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The development agenda beyond 2015 as it pertains to
disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific

Disaster risk reduction related to the development agenda beyond 2015, including issues pertinent to least developed countries and countries with special needs

Note by the secretariat

Summary

      The dialogue on disaster risk reduction (DRR) relating to the development agenda beyond 2015 is taking place at global and regional levels and involves the key stakeholders, including ESCAP member States. The discussion so far indicates that DRR issues may be broadly reflected under the framework of resilience. It is notable that DRR issues are being discussed as an integral component of the development agenda beyond 2015. The United Nations regional commissions, including ESCAP, are providing the regional inputs into the ongoing global debate. In the specific context of the Asia-Pacific region — the world's most disaster-prone region with a complex landscape of hazards, vulnerability and exposure — dialogue is ongoing in several forums. The present document contains the key outcomes emerging from these consultations. It is also highlighted in the present document that DRR issues are likely to be factored into poverty eradication, and sustainable development goals and targets. While considering the region's specificities, the key issues and challenges in facilitating inclusive dialogue — and thus enabling the regional voice of member States to be heard while maintaining a focus on the regional dimensions of the development agenda beyond 2015 within the DRR framework — are highlighted in the present document. Of special note in this context are the region's least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, which are all characterized by their acute vulnerability and their lack of resilience to disasters. In conclusion a number of outstanding issues related to integrating DRR into poverty eradication and sustainable development are highlighted for consideration by the Committee, including those in Commission resolution 69/12, which relates to enhancing regional cooperation in order to build resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific.

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[*]   E/ESCAP/CDR(3)/L.1/Rev.1.

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I. Introduction

1. As the deadline for implementing the Millennium Development Goals approaches, the shaping of the development agenda beyond 2015 is taking place at different levels. In September 2011, at the request of the Secretary-General, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiated system-wide preparations for the definition of the agenda. The United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda (UNTT), which comprises more than 60 entities of the UN system, including ESCAP, was launched in January 2012. In June 2012, UNTT published its first report,[1] identifying a future vision based on the core values of human rights,

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[1] United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General* (New York, 2012). Available from www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf /untt_report.pdf.

equality and sustainability. The report proposes to organize the framework beyond the Millennium Development Goals along four lines: (a) inclusive social development; (b) inclusive economic development; (c) environmental sustainability; and (d) peace and security.

A.   United Nations initiatives

2.   The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development resulted in a focused political outcome document,[2] which contains clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development, including a set of sustainable development goals that build upon the Millennium Development Goals and that converge with the development agenda beyond 2015. Simultaneously, the United Nations system — specialized agencies, programmes and funds — started several efforts to define a new set of initiatives, namely the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Global Compact, and the United Nations Development Group. In a 2012 report,[3] the Secretary-General outlined how to advance the development agenda beyond 2015, including by taking action to ensure coherence between it and follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

3.   On 30 May 2013, the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released their report.[4] In the report, the Panel highlights five big, transformative shifts, namely: leave no one behind; put sustainable development at the core; transform economies for job and inclusive growth; build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and forge a new global partnership.

4.   In all of these forums, DRR is typically listed as a priority area in the development agenda beyond 2015, being clustered with climate change and other environmental priorities and, increasingly, with socioeconomic development.

B.   Regional initiatives

5.   In June 2013, the regional commissions published *A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda*,[5] highlighting the regional contribution to the global policy debate, including the topic of policy coherence at different levels. In the report, the regional commissions outlined the regional perspective in formulating the development agenda beyond 2015 and identified priority areas and messages. In the specific context of Asia and the Pacific, building on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, regional priorities have been clustered around four themes, namely economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and governance and institutions. The regional priorities and areas of concerns that are specific to the Asia-Pacific region are shown in the table below.

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[2]   "The future we want", General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

[3]   A/67/257.

[4]   High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development* (New York, 2013). Available from www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf.

[5]   E/ESCWA/OES/2013/2.

Table
Asia-Pacific regional priorities and specific concerns as regards the development agenda beyond 2015

Economic sustainability	Social sustainability	Environmental sustainability	Governance and institutions
Regional priorities			
Economic growth; poverty reduction; employment; food security; trade, investment and technology; income inequality	Education; health; gender equality and women's empowerment; social protection	Climate change disaster risk reduction; biodiversity; urbanization	Democracy and the rule of law; effective institutions; citizen security; global governance
Specific concerns			
Absolute poverty levels; promotion of high-value manufacturing; building domestic demand	Strengthening and extension of social protection systems	Large internal displacement induced by floods and storms; small island inundation/seawater incursion; megacity challenges	Decentralization and devolution of governmental services

Source: United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Commission for Africa and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda* (E/ESCWA/OES/2013/2).

6.   Between 26 and 28 August 2013, at the request of member States, ESCAP organized the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015. The dialogue was aimed at reviewing progress made in achieving the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals, while shaping the agenda with a focus on the outstanding issues facing the Asia-Pacific region. The dialogue was the first regional ministerial-level event to discuss the development agenda beyond 2015, following the release of the high-level Panel's report.[6] The dialogue helped in providing the region's input into the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, which is important for finalizing the development agenda beyond 2015. Further, the regional implementation meeting for Asia and the Pacific on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which took place in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2013, discussed regional perspectives to the global processes that resulted from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, such as the establishment of a high-level political forum to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the development of sustainable development goals.

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[6]   United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015", concept note (Bangkok, 2013). Available from http://apmd2013.unescap.org/documents/APMD2013_ConceptNote.pdf.

Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015[a]

Ministers and high-level representatives from Asia and the Pacific adopted the Bangkok Declaration as the key outcome document of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015. The Declaration emphasized that the development agenda beyond 2015 should be "holistic, inclusive, equitable, people-centred and universal", and should aim to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development. The Declaration recommended that the development agenda should "address all forms of inequalities and the factors underpinning them". It proposed a strengthened global partnership and enhanced implementation of the agreed-upon development goals. It was recommended that the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 should carry forward the spirit of the Millennium Declaration with:

(a)   A determination to build upon and implement further measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly with the aim of eradicating poverty;

(b)   A balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;

(c)   An emphasis on inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and economic growth that aims to effectively address all forms of inequalities and the factors underpinning them;

(d)   A focus on the global, regional and national dimensions of sustainable development in addressing the special needs and particular challenges of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in the context of their respective plans and programmes of action;

(e)   A strengthened global partnership for the enhanced implementation of internationally agreed development goals and objectives.

In the Declaration, ministers reiterated their commitment to address the remaining gaps in implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, to address new and emerging challenges and to seize new opportunities in the actions enumerated in the framework for action and follow-up to the "The future we want" document, supported as appropriate by the provision of the necessary means to implement such measures. Ministers also encouraged the United Nations system, including its regional commissions, and regional and subregional organizations, to continue promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and in their respective capacities supporting the member States in implementing sustainable development.

[a]   http://apmd2013.unescap.org/documents/APMD2013_Declaration.pdf.

II.   The development agenda beyond 2015: DRR framework

7.   The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was a major milestone in recognizing DRR to be amongst the issues influencing sustainable development, called for greater political commitment to ensure that DRR and building resilience among communities and nations are addressed with a renewed sense of urgency in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It provided the momentum for building up resilience to disasters in the framework of the green economy and sustainable development, through the employment of more integrated and coordinated approaches. It also introduced several innovative approaches to enable greater integration of DRR and climate change adaptation at all levels, including in national development strategies and investment, strengthening of local governance and stronger partnerships with civil society. There is now an opportunity to capitalize on green economy paradigms so as to provide political support, as well as additional resources, to strengthen risk management capacities, including those relating to disaster loss and risk assessment.

A.   Sustaining the momentum of the Hyogo Framework for Action

8.   The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA)[7] will be reviewed and a framework for DRR (referred to as the Hyogo Framework for Action 2 or HFA2) will be developed at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which the General Assembly decided to convene in Japan in early 2015.[8] The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) was identified as the secretariat that will facilitate development of HFA2 and coordinate preparatory activities in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

9.   In conjunction with the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in May 2013, UNISDR published a synthesis report on consultations that had taken place on a framework beyond 2015 for DRR.[9] Three common patterns that have captured the variety of themes and specific issues during the consultation process are reflected in the report. The first pattern is described as local action — which is characterized by the common aim of building leadership through community engagement and fully capacitated local government. The second pattern relates to integrated approaches, which reflect a range of issues related to breaking barriers, especially those concerning sectoral issues and institutional mechanisms. The third pattern relates to an enabling environment, which includes conditions and incentives for building resilience, for example, measures such as risk-informed decisions, risk assessment and analysis, public awareness, capacity development, governance and accountability, and monitoring and resources.

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[7] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

[8] General Assembly resolution 67/209, para. 10.

[9] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Synthesis Report: Consultations on a Post-2015 Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2)* (Geneva, 2013). Available from www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id =32535.

B. Asia-Pacific regional consultative processes

10. Consultations in the Asia-Pacific region, which are being conducted at various levels and which include the integrated and multisectoral discussions related to the development agenda beyond 2015 and sustainable development goals, resulted in the following seven imperatives: (a) building on HFA in order to construct a new framework for DRR; (b) integrating DRR, climate change and sustainable development; (c) local-level action; (d) turning vulnerability into resilience; (e) multi-stakeholder engagement; (f) risk governance and accountability; and (g) knowledge-based decision-making.[9] As a result of the consultations, it was strongly recommended that HFA2 should have well-defined targets, indicators, clearly defined responsibilities and monitoring mechanisms to increase accountability for its implementation and to measure not only the outputs, but also the cumulative impact of risk reduction interventions. There was also a call to consider making the new DRR framework a legally binding instrument, in the form of a United Nations convention. The need to develop regional and national frameworks to ensure HFA2 implementation was also highlighted.

11. The second phase of consultations on HFA2 are ongoing and are focused on identifying the main elements, principles, targets, indicators, and implementation and monitoring mechanisms needed in the new global framework for DRR. The consultation process also aims to strengthen the ownership and commitment of stakeholders, in particular national and local governments. Inputs from these consultations will then inform subsequent deliberations, primarily at the regional platforms on DRR that will take place in 2013 and 2014, including those during the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, the General Assembly in September 2014 and at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, where countries will negotiate and adopt HFA2.

III. DRR: resilience framework

12. The concept of "resilience" emerges, through multi-stakeholder consultations, to be a broader concept, goal and development agenda, which considers both known and unknown possibilities and combinations of threats in the future.[10] This includes, but is not limited to integrating DRR, climate change adaptation, conflict and fragility into sustainable development considerations. Building resilience is thus regarded as a transformative process that strengthens the capacity of people, communities, institutions and countries to anticipate, manage, transform and recover from shocks.[11]

A. Resilience framework: political support

13. The recent Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific Region on the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015 emphasized that the development agenda beyond 2015 should aim, amongst other things, at

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[10] United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crises* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.F.3).

[11] United Nations Development Programme, Peacebuilding Support Office, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and United Nations Children's Fund, *Impact of Conflict, Violence and Disaster on Long-term Development. A Global Thematic Consultation: Building the Post-2015 Development Agenda* (2013). Available from www.worldwewant2015.org/file/285363/download/309358.

promotion of DRR and preparedness and that it should also be supportive of climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability.

14. The Global Thematic Consultation on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which was held in Jakarta in February 2013, focused on integrating DRR and resilience into the development agenda beyond 2015 and highlighted the importance of DRR in achieving any future development goals.[12] The Consultation took forward as principal drivers the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and those of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability. It advocated the integration of DRR into national policies, plans, programmes and budgets; and identified the need to pursue DRR as an integral element of sustainable development, and to demonstrate how its absence would compromise economic, social and environmental resilience in the development agenda beyond 2015. The Consultation suggested possible options for integrating DRR into the development agenda beyond 2015, including:

(a) Establishing a stand-alone goal on DRR using resilience as a framework. This would provide an opportunity to address the interface between global frameworks for sustainable development, DRR, climate change and conflict;

(b) Mainstreaming DRR into the goals of other sectors, particularly poverty reduction, health, environment, governance, food security, gender equality, education and water;

(c) Promoting a new development approach that integrates DRR considerations into all development interventions, for example, making disaster risk assessment mandatory at the outset of any development project, and using existing assessment tools, such as environmental impact assessments;

(d) Developing input, outcome and impact targets and indicators that capture reductions in direct losses, such as mortality and economic impact; as well as indirect losses, such as the loss of social capital and ecosystems. Targets and indicators should be applicable at regional, national and subnational levels.

B. Resilience framework: broadening coverage to multiple shocks

15. The sixty-ninth session of the Commission, which took place in May