

ActionAid's Call for Action on Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

1. ActionAid is an international development organization comprising a federation working with over 15 million people in more than 45 countries for a world free from poverty and injustice. ActionAid appreciates the Government of Japan hosting the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) and recognizes their leadership in disaster risk reduction (DRR) since the 1994 Yokohama World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. ActionAid hopes that the 3rd WCDRR will deliver a just and ambitious outcome with tangible targets for resilience building of people living in poverty.
2. This paper is drawn from ActionAid's extensive experience supporting DRR in communities living in multi hazard locations across regions. The main purpose of this paper is to communicate ActionAid's priorities for the Post-2015 DRR Framework and its implementation to stakeholders at the 3rdWCDRR, scheduled to take place in Sendai, Japan from 14 to 18 March 2015.
3. ActionAid takes side with people living in poverty and exclusion, especially women who are hit hardest by disasters and experience multiple denials of rights on a daily basis. ActionAid adopts a human rights based approach (HRBA) to DRR that demands affirmative, timely and adequate action to minimize the impact of shocks and hazards and build long-term resilience to disasters through the empowerment of vulnerable groups at all levels.
4. In the past decade, disasters have continued to exact a heavy toll across the world with over 700 thousand lives lost, 1.4 million injuries, 23 million homeless, 144 million displaced, and economic losses of over USD 1.3 trillion¹. The IPCC's 5th Assessment Report has outlined that climate change impacts will increase hazards in many parts of the world with greater frequency and intensity. Scenarios indicate that even with fulfillment of current mitigation pledges, the world may see increases in temperature of 4⁰C or more², bringing more catastrophic disasters with greater loss and damage, where people living in poverty will suffer the harshest consequences. ActionAid has responded to many disasters with emergency humanitarian assistance, and has provided support to communities to develop preparedness strategies for reducing their vulnerability and the risks of disaster.
5. Despite the successes of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in promoting disaster risk reduction, significant challenges remain in fulfilling its potential and reducing exposure and losses around the world. The finalization of the Post-2015 DRR Framework at Sendai presents an opportunity to address some of these challenges, yet so far the drafting process has resulted in weakened ambition across a number of key areas vital to the framework's success. ActionAid therefore urges all parties to take positive action to address the **10 Points** outlined below:
 - i. **Place human rights at the center:** It is imperative that the rights of the poorest, most vulnerable and at risk groups, are central to the Post-2015 DRR Framework. It is these groups that usually are most impacted by disasters and have the least capacity to be able to protect themselves and their livelihoods from the impacts. ActionAid **calls on** states to ensure the human rights of all persons are protected by acknowledging access to participatory disaster risk reduction and preparedness at all levels as a basic right in the Post-2015 DRR framework.
 - ii. **Broaden the inclusion of vulnerable groups:** Socially excluded groups, including women, children, the elderly, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, and indigenous people, are often found to be the most vulnerable to disasters and the most impacted. The Post-2015 DRR Framework must ensure that policies, from the international to the local level, emphasize the specific needs and capabilities of these groups and strive to reduce their vulnerability while increasing their resilience. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring the active participation and engagement of vulnerable

¹ Zero Draft of Post 2015 DRR Framework (<http://wcdrr.org/preparatory/post2015>)

² Betts RA et al. 2011. When could global warming reach 4°C? *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*

groups in disaster risk reduction planning and implementation. ActionAid **calls on** parties to retain all references to “vulnerable groups” in the Post-2015 DRR Framework and work to embed an ‘inclusive approach’ in the implementation of the framework at all levels.

- iii. **Promote women’s leadership and their active participation:** Women are among the most vulnerable segments of society, especially during disasters, largely due to their socially constructed role which limits their capacity to prepare and respond. Gender inequality and discrimination often excludes women from decision-making and access to productive resources, which is vital in building resilience to disasters. ActionAid’s experience provides evidence that supporting women leadership brings benefits for the whole community in terms of reducing multiple vulnerabilities. ActionAid therefore **calls on** parties to recognize and promote women leadership and their active participation in decision making as well as in implementation at all level. ActionAid also calls for setting a ‘Gender Target’ in Post 2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and not compromising on gender equity.
- iv. **Recognize youth leadership and young people as change agents:** Youth and young people will inherit the problems of the present and will be responsible for addressing, coping and adapting to a future of uncertainty. The youth of today are our future! They will be called on to govern, manage and build a future on this frazil grounds. Countries so far failed to recognize and engage the tremendous potential of young people. Based on ActionAid’s experience, we **call on** parties to recognise the urgency of providing a platform to young people so as to ensure their participation in policy development, programme interventions and monitoring and evaluation processes. Youth integration to the post-2015 discussion is crucial to ensure the sustainability of disaster reduction initiatives and climate change actions in the coming decades.
- v. **Planned migration and urbanization:** The last two decades have seen unprecedented urbanization, and this is expected to accelerate due to rapid population growth, technology transformation and recurrent disasters³ such as those caused by climate change in developing countries⁴. It is essential that forced and unsafe migration from rural areas is reduced by addressing inequality, job creation, strengthening the local economy, and appropriate technological innovation, as well as improved protection of migrant workers’ rights. Rapid and unplanned urbanization in developing countries is causing environmental degradation and putting further pressure on scarce natural resources and already under resourced public services. ActionAid **calls on** parties to develop ways to address forced migration caused by disasters, and to ensure that urbanization integrates risk reduction to future disaster and climate change impacts.
- vi. **Support DRR at the local level:** Much of the success of HFA has been attributed to national level policy and actions that have increased the preparedness and resilience at a country level. However, a large gap remains between policy and practice in many countries and implementation of disaster risk reduction at the local level continues to be a challenge. The Post-2015 DRR Framework must retain strong references to implementation of DRR by local government authorities and communities to ensure these policies are translated into action. ActionAid **calls on** parties to retain all references to local implementation of disaster risk reduction in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR and to take action to ensure national level policies are translated into local level action plans and resourcing.
- vii. **Integrated targets and monitoring of Post-2015 Agreements:** With climate related disasters accounting for the majority of disaster impacts over the past decade, it is crucial that efforts to curb global greenhouse gas emissions at the Paris climate change conference are complementary to the Post-2015 Framework for DRR. Similarly, global ambitions to promote development that is sustainable through the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without the right action being taken to limit climate change and reduce disasters. In 2015, it is essential that complementary targets and monitoring frameworks are developed that collectively review progress and effectiveness across all three global frameworks. ActionAid **calls on** parties to set strong overall targets by which

³ Mark Pelling, R (2007) Urbanisation and Disaster Risk; <http://populationenvironmentresearch.org/>

⁴ Cohen, Barney (2006) Urbanization in developing countries: Current trends, future projections, and key challenges for sustainability, Technology in Society; www.elsevier.com

performance can be measured and to establish a mechanism under the Post-2015 DRR Framework for integrated review of actions to reduce disasters and build resilience that can be consistently applied across all 2015 agreements.

- viii. **Strengthening partnership beyond borders:** It is now evident that a single community within a country, or a single country within a region, cannot achieve resilience without transboundary partnership on equitable natural resource allocation and development, human migration and early warning information sharing. Countries must avoid national development interventions that create or enhance disaster risks for neighbouring countries in the region. Countries must also recognize that rapid urbanization and population growth are increasing exposure and vulnerability to disasters, which requires thorough planning of both internal and cross-border migration scenarios by all affected countries. ActionAid **calls on** parties to fully recognize the potential of transboundary cooperation in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR and to commit to establishing national and regional 'Resilience Centers' with the objective of facilitating transboundary partnership for disaster reduction.
 - ix. **Address Loss and damage:** Climate change induced 'loss and damage' to property, territory, lives and livelihoods result from insufficient mitigation action, and failure of adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures⁵. Climate change impacts are happening at a much more rapid rate than predicted by the global community 20 years ago. Slow onset events, including temperature and sea level rise, but also ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, drought, salinization, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification will cause unavoidable loss and damage in many countries. The advocacy by developing nations and civil society led to establishment of an international mechanism at UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in November 2013 to address both avoidable and unavoidable loss and damage. The new DRR framework must address these new challenges by complementing the efforts being made through the international mechanism on loss and damage. ActionAid therefore **calls on** the parties to link with the loss and damage work under UNFCCC by making appropriate referencing in the outcome document of 3rd WCDRR.
 - x. **Enhanced Disaster Reduction Funding:** Disaster mitigation is considered the more cost effective⁶ approach in comparison to post-disaster response. Between 1991 and 2010 the international community spent only USD 13.5 billion on DRR in comparison to USD 69.9 billion for humanitarian response⁷. There needs to be a shift in global funding priorities to ensure disasters and the associated costs are substantially reduced through improved disaster risk reduction. The Post-2015 Framework for DRR must ensure that adequate and timely financial resources are made available to support implementation of the framework at all levels. ActionAid **calls on** developed countries to commit funding of at least 5% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for disaster risk reduction.
6. The 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction presents a crucial opportunity for the world to build on past gains with science-based understanding of future challenges. WCDRR, being the first major conference of the Post 2015 Frameworks, must demonstrate transparent and accountable processes for other UN negotiations such as SDGs and UNFCCC to follow. The WCDRR also must mark a new era for global disaster risk reduction and provide an enabling environment where science and technology blends with community voice and knowledge. To ensure that the world is on the pathway towards transformative resilience, the conference must address the increased challenges posed by climate change, resource based conflict and urbanization while recognizing the needs and capacities of the world's poor and vulnerable communities. It must pave the way for shifting the power and ensuring that those most affected by disasters are at the forefront of disaster risk reduction and resilience building.

⁵ActionAid, Care, WWF (November 2012) Tackling the Limits to Adaptation: An international framework to address 'Loss and Damage' from climate change impacts

⁶Kelman, Ilan (undated) Disaster Mitigation is Cost Effective, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>

⁷Kellett, J and Caravani, A (2013) Financing Disaster Risk Reduction: A 20 year story of international aid; GFDRR and ODI