



Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017

"From Commitment to Action"

22 – 26 May, Cancun, Mexico

Statement of the European Union and its Member States

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

We thank the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for convening the Fifth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and Mexico for hosting it in Cancun.

Disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change, are increasing in frequency and intensity, continuing to cause significant human and economic losses and impeding progress towards sustainable development.

In Europe, most recently we have faced floods, devastating earthquakes and forest fires across the continent. We are witnessing a worrying trend where average annual losses from disasters have risen from €9 billion in the 1980s to more than €13 billion in the years since the turn of the century.

Mexico and countries in this region have also not been spared. In recent months only, Colombia and Peru experienced the worst floods and mudslides in almost 30 years, and Chile suffered from numerous wildfires, causing casualties and damage.

Two years after Sendai, we are putting our "*Commitments to Action*".

In the past years, the European Union and its Member States have made great progress in implementing the Sendai Framework:

The Sendai Framework has been an opportunity to develop a disaster-risk informed approach for EU policies. At EU level, since 2016 we are working on the basis of an Action Plan on Sendai that supports efforts:

- To build disaster risk knowledge;
- To engage with all of society;
- To promote disaster risk informed investments;
- And to develop disaster risk management strategies.

The Action Plan is supportive and complementary to the activities to implement the Sendai Framework of the National and European Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Our EU civil protection legislation has a strong focus on prevention and preparedness policy and action.

We have produced disaster risk assessments and disaster risk management capability assessments. We have engaged in mutual learning on disaster risk management through voluntary peer reviews of the EU Member States and our neighbouring countries. We took actions to improve the global knowledge base on disaster risks and to develop cutting-edge early warning and alert systems to enable rapid response. We deployed expert teams in the field to provide advice on prevention measures to other States and stakeholders.

The European Union and its Member States remain collectively the world's largest donor of development and humanitarian aid.

Resilience is one of the priorities of the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy.

As part of our international cooperation, we have taken concrete measures to strengthen national and local disaster risk reduction capacities. We are changing the way we address disasters – early warning, anticipation and early action are vital parts of the EU humanitarian and development disaster preparedness support. We are committed to continue strengthening disaster resilience worldwide.

Community resilience, local ownership and leadership are essential for creating lasting solutions to cope with risk and shocks.

We are putting people at the centre of our programmes, paying special attention to women, children, elderly, people with disabilities and other groups disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of disasters. We are promoting partnerships and actions to address the protection needs of growing numbers of climate and disaster displaced people.

Building resilience to disasters is indispensable to face complex global challenges, such as unsustainable urbanisation and poor land management, poverty, displacement, ecosystem degradation and climate change.

Implementing the Sendai Framework goes beyond our EU internal and external policies and it requires a global effort.

Disaster resilience is an integral element of our strategies to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the EU and in our partner countries. Also, in Istanbul, at the first ever World Humanitarian Summit, we committed to manage and prepare for disasters differently: namely, to anticipate and

proactively manage risks. The EU and its Member States continue to advocate and support others to assume their part of the shared responsibility to reduce risks and vulnerability.

The Sendai Framework needs collective action. We have been working with the private sector, the scientific community, civil society and youth. Through the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, we have brought together volunteers and organisations to build local resilience to disasters in the world's vulnerable communities. This is solidarity at its best.

Now it is the moment to move even further in our common efforts to implement Sendai. This week, we need to discuss practical solutions that will support us to deliver concrete results.

First, reaching the Sendai Framework targets will be instrumental for effective implementation of the Framework. We reaffirm our appreciation of the UN adoption of the set of indicators to measure global progress.

We would like to emphasise that data collection must be linked to policy making and concrete actions. It should allow States to have better risk assessments and to improve prevention and response at national and local scale.

By 2020 we need to achieve the Sendai target on Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies. We must develop inclusive strategies, with active engagement of local actors – authorities, communities, affected populations and civil society. We should promote synergies between Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and National Climate Change Adaptation Plans.

Second, we must further strengthen capacities to forecast and anticipate disasters and improve our preparedness systems to respond. Forecast-based interventions to disasters can save lives and costs.

Third, education and effective communication are crucial to improve our understanding of risks and create more risk-informed communities. We must use their potential for reducing disaster risks.

Fourth, there is still a need to increase investment in disaster risk reduction, especially in the most vulnerable and least-developed communities and countries. We also have to work with the private sector to enhance resilience of businesses to disaster risks and to facilitate private investments in disaster risk management.

Fifth, we must consider vulnerability of poor people and the well-being losses of individuals and communities caused by disasters. There is evidence that financial inclusion, disaster risk and health insurance, social protection and adaptive safety nets can reduce well-being losses from disasters.

Sixth, in implementing the Sendai Framework we must respect the overarching principles, such as human rights, and continue to promote good governance, gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and the fight against poverty.

Dear delegates,

All countries have shared challenges in the face of disasters.

The EU and its Member States reiterate their continued commitment to play an active role to implement Sendai and to engage in an open and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders to deliver on our common responsibilities.

We cannot face challenges alone. Let us join forces. EU and its Member States. All countries of the Globe.

The Fifth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun is an opportunity to reinforce our efforts for a clear course for enhanced disaster resilience.

Let us make sure we work together to deliver for humanity and to make our world more resilient.

Thank you.
