



## **Ambitious and coherent? Reviewing the pre-zero draft of the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>1</sup>**

### **A. The Case for a New Framework**

In its Preamble, the pre-zero draft acknowledges that while the last decade of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) has seen progress in a number of areas, the challenge of tackling underlying risk factors has not been met. It says that in many areas exposure has increased faster than vulnerability has reduced. It also points to messages emerging from consultations, including the need for post-2015 frameworks to be 'coherent, mutually reinforcing and pragmatic in their policy guidance and implementation mechanisms' (point 5).

The CDKN/ODI guide calls for the post-2015 DRR agreement to be centred more squarely in the development and climate change agendas, including by acknowledging that DRR is critical for:

- Avoiding reversals in development progress,
- Minimising impoverishment given the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of eliminating extreme poverty,
- Reducing the impacts of changing climate extremes and;
- Sustainable economic growth.

This framing is critical if the post-2015 DRR agreement is to move beyond its narrow visibility in the DRR community. We feel that the pre-zero draft repeats a well-rehearsed framing used in the HFA, and indeed suggests 'this framework builds on the HFA by retaining the HFA expected outcome and integrating and strengthening the focus of the priorities for action'. Adopting a 'safe' narrative after a decade of patchy delivery under the HFA and in the face of growing disaster risks is symptomatic of a lack of ambition across the entire draft. The Preamble requires a much bolder presentation of DRR as a key pillar of sustainable and resilient development and climate action, and in doing so, should acknowledge that the post-2015 DRR agreement must work in partnership with other frameworks to strengthen resilience in a more risky world.

On a side issue, Point 8 of the pre-zero draft uses the language 'disasters caused by natural hazards'. This should be urgently amended. Decades of research have found that disasters are *caused* by a combination of vulnerability, exposure *and* natural hazards.

---

<sup>1</sup> We would like to recognise contributions from ODI and CDKN staff and others, including Tom Mitchell, Emma Lovell, Virginie Le Masson, Amy Kirbyshire, Kashmala Kakakhel, Thomas Tanner, Katie Peters, Emily Wilkinson, Elizabeth Carabine, Lindsey Jones, Aditya Bahadur and Julie Calkins. Please send all correspondence to Tom Mitchell ([t.mitchell@odi.org.uk](mailto:t.mitchell@odi.org.uk))

## B. The Organising Logic

The pre-zero draft presents the three 'goals' of the post-2015 DRR agreement first included in the *Elements* paper, summarised as:

- The prevention of disaster risk creation
- The reduction of existing disaster risk
- The strengthening of persons, communities and countries' disaster resilience (in referenced to absorbing loss, minimizing impacts and recovery).

As Tom Mitchell said in his recent blog, having a third goal related to 'resilience' that only applies to absorbing and minimizing impacts associated with residual risk is old-fashioned. More current applications of the term 'resilience' refer to the need for anticipation and risk minimisation, and would naturally refer to all three goal areas. Additionally, the sentiment of preventing all disaster risk creation may be seen as anti-growth by some quarters, particularly as research by Hallegatte<sup>1</sup> (2012) suggests that economic growth is 'risk taking' by its nature. Instead, the CDKN/ODI guide proposes a different three-part organising framework centred on 1) inclusive risk governance, 2) resilient development and 3) managing residual risk (see pages 14 and 15). The intention is to create a structure that places the focus on minimising risk through development processes and the more disaster-specific actions required when threats remain and are imminent.

Nonetheless, if the pre-zero draft's tripartite goals approach is to remain somewhat intact, then at minimum, we would propose the following revisions:

- Minimise new risks
- Reduce existing risks
- Manage residual risks

These would combine to achieve the outcome of 'disaster resilience for sustainable development'.

One would then expect the goals themselves to provide a central organising framework for section D on 'priorities for action', but instead we are presented with a new four part set of actions divided by geographic scales. The four are:

- Understanding disaster risk
- Strengthening governance to manage disaster risk
- Preparedness for Response, Recovery and Reconstruction – "Build Back Better"
- Investing in Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience

It is unclear how these four 'priorities for action' link with the 'three goals' and the 'five targets', and there is no attempt to organise actions to achieve the specific goals or the targets or any clear reference to the HFA's organising framework (though section F point 27 recognises that it is still valid). Instead, we recognise the need for elements that cut across the three goal areas and would propose that these need to include some combination of inclusive governance, understanding risk and resourcing if referring to the three goals proposed in the zero-draft. Nonetheless, the current pre-zero draft formulation has left us feeling confused and we would recommend a complete rethink on how actions are structured to achieve a set of goals that require revision. Targets should then be aligned with the set of goals and actions should be designed to achieve those goals and targets.

### **C. Progress Monitoring and Accountability**

The pre-zero draft includes a number of key points on the manner in which the post-2015 framework for DRR will be monitored but needs to go further in chalking out a clear plan to measure the progress made by countries on DRR.

The current draft underlines the importance of strengthening the capacity to monitor progress on the post-2015 framework for DRR under the section on 'understanding disaster risk'. Second, in the section on 'Strengthening Governance to Manage Disaster Risk' it states that there must be mechanisms to monitor, periodically assess and publicly report on progress. Third, the pre-zero draft highlights the role of national and regional institutions to strengthen the evidence base in support of the implementation and monitoring of this framework. Fourth, the draft clearly outlines the manner in which mechanisms to monitor the post-2015 DRR framework, climate agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be aligned. Crucially, as part of this, it stresses the use of both outcome and output indicators. Fifth, the pre-zero draft also highlights the potential value of voluntary and self-initiated peer reviews as key mechanism to monitor progress on the post-2015 framework. Overall, it also presents five top line, global numerical targets, four of which are focused on reducing disaster losses.

As such, the pre-zero draft includes many recommendations made by ODI and CDKN in diverse international forums and publications. This said, there is scope for the future drafts to emphasise certain other key aspects of monitoring that are critical to ensure that any new DRR framework has the desired impact. For example, much more clarity is needed on the nature of targets and indicators that will be employed in any new monitoring system. A more explicit mention of the need to provide a 'basket of indicators' would be important, as would the need to explain how the climate change, DRR and SDG frameworks would share targets and indicators. It will also be necessary to consider the 'nuts and bolts' issues of monitoring too. For instance, there is no clarity on how often the monitoring will take place, who will compile the data and whether there will be any form of system for addressing poor progress. There also needs to be greater focus on the manner in which a monitoring system for tracking national progress on DRR must focus on the collection of detailed disaster risk information, given that just counting disaster losses can tell you relatively little about DRR progress given the highly variable incidence of disaster events at national level. Additionally, more clarity is needed on mechanisms to monitor extensive risk as historically, intensive risk has been gauged more effectively and has received more attention.

### **D. The interface with the SDGs**

The pre-zero draft touches upon the importance of the post 2015 framework for DRR aligning with the post 2015 SDGs but does not go far enough in outlining the manner in which these frameworks need to be developed and implemented in tandem.

Current mentions of the SDGs are included in the 'Preamble', where the need for coherence and mutual reinforcement between the frameworks on sustainable development, DRR and climate change is emphasised as a message emerging from consultations. Alignment is then highlighted in the section on 'Strengthening Governance to Manage Disaster Risk' where the draft calls for alignment in mechanisms and institutions for the implementation of the three frameworks. Later in the same section, it outlines the importance of aligning the monitoring systems of the framework, a point that is repeated in the section on the 'transition phase'.

As such, the pre-zero draft includes many recommendations made by ODI and CDKN in diverse international forums and publications. This said there is scope for the future drafts of the framework to present this need for alignment more strongly and to specify more practical details. This can be

achieved by first, underlining that there can be shared mechanisms to finance the frameworks (especially as the recent draft report from the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Finance calls for commitments to DRR Finance – point 80). Second, subsequent drafts can go into more specifics on the overlaps in the science and data needed for the future frameworks on DRR and sustainable development and outline the need for shared mechanisms to supply this. Third, greater detail on the manner in which the post-2015 DRR framework and the post-2015 sustainable development goals will share targets and indicators will allow the two frameworks to lock into each-other more tangibly, as well as alignments of timetables and reporting modalities.

### **E. The interface with climate change**

It is comforting to see that those working on high level post-2015 frameworks (SDG, climate change and HFA) are namedropping each other and calling for coordination and coherence. The pre-zero draft acknowledges climate change as a key stressor, makes links with sustainable development, and notes the need for consensus across the different post-2015 frameworks. It is encouraging in particular to have potential synergies with other relevant monitoring and reporting systems included (para 28). The pre-zero draft also notes the need to ensure that the post 2015 DRR agenda is adequately referenced in sustainable development and climate change instruments to help with implementation.

This last call highlights the real challenge: The language is passive, along the lines of 'collaboration should be ensured...' (para 19b) rather than attempting to identify the institutional and stakeholder processes for doing so. While this is a pre-zero draft, there should at least be options for such coherence. This might be in the form of mandating and facilitating national cross-framework committees, a post-2015 DRR cross-framework working group or particular cross-framework champions nationally and internationally.

Despite the critical advances made by the IPCC SREX report (2012), it is surprising to see that there is no reference in the draft to the importance of improving understanding of the impact of climate change on extremes and disaster events. This would have been expected particularly in paragraphs 14 and 18 on 'Understanding disaster risk', where the post-2015 agreement on DRR could play a vital role in fostering both regional approaches to climate science and supporting greater inclusion of climate change within risk assessments to understand the changing nature of risk profiles up to 2030 and beyond.

Finally, if we are really keen to see a reduction in disaster risks, surely the post-2015 agreement on DRR needs to call for mitigation actions to limit the extent of climate change to avoid dangerous climate change (nominally 1.5-2°C).

### **F. The Interface with conflict**

The pre-zero draft notes that conflict is an underlying risk factor but does not provide any degree of accommodation of the different approaches that may be required to address disaster risk in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS). In this regard, it provides no advancement on the existing HFA, nor takes into consideration the numerous calls for the more systematic inclusion of 'conflict', as laid out in the preparatory documents (including specifically from the Africa regional consultation and the 2013 Global Platform).

The pre-zero draft recognises that conflict has ‘not received sufficient attention’ despite constituting a significant underlying risk driver (point 3). The strong narrative in support of effective and equitable governance is a useful contribution to the need to address DRR in FCAS. For example, the calls for participatory decision making processes, improved governance and institutional design (point 5). Overall, the lack of visibility of issues of conflict and fragility is a significant oversight. The inclusion of FCAS to those requiring ‘special attention’ is recommended; because the processes, approaches and outcomes of supporting DRR in FCAS will be markedly different to those in peaceful and stable societies.

Of the CDKN/ODI Guide’s suggested areas for action, the pre-zero draft includes one – inclusive governance. It does not include the complexity of risk (specifically, the relationship between disaster risk and conflict and fragility in risk and vulnerability assessments), nor dual benefits (seeking opportunities for co-benefits in peace-building and state-building as well as risk-informed development progress). The recommendations in the CDKN/ODI Guide section on conflict therefore still stand. Conflict and fragility must be an explicit component of the post-2015 DRR framework, as does the need to: adopt conflict sensitive and Do No Harm approaches to DRR, and; ensure investments in DRR are sensitive to contexts of conflict and actively encourage, support and be integrated into the management and reduction of conflict risk.

### **G. The interface with the environment**

The pre-zero draft recognises environment as a component of resilience. This language signifies a move forwards from the HFA, which refers to ‘social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities’. More detail is provided on investments needed e.g. food security, water and ecosystem management, which is also a welcome addition. The section ‘*Investing in Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience*’ limits its consideration of environmental priorities to ‘strengthen the sustainable use and management of ecosystems’. This description has not developed from the HFA and should be expanded, in line with other priorities in this section, to include more detailed measures. The section does refer to protection of ‘culturally important lands’, many of which will be important for environmental reasons.

The draft has made linkages between poor environmental management as one of a suite of drivers compounding disaster risk. This statement could be strengthened by recognition of the particular complexities of these linkages. The feedbacks between disaster risk and ecosystems are unpredictable, often non-linear and operate across scales beyond the immediate scope of some risk assessments. The importance of ecosystem services in regulating processes that affect disaster risk, and in providing a source of resilience should be explicitly recognised here and elsewhere.

HFA recommends social, economic and environmental impact assessments in planning and implementation of projects. Comprehensive environmental impact assessment, carried out alongside project design, can identify and mitigate against disaster risks linked to environment. The pre-zero draft has omitted this specific activity for reducing underlying risk factors, although emphasis is placed on strengthening technical and scientific capacity to assess hazards. In some areas the language around environment has improved and more specific measures outlined. However, it is not convincing that environment has been sufficiently integrated as a major issue cutting across DRR rather than an add-on.

### **H. Vulnerability and Inclusion**

The pre-zero draft recognises that the ‘exposure of people and assets in all countries has increased faster than vulnerability has decreased’. It acknowledges the need to manage differential levels of vulnerability and exposure, and to empower vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making and

implementation<sup>2</sup>. The draft does not say how progress on social and cultural dimensions (including poverty, gender, age, and disability) will be promoted, accounted for, and by whom. Questions remain about whether shortcomings of the HFA will be overcome, particularly in relation to the integration of gender perspectives, social and cultural diversity, and community participation as cross-cutting themes.

The pre-zero draft recognises that the needs and risk profiles of all groups of society should be taken into account<sup>3</sup>, and to leverage these for effective planning and implementation of DRR policies and practices (points 12 d, g and j) – in line with recommendations from the CDKN/ODI Guide. Nevertheless, there is not sufficient focus on: monitoring ‘activities and outcomes that are based on context-specific analysis of the differential needs, vulnerabilities, expectations and existing capacities of all groups’; or on gender equality, and social and cultural diversity as cross-cutting themes (CDKN/ODI Guide recommendation).

The pre-zero draft successfully highlights the need for ‘relevant, local, traditional and indigenous knowledge, culture and practices’ to be taken into account (point 12 i); but could advocate further for DRR practices to be revised accordingly. Full leadership, empowerment, participation and action of all members of society (points 12 d and e) is recognised (in line with the CDKN/ODI Guide) as is the role that different groups – children and youth, women and persons with disabilities – can play in contributing to DRR (point 23). However, the draft should specify that governments need to create an ‘enabling environment for socially marginalised people and grassroots organisations to engage in and/or lead decision-making processes and DRR programme design’ (CDKN/ODI Guide recommendation) in order to overcome some of the shortcomings of the HFA in terms of progress in these areas.

The need for gender-specific and sex/age/disability-disaggregated data is recognised; the monitoring process must however, ‘incorporate a social vulnerability dimension in the design of the new set of indicators’ (CDKN/ODI Guide). In addition, the assessments and analysis should be disaggregated according to aspects of social vulnerability as mentioned above.

## I. Science

The pre-zero draft recognizes the important role of applied science, information sharing and technology transfer in DRR in the *Guiding Principles*: ‘Sound disaster risk management is based on risk-informed decision-making, which requires freely available, publicly accessible, simple and easy-to-understand, science-based, non-sensitive risk information, including on disaster losses, socio-economic impact, hazards’ characteristics, and people and assets’ exposure and vulnerability, at every level.’ This emphasis accords with the statements from regional consultations and with 65 out of 87 country statements and 8 out of 10 major groups that call for science to support the implementation of the post-2015 DRR framework. Science support was largely missing from the HFA.

The Priorities section ‘*Investing in Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience*’ in the National and Local context sets priorities to strengthen the resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets. Ideally, this list should also include investment in knowledge management, coordination of information dissemination and exchange, as well as supporting related capacity building and

---

<sup>2</sup> The guiding principles of the non-paper (Section C) refers to respecting human rights; full leadership and empowerment of local communities; all-of-society engagement and empowerment, equality, inclusive and non-discriminatory participation; as well as recognising the need for gender, women’s leadership, children and youth, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples –to be fully engaged in the ‘determination and implementation of policies’.

<sup>3</sup> Including specifically acknowledging the need for gender considerations, children and youth, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples within the determination and implementation of policies (point 12d).

innovation transfer activities as a priority for resilience, given the sheer number of countries which specifically mentioned these as priority actions at the recent 1st Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on DRR.

The Priorities section '*Understanding Disaster Risk*' in the Global and Regional context, proposes to revitalize the Science and Technical Committee, tasked with strengthening the evidence base, promoting scientific research, promoting and supporting access and application to science for decision-makers and sharing best practice to improve public policy. We would strongly endorse the call to establish an international science advisory mechanism for DRR. However the functions of this mechanism as written in the pre-zero draft are not directly responding to users' needs and could be expanded with functions specified as follows:

- Improve communications from new and existing initiatives to better inform policy and decision-makers
- Monitoring progress toward targets for reducing disaster loss
- Providing guidance on standards and methodologies for risk assessment, models and data-sharing
- Coordinating and connecting user demand for science to relevant research and evidence
- Promoting training, education and technological capacity building for DRR
- Collecting, analysing and frequently reporting current and future disaster risk, as well as management efforts, at global, regional, national and local scales.

## **J. Stakeholders and leadership**

The pre-zero draft asserts that it is a primary responsibility of States to manage disaster risk but also calls for responsibilities across public and private stakeholders to be articulated and aligned. Cross-sector partnerships are encouraged, however, the pre-zero draft does not state who should 'own' different aspects of DRR nor suggest the kinds of partnerships arrangements that are needed for implementation. This opens the door to a continuation of the problems identified in the HFA Mid-Term Review regarding who is in charge of what at the national level, institutional overlaps, and lack of guidance on coordination and accountability.

The pre-zero draft does provide an indication of distinct roles for a range of non-government stakeholders: parliamentarians to provide scrutiny on progress; academic institutions to assess risk and support decision-making; national governments to provide enabling environments and regulatory frameworks; local governments to provide 'leadership' (presumably political) but also act as implementers of DRR plans; businesses to help develop laws and integrate DRR in investment decisions; and the media to raise public awareness and disseminate information. However, it does not elaborate how these stakeholders might be supported or incentivised to fulfil these roles other than stating, for example, that local action and leadership needs to be 'empowered through regulatory and financial means'. For the construction sector there is the suggestion that certification could improve standards and compliance and that 'reinforcing capacity' and a 'consensus-based approach' can help in the development and enforcement of building codes in hazard-prone areas.

DRR at the local level is critical and requires leadership and empowerment of local communities and administrators. Priorities for Action include building the capacity of local government officials and stakeholders and encouraging SMEs and the media to 'take an active role at local', as well as at national, regional and global levels. Sub-national plans and policies need to co-produced with local stakeholders, recognising the role of local solutions, local expertise and traditional knowledge in developing successful local risk reduction strategies and identify and tackle local drivers of risk.

The language of the pre-zero draft on roles and responsibilities allows for considerable flexibility and encourages local solutions, although it is relatively weak on monitoring and accountability at subnational level – an issue identified as being critical to understanding progress in the CDKN/ODI Guide. A clearer sense of principles or minimum standards for action by stakeholder groups would add substance to the post-2015 framework.

## **K. Finance**

Financing is very poorly articulated in the pre-zero draft of HFA2. Even with one of five goals suggested as a reduction of economic losses, there is very little said about the necessary investment to reduce these losses. We have the financial penalty but not the financial requirement. This is a mistake.

The document starts with a strong enough mention, as consultations thus far have made it clear that ‘risk-informed investments and strengthened financial instruments are required at national and international levels.’ After that there is little. On the international side, there are a few weak mentions of ‘resources’ supporting national-led reductions of disaster risk. The only explicit reference to a ‘financial instrument’ is a request to adequately fund the Trust-Fund for DRR (managed by ISDR) which is hardly representative of all the financial requirements that should surely be placed on international finance.

The only significant mention of the need to allocate resources across the four new proposed pillars is in ‘Investing in Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience’. Here we see a suggestion that governments ‘allocate resources at all level of the administration for the development and the implementation of disaster risk management policies, plans, laws and regulations in all relevant sectors.’ Welcome, but hardly representative of what is needed: a clearly argued, urgently communicated demand that governments and the international system commit financially across all targets, goals and pillars.

## **L. Means of Implementation**

While not a core part of the ODI/CDKN guide, it would be incomplete to ignore the pre-zero draft’s section on ‘means of implementation’, which it terms ‘international partnership in the implementation and follow-up process’. It is somehow supplemented with a rather out-of-place section ‘F’ on the transition phase, which appears to include elements of UNISDR’s role in facilitating the consultation process around agreeing a post-2015 agreement on DRR.

We would recommend that this section needs a top-to-bottom reformulation, which would include the following:

- A clearer set of proposals for linking the post-2015 DRR agreement to other significant agreements, specifically focused on joined up actions, integrated monitoring and reporting etc.
- The addition of actions organised clearly by stakeholder group, offering a space for such groups to outline clear prescriptions for their role in implementing the post-2015 DRR agreement.
- A clearer formulation of the role of UNISDR vis-à-vis other stakeholder groups, particularly in respect to its relationships with the UN system and a clearer vision for how it will facilitate delivery against the goals and targets established here. Any mention of the UN system is accompanied by reference to the UN Action plan on DRR for Resilience, a plan that provides a basis for joint action, but does not represent all that the UN does in DRR across all its



funds, agencies and programs. A strengthening of the relationship between UNISDR and the 'development' apparatus of the UN system is crucial. Some member states and UN agencies will be particularly sensitive to the language about UNISDR's potential responsibilities with respect to its mention of 'supporting countries'. This language, together with the lack of end date for the framework (see below), suggests UNISDR may be pitching for an operational role. This may be considered appropriate by some but member states will be sensitive to the risk of duplicating the work of UN agencies and others at country level.

- A rethink of the time period covered by this agreement (the pre-zero draft describes it as 'open-ended'. We would suggest direct alignment of timeframes with the SDGs – and much greater clarity on the mode of reporting, responsibility for reporting and the way in which revisions to the framework will be discussed and agreed.
- A strengthening of the language around the role of regional organisations: While the added focus on the role of regional organisations is an advance from the HFA, it misses the opportunity to anchor their role as a bridge between the national level and the global level when paying attention to a principle of subsidiarity. Depending on capacity at the national scale, this role could include supporting access to science and technology, risk assessments, helping monitor progress and aiding weaker government organisations. Critically, regional organisations must play a role in assessing, monitoring and minimising the risk associated with transboundary hazards.

---

<sup>i</sup> Hallegatte, S. (2012) 'An exploration of the link between development, economic growth and natural risk'. Background paper to the 2014 World Development Report.  
<http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-6216>