

**Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
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Building resilience is essential for sustainable development in a region with high disaster risk like Asia and the Pacific, and considering the transboundary nature of many natural hazards, regional actions and solutions are indispensable to addressing these shared risks and vulnerabilities. As such, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 recognized the need to enhance regional cooperation mechanisms, with a particular focus on building the capacity of high-risk low-capacity countries, as well as the importance of science and technology for facilitating a science-policy interface for effective decision-making.

Subsequently, the New Delhi Declaration adopted at the 7th session of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) reinforced the need for enhancing regional cooperation. Further, ESCAP's Regional Road Map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, adopted at the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development held in Bangkok, Thailand in March 2017, also identified regional cooperation mechanisms as important vehicles for achieving the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In line with these global and regional agreements, ESCAP is committed to support regional cooperation for disaster risk reduction and resilience, in addition to providing high-risk vulnerable countries with a range of tools and services. At the 73rd session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held from 15-19 May 2017, member States, through an ESCAP resolution, entitled *“Enhancing regional cooperation for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Asia and the Pacific,”* requested the secretariat to *“accord priority to synchronizing multi-disciplinary support to member States in the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in their development strategies, in line with the Sendai Framework and with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets relating to disaster risk reduction”* and *“continue to support and facilitate multi-hazard early warning systems, impact-based forecasting and disaster risk assessment to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms.”*

In the Asia-Pacific region, disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities of the UN System are now well-anchored and steered by the *Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM)* and its *Thematic Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (TWG-DR3)*, which ESCAP chairs together with UNISDR and UNDP. This Thematic Working Group aims to align national and regional DRR strategies and programs with the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Over the years, ESCAP has developed a comprehensive DRR program that promotes regional responses to regional challenges aided by the collective efforts of global, regional and national agencies. ESCAP's regional cooperation addresses all types of natural disasters facing the Asia-Pacific region, and it supports the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge and innovative DRR tools from advanced countries to countries yet to develop these capabilities.

In Asia-Pacific, international and regional cooperation presents excellent opportunities to progress DRR and build resilience. First, international and regional cooperation is essential for developing well-functioning end-to-end early warning systems, which require data sharing from multiple countries, including ground- as well as space-based observation networks. Accordingly, international and regional cooperation for multi-hazard early warning systems should be encouraged. ESCAP and WMO facilitate the operation of the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones, which address typhoons emerging from the western Pacific and tropical cyclones emanating from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, respectively. For more than four decades, both these bodies have supported countries with early warning systems and capacity development. However, there is a need for extending regional cooperation mechanisms to other areas such as transboundary river basins, and common agro-ecological and seismic zones to address floods, droughts, earthquakes, and sand and dust storms.

Second, international and regional cooperation can also harness advances in science, technology and innovation. One unique cooperation model is ESCAP's Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP). Through RESAP, space-faring countries such as China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam offer satellite images, information and capacity development to other countries on the use of satellite technology for disaster risk reduction. ESCAP, in close consultation with the space community of Asia-Pacific, is now in the process of drafting a new action plan on space applications that will guide work from 2015 to 2030. As a first step in this process, ESCAP, jointly with the Indian Space Research Organization, organized the Asia-Pacific Space Leaders Forum in New Delhi in November last year, bringing together space and disaster risk management leaders for a regional dialogue on space information products.

Third, enhanced interaction between countries with shared vulnerabilities and risks can help bridge knowledge gaps and build science policy interfaces on resilience. In particular, the experiences of responding to natural disasters have generated valuable knowledge and lessons in managing risks. After recovering from several mega earthquakes, the Asia-Pacific region has reconstruction expertise, including innovative solutions for resilient infrastructure, low-cost housing, protection of cultural sites and rebuilding in difficult terrain. In this regard, the dialogues organized by ESCAP, the National Planning Commission of Nepal and the SAARC Disaster Management Centre following the 2015 Gorkha earthquake provided a platform for experts with post-earthquake experiences in India, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Thailand, to share their knowledge and help Nepal "build back better".

In many high disaster risk countries, building resilience is not a choice but a collective imperative for sustainable development. Due to their scale and transboundary nature, it is clear that many disaster risks are best tackled collectively. Thus, ESCAP will work together with global, regional and national partners to protect people and safeguard development gains from natural disasters while continuing on the path towards sustainable development. Specifically, ESCAP will develop a regional action plan for multi-hazard early warning systems, strengthen the science-policy interface to better understand and address disaster risks, and promote the sharing of best practices to make DRR tools and approaches more effective and efficient throughout the region. ESCAP looks forward to working with partners of the UN System and other international organizations for the achievement of our common objectives.

Thank you.