

SENDAI CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
(14-18 MARCH 2015)
REPORT BY THE ORDER OF MALTA DELEGATION



UN World Conference on
Disaster Risk Reduction
2015 Sendai Japan

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1. Executive Summary

The **Order of Malta** participated in the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, Japan, 14-18 March 2015) with two Delegates : Michel Veuthey and Sae Kani.

The Order of Malta was given the opportunity to make a statement in Plenary on the 17th of March (mentioning projects by **Malteser International** in Disaster Risk Reductions in Haiti, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam, highlighting the **role of Faith-based organizations (FBOs)**, underlining the importance of **spiritual values** and of the **family**, adding the need to **include persons with disabilities**) and be on « Ignate the Stage » to publicize the Symposium on « *Religions Together for Humanitarian Action* » (Geneva, 27 May 2015). The Order's Delegation – especially Sae Kani - contributed to organize events for persons with disabilities in the Conference (two of them were included in our Delegation for the Opening Session).

It also was an opportunity for a series of **bilateral contacts**, including one with the Mexican Delegation on instruction of the Grand Magistry. We had the possibility to gather information on lessons learned and trends in Disaster Risk Reduction, and, more generally, on the ongoing and **forthcoming negotiations on humanitarian issues**.

2. The Three Conferences : 1994, 2005, 2015

Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, said at the Opening Ceremony of Sendai, that because his country was disaster prone it had been working hard on disaster risk reduction for a long time.

Japan indeed hosted three conferences on DRR :

1. The World Conference on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction in **Yokohama (May 1994)**. Its report includes the *Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, the Principles, the Strategy and the Plan of Action*¹.

2. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, **Kobe, Hyogo, January 2005**. The Conference, which met one year after a powerful earthquake, was to take stock of progress in disaster risk reduction accomplished since the Yokohama Conference of 1994 and to make plans for the next ten years in the « *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* »².

3. The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (**Sendai**, 14-18 March 2015) met exactly one year after the tsunami and adopted the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* and the *Sendai Declaration*³.

3. Sendai : A Multi-layered Process

The Sendai Conference was a multi-stakeholder, multi-layered, multi-track and multi-purpose negotiation:

- **multi-stakeholder**: Governments, intergovernmental (universal and regional) organizations, parliamentarians, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC, IFRC, National Societies), international NGOs, local humanitarian organizations, private business, academia, media;
- **multi-layered**: while representatives of States, international organizations and interest groups were negotiating the final texts of the Sendai Declaration and Framework, actors in the field, research and private sector were informally exchanging ideas in workshops; Governments conducted lengthy **formal negotiations** whilst other actors were looking for **practical solutions** in hundreds of informal gatherings;
- **multi-purpose**: Governments from developed countries were offering assistance, and, at the same time, resisting the claim to a right to development, insisting on international cooperation; Governments from developing countries were asking for more assistance from donor countries, technology transfers, and claiming a right to development, a right to food, a right to water, and to the respect of their sovereignty;
- **multi-track**: not only disaster risk reduction (DRR) but also emergency humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, development, climate changes, environment, were all on the negotiating table. The result is a composite text, *un habit d'Arlequin*. Sendai, as Laurent Fabius, French Foreign Minister and future President of the December 2015 Paris Conference on Climate Change, said, is one track among others; DRR, Development, Climate, WHS, have each with their

¹ http://www.unisdr.org/files/10996_N9437604.pdf

² http://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf

³ <http://www.wcdrr.org/>

own momentum/dynamics of negotiation, and nevertheless with obvious links in substance;

- **multi-referential** : references to **high tech** such as satellite communications or space technology and DRR, were also supplemented by references to **traditional knowledge** to prevent disasters and strengthen resilience. The Japanese Government officially emphasized the character « YUI », meaning mutual cooperation through physical assistance⁴but publications were distributed on « Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Knowledge & Resilience to Climate Change & Disaster Risk ». The United Nations Study by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples entitled « *Promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction, prevention and preparedness initiatives* » (A/HRC/27/66), which makes the link between disaster risk reduction and human rights, was distributed at Sendai⁵.

4. Bilateral Meetings

Sendai was an opportunity for many **bilateral meetings** such as with

- the **Mexican Delegation** in order to reaffirm - on instructions of the Grand Magistracy - the wish of the Order to reinforce the humanitarian cooperation and establish diplomatic relations ;
- the **Secretary-General of the International Civil Defence Organization**, expressing anew his interest to reinforce the cooperation with the Order ;
- the **Director-General of IOM and the Secretary-General of the IFRC**, as well as the Deputy Director of Operations of the **ICRC** on the Symposium "*Religions Together in Humanitarian Action*" ;
- **Dr. Jemilah Mahmood**, Head of the WHS Secretariat, and her collaborator, **Arif Khan**, on the Symposium and the WHS ;
- Representatives from the UN, UNDP, FAO, OSCE, ICRC ;
- the **Apostolic Nuncio in Tokyo** ;
- **Ambassador Toni Frisch** (Swiss Vice-President of the Conference) **Manuel Bessler** (Swiss Development Cooperation, State Secretary and Humanitarian Aid) and other Members of the Swiss Delegation ;
- **African Delegations** interested in a greater cooperation with the Order (DR Congo especially, and also Bénin, Burkina Faso) as well as the Delegation of the Philippines ;
- **Faith-based organizations such as Caritas Internationalis, World Vision, Religions for Peace, Act Alliance**, on the absence of any mention of

⁴ http://www.japan.go.jp/src/200202/bousai15_04-05.pdf

⁵ This interesting Study is available online : <http://bit.ly/18Xg3ql>

FBOs in the final text of the Sendai Framework of Action and on the Symposium in Geneva ;

- **Universities** (from Japan, France, Korea, New Zealand, US, etc.) : ongoing research projects on risk assessment, preparedness, striving to move towards disasters with zero victims...
- **Private business**, such as insurance companies (Munich Re, Swiss Re), building companies.

We could also attend workshops, among those one organized Sunday morning by **Caritas Internationalis workshop** on the role of FBOs⁶.

We were invited by UNISDR Senior Information Management Officer Craig Duncan to take part in a 15-minute "**Ignite the Stage**" on the Symposium "*Religions Together for Humanitarian Action*" on the 17th of March in the afternoon.

A sample list of this material could be provided upon request.

5. Post-Sendai

Follow-up meetings of Sendai on DRR should take place in :

- Qatar in May 2015 (Arab Regional Ministerial Meeting)
- Cameroon in July (African Regional Ministerial Meeting)
- Paris on 17 October (European Regional Meeting)
- Brussels 3-4 June (European Development Day)⁷
- Bonn 8-10 June (Resilient Cities)⁸

The links of the Sendai Conference with other processes were clear :

- **Summit for the Adoption of Sustainable Development Goals**⁹
New York (25-27 September);
- **World Humanitarian Summit**¹⁰
Global Consultations in Geneva (14-16 October 2015);
- **International Conference of the Red Cross/Red Crescent**¹¹
Geneva (8-10 December);
- **Climate Change Conference**¹²
Paris (30 November – 11 December 2015).

⁶ <http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/WCDRR-List-of-Public-Forum-Side-Events-1st-Draft.pdf>

⁷ <http://eudevdays.eu/>

⁸ <http://resilientcities2015.iclei.org/>

⁹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>

¹⁰ www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/

¹¹ www.rcrcconference.org/en

¹² <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en>

6. Conclusions and Proposals

Was the Sendai Conference a **historical success or a failure?**

The assessment depends on the issue, and from the viewpoint...

It was a modest step forward in international humanitarian cooperation, a welcome opportunity to exchange ideas among many stakeholders.

The « Framework » is certainly not a new treaty, not even a strong « soft law » (non-binding) text. **Much will depend on its implementation**, by Governments, international organizations, humanitarian actors, private business, local civil society and on the outcome of parallel negotiations (on climate change, development, environment, human rights).

187 UN Member States attended the Conference and approved seven Targets, four Priorities (Understanding Risk, Risk Governance, Investment in Resilience, Build back better) and a set of Guiding Principles, underscoring that substantial reduction of disaster risk requires **perseverance and persistence**... *“Sustainability starts in Sendai,”* UN SG Ban Ki-moon declared at the opening of the Conference, asserting to the largest-ever high-level meeting on the subject, *“this is the first step on our journey to a new future”*.

Margareta Wahlström, Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) affirmed that the adoption of the new framework *“opens a major new chapter in sustainable development”* and that the *“implementation will be vital to the achievement of future agreements and sustainable development goals and climate later this year.”* She also added that *“Implementation of the Sendai Framework for action over the next 15 years will require strong commitment and political leadership,”* noting that stakeholders had already made 120 voluntary commitments for risk reduction initiatives at the Conference, in addition to 88 others made in the lead-up to the event.

The Conference also heard from parliamentarians, civil society, national platforms for disaster risk reduction, local government representatives, scientific institutions and the private sector, as well as agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, private business.

According to the « Global Network for Disaster Risk Reduction » (GNDR)¹³:

« The Framework presents a **step forward in terms of the inclusion of vulnerable groups**, identifying actions at different scales, and international transfer of technology. However, it falls short in terms of providing measurable targets, building on local level capacities, recognising conflict and climate change as underlying drivers of vulnerability, and **making linkages with other critical frameworks** being developed this year, including the SDGs and the UNFCCC's Climate Change Agreement. For a non-legally binding Framework, it **lacks ambition and does not set a strong precedent** for these other major international agreements later this year. The new Framework does, however, place an **important emphasis on civil society** in achieving the Framework's goals » .

¹³ <http://bit.ly/190jqgF>

Professor **Walter Kaelin**, Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative¹⁴ called the Sendai Framework “***an important step forward for people displaced by disasters***”.

Maggie Ibrahim, World Vision UK’s resilience manager, underlined that the Sendai conference had spotlighted issues affecting **disabled people, women and children** in disasters: “*But the agreement would not quip them and another vulnerable people with the resources and tools to build skills so they can better prepare for disasters and avert crises*”.

Islamic Relief and other faith-based NGO’s were disappointed not to see any reference to the unique contribution made by local faith communities and FBO’s in disaster preparedness and response.

Eventually, a gathering like the Sendai Conference is like a **market place** where one could learn a lot in bilateral exchanges, side-events.

Governments, International organizations, humanitarian organizations, think tanks, private business and NGOs were advertising their policies, activities, research and interests with publications, videos, conferences.

The participation of Ms. **Sae Kani**, Malteser International Adviser based in Japan, was quite useful. She knows a lot about field activities and is very well known by many international humanitarian workers, beginning with Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, with whom she worked in Malaysia in 2007. She also actively participated in the organization of workshops on the **edeer** in the framework of the *Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DiDRRN)* (Malteser International is one of founders of DiDRRN).

Not really surprisingly, as the last preparatory meetings took place in Geneva, many participants came from **Geneva**, representing the UN (UNISDR, UNHCR, OCHA, WMO), IFRC, ICRC, IOM, IUCN, Inter-Parliamentary Union, diplomats, NGOs.

The Order definitely needs to maintain the contact with interlocutors met in Sendai, as they might well be part of other **up-coming meetings** in Geneva, New York, Paris and Istanbul. The Order could participate in these meetings with larger delegations including high level representatives (from the Order and Malteser International) for networking and field specialists for expertise. We indeed need to **be seen as part of the larger humanitarian community** not only in the field but also in these meetings where the informal part (bilateral contacts, side-events, distribution of documents) could more important for the Order and for other humanitarian actors than the formal negotiation.

Finally I would like to thank the Grand Chancellor for appointing me as Representative of the Order – with Sae Kani of Malteser International – at this Conference and Webster University (Geneva) for funding this trip.

Michel Veuthey

¹⁴ <http://www2.nanseninitiative.org/>

APPENDIXES

1. **STATEMENT BY THE ORDER OF MALTA**
<http://bit.ly/1NdbLuv> (and in separate document in PDF)
2. **CONTACTS** (in a separate document in Excel format)
3. **FRAMEWORK**
<http://bit.ly/1Ct57x0>
4. **DECLARATION**
<http://bit.ly/1AZMpry>
5. **LIST OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**
<http://bit.ly/1xC3XPK>

6. LIST OF SPEAKERS

Friday 13 March 2015

<http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/JOURNAL-NO.-1-EN.pdf>

Saturday 14 March

<http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Journal-2-EN.pdf>

Sunday 15 March

<http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Journal-No.-3-E.pdf>

Monday 16 March

<http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/EN1.pdf>

Tuesday 17 March (Order of Malta)

<http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/EN2.pdf>

Wednesday 18 March

<http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/EN6.pdf>

7. FURTHER ONLINE INFORMATION

7.1 UNISDR (UN OFFICE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION)

- **Sendai Conference Documentation** :
<http://www.wcdrr.org/conference/programme/documentation>
- **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)**
www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai_Framework_for_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_2015-2030.pdf
 - **Themes & Issues** <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/>
 - **Risk Identification** <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/risk-identification/>
 - **Recovery** <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/recovery/>
 - **Social Impacts** <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/social-impacts/>
 - **Traditional knowledge and DRR**
www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/indigenous-knowledge/
 - **Vulnerable populations**
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/vulnerable-populations/>
 - **Water** <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/themes/water/>
 - **Organizational Contacts** <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/contacts/>
 - Harnessing the full potential of **multi-sectoral partnerships** in disaster risk management
<http://r3ady.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Final-Input-Post-2015-Framework-for-DRR.pdf>
 - **Input in support of the process to develop the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction from multi-sectoral leaders in the U.S. and Japan**
<http://sendai-forum.info/en/10308/>

7.2 PREVENTION WEB (UNISDR) <http://www.preventionweb.net>

- **Global Assessment Report 2015 on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR)**
http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2015/en/gar-pdf/GAR2015_EN.pdf
- **Public Network and Communities**
http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/networks/list.php?cat_id=7&scat_id=108
- **Educational Material**
http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/edu-materials/index.php?o=ent_datepublished&o2=DESC&hid=0&tid=108&cid=0&aid=0&lid=0&x=21&y=7
- **Academic Programmes**
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/academics/>
- **Trainings and Event Calendar**
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events/index.php?rid=0&timeID=1&tid=108&oid=0&hid=0&x=6&y=12>
- **Policies, Plans and Statements**
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/policies/>
- **2009 UNISDR / Terminology on DRR**
http://www.unisdr.org/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyFrench.pdf (FR)
http://www.unisdr.org/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyEnglish.pdf (EN)
http://www.unisdr.org/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyRussian.pdf (RUS)
http://www.unisdr.org/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologySpanish.pdf (SPA)
http://www.unisdr.org/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyChinese.pdf (CHI)

7.3 ISSUES

- **Summary for Policy Makers**
http://wcdrrbag.info/Undocuments//ByStakeholder/43219_sciencefordrrsummaryforpolicymakers.pdf
- Local Voices from the **Philippines for Resilience**
http://wcdrrbag.info/Undocuments//ByStakeholder/43221_philippinecsostatementonwcdrr.pdf
- **Guidance Note for Recovery – Environment**
http://wcdrrbag.info/Undocuments/ByStakeholder/Guidance_note_on_recovery_-_Environment.pdf
- **Health** http://www.preventionweb.net/files/38774_health.pdf
- **Infrastructure** http://www.preventionweb.net/files/40429_infrastructure.pdf
- **Water**
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=38763&pid:0>

7.4. GOVERNMENTAL DOCUMENTS

10 LESSONS FROM FUKUSHIMA

(Reducing Risks and protecting communities from nuclear disasters)

<http://fukushimalessons.jp/en.html>

ESCAP (with ADPC and R3)

RESILIENT BUSINESS FOR RESILIENT NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

<http://www.unescap.org/resources/resilient-business-resilient-nations-and-communities><http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Resilient%20Business%20Book-Final-lowres.pdf>**EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY**

SATELLITE EARTH OBSERVATIONS IN SUPPORT OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

www.eohandbook.com/wcdrhttp://www.eohandbook.com/eohb2015/files/CEOS_EOHB_2015_WCDRR.pdf**GERMAN COMMITTEE FOR DISASTER REDUCTION (DKKV) www.dkkv.org**

DETECTING DISASTER ROOT CAUSES. A FRAMEWORK AND AN ANALYTICAL TOOL FOR PRACTITIONERS

http://www.dkkv.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Veroeffentlichungen/Publikationen/DKKV_48_Detecting_Disaster_Root_Causes.pdf**GERMAN FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE (with the GERMAN RED CROSS)**

FRAMEWORK. ACTION PLAN OF THE FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE FOR HUMANITARIAN ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

http://www.dkkv.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Veranstaltungen/WCDRR_2015/GRC_2015_FFO_Action_Plan_CCA_engl.pdf**JAPAN SPACE EXPLORATION AGENCY**

SENTINEL ASIA PROJECT

<http://sentinel.tksc.jaxa.jp>**US FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) App for iPhone**<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8>**7.5. RED CROSS / RED CRESCENT NATIONAL SOCIETIES DOCUMENTS****JAPANESE RED CROSS SOCIETY**

(INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITARIAN STUDIES, JAPANESE RED CROSS ACADEMY)

<http://www.jrc.ac.jp/ihs/index.html> (JAPANESE)<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/0a3aed1a4b8886014af892d36c717c4b.pdf>**GERMAN RED CROSS International Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation**http://www.drk.de/fileadmin/Weltweit/Dokumente/GRC_2013_DRR_and_CCA_Concept.pdf**7.6. ACADEMIA****DISASTER REDUCTION HYPERBASE**<http://drh.bosai.go.jp>**KYOTO UNIVERSITY (INTER-GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SURVIVABLE SOCIETIES)**<http://gss-sv01.gss.sals.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en.html>**UK ODI (with UNDP)**

10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FINANCE FOR REDUCING DISASTER RISK

<http://www.odi.org/publications/9248-finance-reducing-disaster-risk-10-things-know-full-report>**US NATIONAL ACADEMIES**

DISASTER RESILIENCE. A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE

www.national-academies.org<http://www.nationalacademies.org/topics/resilience/index.html><http://www.nap.edu/catalog/13457/disaster-resilience-a-national-imperative>

7.7. DISASTER LAW

- UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION (ILC)
« Protection of persons in the event of disasters »
http://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/6_3.htm and especially
Protection of relief personnel and their equipment and goods
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/248/75/PDF/N1424875.pdf?OpenElement>
- INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT
Strengthening Disaster Law (Geneva, 2011, Resolution 7)
<https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/red-cross-crescent-movement/31st-international-conference/31-international-conference-strengthening-disaster-law-2011-12-29.htm>
- INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RC/RC NATIONAL SOCIETIES (IFRC)
Pilot checklist on law and risk reduction (« Better laws, safer communities »)
<https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/>
<https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-law/about-disaster-law/>
<https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-law/about-disaster-law/international-disaster-response-laws-rules-and-principles/>
- INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HUMANITARIAN LAW (SANREMO)
International Disaster Law Course (San Remo, 27 April - 1 May 2015)
<http://www.iihl.org/idlcourse>

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