk, but also the most severely affected. (Over a 20 year period, low and lower-middle income countries accounted for only 27% of disasters but 81% of deaths.) These same vulnerabilities make recovery, and the transition from relief to development, considerably challenging, with some countries and communities never fully transitioning out of crisis.

While the challenges are considerable, global developments in 2015 offer signs of hope. All four of the major post-2015 development negotiations - disaster risk reduction, financing for development, sustainable development and climate – have made strong reference to the indivisibility of risk from development. This has been driven not only by member-states themselves through negotiations but also by civil society, the multilateral system and the private sector. Risk has thus become an all-of-society issue, with an increasingly all-of-society approach.

That said, there is much that needs to change for development to capitalise on the opportunity to be truly risk-informed. Development itself has to change. Resilience, the reduction of risk and reduction of vulnerability, needs to be central. Economic growth and social development, has to increasingly be low or even zero-carbon. The integration of climate and disaster risk with development as indivisible elements should be seen not only as the singular way in which progress will be achieved. Additionally, investment by the development community, whilst critically needed in those contexts most at risk, will fail to yield results unless the private sector, responsible for the bulk of investment, is at the centre of all development plans and programs.

The scale of the risk/development challenges, the breadth and depth of international ambition seen in the SDGs, and the demand for an integrated approach to development that foregrounds issues of risk, can only be delivered through a sustained, all-of-society effort that links global partnership to country and community change. Now is the time to deliver on the promise of 2015.

## **Objectives**

- Reflecting on the year of global agreements and discuss what the outcomes mean for risk and development issues;
- Highlighting how an integrated approach to climate and disaster risk with development will not only lead to more coherent and cost-efficient progress, but actually be central to progress;

- Illuminating the way in which climate and disaster risk impacts on development and vice versa.
- Considering the implications of a risk-informed approach to sustainable development and achieving the sustainable development goals;
- Deliberating on the practicalities of turning global agreements into concrete country-level action, bearing in mind gender equality;
- Describing how the global all-of-society partnership seen most-recently in COP21 advocacy and discussions can mean real change at the country level.

### **Guiding Questions**

- What are the transformative ways in which governments have delivered development through building resilience to disaster and climate risk?
- What message does the Paris COP21 agreement send to the development community? What is needed to make good on the commitments made at the COP by national and international, public and private actors?
- How can these commitments to deliver risk-informed, low-carbon development be practically delivered at the country level?
- How can partnerships deliver on risk-informed low-carbon development?

### **Expected Outcome**

At the end of this session, participants will have exchanged experiences and thoughts on need to integrate issues of climate and disaster risk into development planning and programming, as well as how to address some of the key challenges and opportunities. These challenges and opportunities should be framed as taking the new global agreements and delivering them at the country level. The practical ways in which developing countries deliver change will be a core element of the outcome, together with the partnerships that need to be developed to make that change a reality. In addition, this session will highlight the role of UNDP in delivering development that is informed by climate and disaster risk, and illuminate examples of good practice from UNDP and beyond.

### **Format**

The session follows a Davos-style discussion format. A moderator will provide a brief overview of the session objectives and pose questions to each of the panellists to respond, before opening the session for interventions from the floor.