

**Standards for Disaster Risk Reduction
Стандарты для сокращения риска бедствий**



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
ЕВРОПЕЙСКАЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

Standards
for Disaster Risk Reduction

Стандарты
для сокращения риска бедствий



United Nations
New York and Geneva, 2015

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ECE/TRADE/424

Table of contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
I. Voluntary standards for the prevention of disaster risks	5
II. Voluntary standards for the management of disaster risks	9
III. Crisis management in regulatory frameworks	16
IV. Conclusions	20
<i>Введение</i>	25
I. Стандарты в области сокращения риска бедствий, соблюдаемые на добровольной основе	29
II. Стандарты управления рисками, соблюдаемые на добровольной основе	34
III. Антикризисное управление в рамках систем нормативного регулирования	43
IV. Заключение	48

Introduction

The aim of this document is to help bring voluntary standards into the toolbox of disaster risk reduction, including both by encouraging their use by business and by enhancing their role in regulatory practice and policy-making more generally. To this end, the paper shows the potential the standards have in the prevention and management of disaster risks, and in situations of disruption and crisis, and more generally in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030, adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in June 2015.

The SFDRR is a global plan of action to reduce deaths and injuries, the numbers of people affected and economic losses arising from disasters. It calls on: “all relevant stakeholders, including business, professional associations and private sector financial institutions, including financial regulators and accounting bodies, as well as philanthropic foundations, to (...) actively participate, as appropriate (...) in the development of normative frameworks and technical standards that incorporate disaster risk management” (Para SFDRR 36c).

The need for appropriate standards, including voluntary standards, is further strongly reiterated throughout the text of the SFDRR, under all four priorities. Among other references to standards, throughout the text, the most important ones are as follows:

- Under Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk: the text calls on the scientific and technical communities, at all levels, to “provide guidance on methodologies and *standards* for risk assessments, disaster risk modelling and the use of data”

Standards for Disaster Risk Reduction

- Under Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk:
 - (a) the text calls on the “establishment of necessary mechanisms and incentives to ensure high levels of compliance with the existing safety-enhancing provisions of sectoral laws and regulations, including those addressing land use and urban planning, building codes, environmental and resource management and health and safety *standards*, and update them, where needed, to ensure an adequate focus on disaster risk management”;
 - (b) and further, it encourages local and national institutions “to promote the development of quality standards, such as certifications and awards for disaster risk management, with the participation of the private sector, civil society, professional associations, scientific organizations and the United Nations”;
- Under Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience: the text encourages the revision of existing or the development of new building codes and standards
- Under Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction: the text recalls the importance of promoting the further development and dissemination of instruments, such as *standards*, codes, operational guides and other guidance instruments, to support coordinated action in disaster preparedness and response and facilitate information sharing on lessons learned and best practices for policy practice and post-disaster reconstruction programmes.

A standard is formally defined as a “document approved by a recognized body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines, or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory” (WTO, 1994).

Standards for Disaster Risk Reduction

At the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and particularly at the side event on “Standards for Disaster Risk Reduction Including Building Codes” co-organized by the UNECE, the increased use of standards in the context of DRR was explicitly demanded by governmental, business and societal stakeholders. With contextualization, standards can be used across all sectors to:

- Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of both regulators and economic operators not only during crises, as well as policies, plans and programmes for enhanced disaster preparedness for effective response
- Facilitate the adoption of a common risk management terminology and methodology by diverse stakeholders, bringing positive systemic effects.
- Provide sound metrics so that progress towards shared priorities can be accurately measured.
- Enhance accountability and transparency and facilitate comparisons across different areas of public concern and across different geographical locations.

This little volume attracts the attention of policy makers to three important roles that standards can play. First, how voluntary standards can help prevent the accumulation of new disaster risks, by assisting communities and organizations in moving towards a more sustainable pattern of sustainable and resilient development (see Section 2).

Second, how standards – and in particular risk management standards – can be used as a methodology for the effective pooling of different stakeholders’ resources for managing all kinds of risks, including natural hazards that may cause disasters (see Section 3) in different sectors and contexts.

And finally, standards such as those on business continuity and emergency management enable both business and

Standards for Disaster Risk Reduction

administrations to absorb shocks in a way that minimizes capital, human and eco-system losses (see Section 4).

The conclusions outline areas of priority action for authorities.

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