

United Nations  Nations Unies

OFFICE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION • BUREAU POUR LA REDUCTION DES RISQUES DE CATASTROPHES

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Excellency,

I am writing in response to your letter of 18 November 2020 inviting the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to provide input to the thematic review of the Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Disaster risk reduction is indeed at the core of this year's HLPF theme, and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, including its provision to "build back better", is essential for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

In accordance with the Sendai Framework, the outcomes of the Global and Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction are offered as an input to the deliberations of the HLPF as part of the integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits. The Global and Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction are an opportunity to assess progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework and to advance coherence between the implementation and financing of national disaster risk reduction strategies, national climate adaptation plans, and national sustainable development plans. The HLPF is indeed a crucial intergovernmental forum to facilitate the integration of a risk-informed approach across the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I therefore regret to inform you that the Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled to take place in 2020 and 2021 have been postponed until after the HLPF due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to sharing the outcomes of the rescheduled Regional Platforms, as well as the seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be hosted by the Government of Indonesia in May 2022, ahead of the HLPF in 2022.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the world, UNDRR immediately pivoted to support Member States in their response and to ensure recovery is risk-informed and builds resilience to all types of future shocks and hazards. Over the past 12 months, we have developed numerous tools and policy guidance documents to ensure risk and resilience are integrated into COVID-19 response and recovery and have brought thousands of experts together virtually to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic for more effective disaster risk reduction policy and practice in the future.

H.E. Munir Akram
President of the Economic and Social Council
New York

Rest assured that UNDRR will contribute this wealth of knowledge gained and lessons learned by us and our partners to the deliberations and outcome of the 2021 HLPF. This includes the preparations for the thematic sessions where the integration of disaster risk reduction is crucial. In future, an annual session dedicated to disaster risk reduction and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could provide an essential contribution to the deliberations of the HLPF.

UNDRR is also committed to supporting a risk-informed approach across the work of the ECOSOC's functional commissions and forums. The Commission for Social Development offers opportunities to promote a risk-informed approach to development that address the underlying social and economic drivers of disaster risk. The Science, Technology and Innovation Forum can play an important role in promoting the disaster risk reduction technology needs of developing countries, including on the collection of an analysis of disaster loss and risk data and early warning systems.

As a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, UNDRR has been engaged in drafting this year's Financing for Sustainable Development Report, and we look forward to actively engaging in the Forum on Financing for Development to promote a risk-informed approach to financing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Development Cooperation Forum also offers an important opportunity to call for international development cooperation that supports national efforts to reduce disaster risk, enables recovery and builds resilience in the COVID-19 period and beyond.

The cascading social, economic, and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis demonstrate what happens when development is not risk-informed. So long as economic and development policies and investments do not consider their role in creating or reducing risk, disasters will continue to undermine progress towards the SDGs, particularly in those countries furthest behind. UNDRR is committed to supporting Member States to capitalize on COVID-19 recovery to embark on development trajectories that reduce risk for current and future generations. The ECOSOC has a leading role to play in promoting the necessary approach to development that reduces risk and builds resilience, and you can rely on UNDRR's support in this important endeavor.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Mami Mizutori
Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Disaster Risk Reduction