

Inputs by Wetlands International to the zero-draft of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Calling for integrated water and wetland management to reduce disaster risk

Wetlands International welcomes the co-chairs' zero draft, dated 20 October. As an organisation with experience in wetland conservation, restoration and sustainable use for the benefit of communities worldwide, we put forward a set of recommendations for inclusion in the post-2015 Framework, summarised in this briefing.

Background:

Water-related hazards account for 90% of all hazards, and their frequency and intensity is generally rising. More and more people will experience water scarcity and suffer the impacts of major floods, droughts, storms and water-related diseases. The way in which we use and manage water resources is central to sustainable risk management. Located at the interface of land and water, wetlands are crucial in regulating the water cycle, for instance by reducing peak flood flow, storing excessive precipitation or recharging groundwater, supplying freshwater for irrigation of both domestic and commercial crops, providing important sources of protein such as fish, and serving as a buffer against storms and saltwater intrusion. Ecosystem based approaches offer the flexibility to grow and adapt to changing environments, which makes maintaining and regenerating natural ecosystems often the most (cost-)effective way of reducing risk and sustaining livelihoods. It is important that the role of ecosystems, and in particular wetlands and water, are adequately addressed in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Our recommendations to Member States

Overall the zero-draft text has considerably improved with regard to incentivising Contracting Parties to invest in preventing disaster risk as much as possible, understanding and assessing risk, tackling environmental degradation and building environmental resilience. In this policy brief we provide recommendations for the post-2015 Framework on the basis of the zero-draft text for further improvement and consistency throughout the text.

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Zero draft text amendments:

Preamble:

- Rephrase paragraph 4:

We are at a crossroads. It is urgent and critical to anticipate, plan for and act on risk scenarios over at least the next 50 years to protect more effectively ~~human beings and their assets, and ecosystems~~ **the social, economic and environmental assets of persons, communities and countries.**

- Add to paragraph 5:

....More dedicated action needs to be focused on tackling underlying risk drivers and compounding facts, such as demographic change, the consequences of poverty and inequality, weak governance, inadequate and non-risk-informed policies, limited capacity especially at the local level, **unsustainable use of land and water resources**, poorly managed urban and rural development, declining ecosystems, climate change and variability, and conflict situations.....

C. Guiding principles:

- There is currently no reference to ecosystem based disaster risk reduction approaches. We suggest to add the following paragraph:

Disaster risk reduction requires integration of ecosystem-based solutions, including ecosystem restoration and the sustainable management of land and water resources at the relevant spatial scale in disaster risk reduction and sectoral plans, strategies, and policies.

D. Priorities for Action

Priority 1: understanding disaster risk

National and local levels

- Add to paragraph 22 b):

Systematically survey, record and publicly account for all disaster loss and the economic, social, health **and environmental** impacts;

- Add to paragraph 22 i)

Promote the incorporation of disaster risk education, including **prevention and** preparedness, in education curricula at all levels and in informal education systems, as well as in professional education;

Global and regional levels

- At paragraph 23 we suggest to add a new indent with the following text:

Promote the collaboration for risk assessments at transboundary landscape scales with regard to shared resources, such as within a river basin, and along coastlines.

Priority 2: Strengthening governance and institutions to manage disaster risk

National and local levels

- At paragraph 25 we suggest to add a new indent with the following text:

Management of natural resources should be integrated in national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies, as well as local, regional and national sectoral, water management and land-use plans and national development strategies in order to build resilience.

Global and regional levels

- At paragraph 26 we suggest to add a new indent with the following text:

Promote collaboration at transboundary levels to enable policy and planning for the implementation of ecosystem based approaches with regard to shared resources, such as within a river basin, and along coastlines, to build resilience and help prevent new disasters across the entire landscape.

Priority 3: Investing in economic, social, cultural, and environmental resilience

National and local levels

- Rephrase paragraph 27:

Investing in risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures is essential to enhance the economic, social, cultural **and environmental** resilience of persons, communities and countries.

- Rephrase paragraph 28 e)

Promote the incorporation of disaster risk assessment into rural **and** urban development planning and management, in particular with regard to mountains, ~~and~~ coastal flood plain areas, **wetlands and all other areas prone to droughts and flooding**, including through the identification of land zones that are available and safe for human settlement;

- Rephrase paragraph 28 k) in order to capture both key aspects of disaster risk reduction being incorporated into environmental agendas and of environment being incorporated into disaster risk reduction and sectoral agenda's.

Strengthen the sustainable use and management of ecosystems, **including the conservation and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity in disaster risk reduction strategies, programming**

and planning, and in sustainable development policy, planning and programming at all levels and sectors; and implement integrated and environmental resource management approaches that incorporate disaster risk reduction.

Or:

Keep paragraph 28 k) as it is and add a new indent 28 l):

Strengthen the sustainable use and management of ecosystems, including the conservation and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity, as a contribution to disaster risk reduction strategies, programming and planning and to sustainable development policy, planning and programming at all levels and sectors.

Global and regional levels

- Add to paragraph 29 b):

Recognizing the different multilateral processes, work through the United Nations and other relevant institutions and processes, as appropriate, to promote coherence at all levels and across sustainable development, **environmental management**, climate change and disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programs;

Priority 4: Enhancing preparedness for effective response, and building back better in recovery and reconstruction.

National and local levels

- Add to paragraph 31 g):

Learn from the **sustainable** recovery and reconstruction programs over the HFA decade and exchange experience knowledge and lessons learned in order to develop guidance for preparedness for reconstruction, including on **water and** land use planning, **use and management** and structural standards improvement;