

International Day for Disaster Reduction 2015 “KNOWLEDGE FOR LIFE”

Goal: Use International Day for Disaster Reduction, on 13 October 2015 to:

1. Raise awareness of the use of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices, to complement scientific knowledge in disaster risk management;
2. Highlight approaches for engaging local communities and indigenous peoples in implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;

Communities, Peoples and Resilience

At the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the international community was reminded that disasters hit hardest at the local level with the potential to cause loss of life and great social and economic upheaval. Sudden onset disasters displace millions of people every year. In 2014, 19.3 million people were newly displaced by disasters. Disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change, have a negative impact on investment in sustainable development and the desired outcomes.

It is also at the local level that capacities need to be strengthened urgently. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is people-focussed and action-oriented in its approach to disaster risk reduction and applies to the risk of small-scale and large-scale disasters caused by man-made or natural hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks.

The focus of this year’s International Day for Disaster Reduction is on the traditional, indigenous and local knowledge which complement modern science and add to an individual’s and societies’ resilience. For example, knowledge of early warning signals in nature can be vital to ensuring early action is taken to mitigate the impact of both slow and fast onset disasters such as droughts, heatwaves, storms and floods. Combined with scientific knowledge such as reports generated by meteorologists, local knowledge is vital for preparedness and can be passed on from generation to generation. New knowledge and coping strategies are being generated all the time as communities in hazard prone locations work out new ways and means to adapt to disaster and climate risk.

In many aspects, indigenous people epitomise the importance of local knowledge and community-level engagement in disaster risk reduction. 370 million people around the world identify themselves as indigenous, in 90 countries. Indigenous peoples’ territories span over 24% of the earth’s surface and they manage 80% of the world’s biodiversity. More than 4,000 of the world’s 7,000 languages are spoken by indigenous people. Many traditions, practices and customs which are important to environmental protection and managing disaster risk are embedded in those languages which are threatened with

extinction. In both rural and urban settings, indigenous peoples have unique vulnerabilities and needs in disaster risk reduction and in post-disaster recovery. At the same time, indigenous peoples have unique capacities and knowledge.

Over the last four years, the UNISDR Step Up Campaign has focussed on the challenge of including major communities in disaster risk management, communities that have built up stores of knowledge on vulnerability and exposure to disasters from their own unique perspectives: Children (2011), Women and Girls (2012), Persons Living with Disabilities (2013) and Older Persons (2014). All these groups have a communal experience and wisdom which can strengthen preparedness and response for society as a whole. This year's International Day concludes the series with a searching look at how communities united by the common threat of disasters, deploy the knowledge and insight born of place, tradition and experience.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Sendai Framework contains multiple direct references to the need for a strong focus on communities and indigenous peoples:

7. "While recognizing their leading, regulatory and coordination role, Governments should engage with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards."

24. (i) Ensure the use of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices, as appropriate, to complement scientific knowledge in disaster risk assessment and the development and implementation of policies, strategies, plans and programmes of specific sectors, with a cross-sectoral approach, which should be tailored to localities and to the context;

27. (h) Empower local authorities, as appropriate, through regulatory and financial means to work and coordinate with civil society, communities and indigenous peoples and migrants in disaster risk management at the local level;

36. (v) Indigenous peoples, through their experience and traditional knowledge, provide an important contribution to the development and implementation of plans and mechanisms, including for early warning;

Guidance for submitting nominations

The main criteria for consideration is that the nominated community must have undertaken an activity, or activities, which demonstrate the value of traditional, indigenous or local knowledge in managing disaster risk and thereby reducing the impact of disasters on a specific, defined community.

This should be described in 1,000 words (max) with a view to possible publication on UNISDR websites and social media outlets. Photographs and short videos are also welcome.

The second criteria is that the submission highlights, directly or indirectly, the importance of one or more of the Sendai Framework's four priorities for action: creating a greater understanding of disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk reduction for better disaster risk management; a smart investment by the community in disaster risk reduction; enhancing disaster preparedness for disaster response or an example of a community-level initiative to build back better after a disaster.

It is not essential but in order to feature on our web sites - unisdr.org and [PreventionWeb](http://PreventionWeb.org) - in the series of stories planned in the build-up to International Day on October 13, it would be helpful if your nomination was written in a ready-to-publish format. It should include a description of the community, population size, disaster profile, and include quotes from a couple of beneficiaries and a project leader. We can also assist in the editing process.

The stories will also contribute greatly to an awareness-raising campaign on social media, including a Thunderclap to be released on Tuesday, October 13, International Day:

KNOWLEDGE FOR LIFE...is the local knowledge you use to manage disaster risk & save lives and assets in your community [#IDDR2015](#)

Organisations and communities supporting the campaign on social media will be encouraged to post photographs, to use KNOWLEDGE FOR LIFE! and the [#IDDR2015](#) [#SFDRR](#) hashtags, on platforms including Twitter, Flickr and Facebook.

Outcome of International Day Activity

1. Greater global awareness of the importance of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices to disaster risk reduction;
2. Inclusion of indigenous people/ local communities in the design and implementation of national DRR programmes;
3. Public discourse to promote attitudinal and behavioral change towards inclusion of indigenous peoples and consultation at community level;

A short summary of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 with its seven targets and four priorities for action, was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on March 18, 2015. It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly on June 3, 2015.

The Sendai Framework is a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibilities are to be shared with other stakeholders including local government and the private sector.

It aims for the following outcome:

The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

THE SEVEN TARGETS

The targets focus on substantial reductions in (1) disaster mortality, (2) number of affected people, (3) direct economic losses and (4) reducing damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services. The Sendai Framework also seeks a substantial increase in (5) national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, (6) enhanced cooperation to developing countries, and (7) a substantial increase in multi-hazard early warning systems, disaster risk information and assessments.

THE FOUR PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Priority 1. Understanding disaster risk: Disaster risk management need to be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment. Such knowledge can be used for risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response.

Priority 2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk: Disaster risk governance at the national, regional and global levels is very important for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation. It fosters collaboration and partnership.

Priority 3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience: Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets, as well as the environment.

Priority 4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction: The growth of disaster risk means there is a need to strengthen disaster preparedness for response, take action in anticipation of events, and ensure capacities are in place for effective response and recovery at all levels. The recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase is a critical opportunity to build back better, including through integrating disaster risk reduction into development measures.