

Press Release – for immediate release

Sendai conference: NGOs lament limited political commitment to funding disaster risk reduction plans

- **Sticky points linger on around targets, finance and support from the developed to developing countries as conference enters last day**
- **Leaders given a wake-up call on importance of deal as Cyclone Pam hits Vanuatu**

Two days after the devastating effects of Cyclone Pam, a coalition of over nearly one thousand non-governmental organisations has lamented the limited financial commitment by world leaders at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) conference in Sendai, Japan.

Calls by the major group of NGOs come as details have emerged that government leaders are failing to agree on a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of marginalised and developing countries. While an agreement is expected to be signed on Wednesday, it is already understood that governments have diluted targets at the expense of vulnerable communities and poor across the world in the draft text.

Marcus Oxley from the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) says: “We already know that the targets of the new agreement have been weakened in terms of how nations will be held accountable to deliver the intended outcomes. This reduced accountability will hinder the implementation of the agreement over the coming 15 years. This will dramatically impact our ability to respond to and avert humanitarian disasters.

“The current talks to finalise the new disaster agreement have become entrenched over how the agenda will be financed. The next 24 hours are critical to finalise and adopt a bold new international agreement on disaster risk reduction, which sets a precedent for the two upcoming agreements on climate change and sustainable development later this year. What we are seeing is that countries with the money to finance the agreement are reluctant to commit any additional and long term funding to help achieve the goals,” he added. “They rightly want to see every nation take responsibility, but they do not want to be tied down to specific commitments.”

A strong agreement at this conference is essential. Governments are meant to achieve a new disaster risk reduction agreement that will commence in 2015, that builds on the successes and addresses the gaps of its predecessor, the Hyogo Framework for Action. This previous agreement helped to raise the international profile and prominence of DRR, and has led to the creation of national-level DRR laws and institutions in many countries. However, the Hyogo Framework for Action often did not translate into desired impact at the local level, partly due to the lack of

adequate resources provided to local government and civil society practitioners on the ground.

Harjeet Singh of ActionAid, a member of Climate Action Network, said: “Over the past few days here in Sendai, we have watched the draft agreement grow weaker and weaker in ways so that it will not make a real impact on the lives of poor people.

“We have been disappointed to note the weakened inclusion of marginalised groups in the implementation of the agenda. The new agreement must set ambitious global targets to create strong accountability to those on the edge of disaster. It should also have at the core, the interests of those disproportionately affected. These include groups such as children and youth, women, elderly persons, and people with disabilities. Unfortunately this hasn’t been the case thus far and it doesn’t bode well for our efforts in the coming decades.” he explained.

We hope that the world leaders will not ignore the wake up call given by Cyclone Pam to come up with bold and ambitious successor to the Hyogo Framework to deal with increasing disasters and climate change impacts.

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For more information, pictures, case studies and interviews, please contact:

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Notes to editors

In 2005, the international community agreed on a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards called the Hyogo Framework for Action on DRR.

For information see www.gndr.org and www.wcdrr.org

This press release has been drafted by a caucus of NGOs at the World Conference in Sendai coordinated by the Organising Partners of the NGO Major Group, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) and the Climate Action Network (CAN).