



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

Sixth session

Bangkok, 28–30 August 2019

Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its sixth session**I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention****A. Matters calling for action by the Commission**

1. The following recommendations of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its consideration and possible action:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Commission scale up regional cooperation to complement national efforts in reducing disaster risk, in recognition of the changing geography and intensification of disaster risks.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Commission support the member States in capacity-building, data access and exchange, learning, and access to new services and technologies to respond to the increasing complexity of disaster risk by leveraging regional, North-South and South-South cooperation.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Commission take note of the request of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to join the thematic working group on disaster risk reduction and resilience of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism or a similar issue-based regional United Nations coordination group on disaster risk reduction, in order to support the operationalization of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recognizes the work of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning and its service nodes

in the region and recommends the Commission to scale up space applications for disaster risk reduction and resilience to support high disaster risk, low-capacity countries, including through the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

2. The following decisions adopted by the Committee are brought to the attention of the Commission:

Decision 1

The Committee notes the operationalization of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network, with priority given to the regional platform for multi-hazard early warning systems for floods and droughts.

Decision 2

The Committee underlines the importance of the findings of *The Disaster Riskscape across Asia-Pacific: Pathways for Resilience, Inclusion and Empowerment – Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019* with regard to supporting risk-informed policy decisions of member States and requests the secretariat to further deepen its analytical research to respond to the changing geography and intensification of disaster risks.

Decision 3

The Committee welcomes the offer from the Government of Indonesia to host the fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2022 and requests the secretariat to assist with the organization of the Conference.

Decision 4

The Committee recognizes that the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) is important to efforts to support disaster risk reduction and resilience and requests the Commission to enhance its collaboration, including with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific, in the management of geospatial information in the region.

Decision 5

The Committee recognizes the importance of geospatial information applications for disaster risk reduction and requests the secretariat to enhance its efforts in capacity-building, the sharing of good practices and the provision of technical support on geospatial information applications to countries affected by disasters.

Decision 6

The Committee notes the results of the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, including the Disaster-related Statistics Framework.

Decision 7

Concerning future regional collaboration on disaster-related statistics, the Committee endorses the recommendations made by the Committee on Statistics at its sixth session (ESCAP/CST/2018/6, recommendation 3).

II. Proceedings

A. Changing geography and intensification of disaster risks in the Asia-Pacific region

(Agenda item 2)

3. The Committee had before it the summary of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019 (ESCAP/CDR/2019/1).

4. The Committee benefited from a panel comprised of Mr. Narendra Tuteja, Manager, Water Forecast Services, Bureau of Meteorology, Australia; and Mr. Rajib Shaw, Professor, Keio University, Japan.

5. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; Fiji; Japan; Pakistan; Russian Federation; and Turkey.

6. The Committee concurred with the analysis presented in the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019*.

7. The Committee was informed of efforts to strengthen disaster resilience, including efforts to review and implement national legislation and policies and strengthen early warning systems. It was further informed of country-led efforts to strengthen disaster resilience through international collaboration.

8. The Committee was informed of the willingness of countries to share their experiences to enhance the capacities of least developed countries. The representative of Fiji said that his country was willing to become a regional hub for supporting the capacity-building of Pacific island States.

B. Regional action: operationalizing the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network

(Agenda item 3)

Strengthening risk assessment and multi-hazard early warning systems

(Agenda item 3 (a))

9. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on operationalizing the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network (ESCAP/CDR/2019/2).

10. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion. The panel comprised Mr. David Corbelli, Senior International Development Manager, Met Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Mr. Chung Kyu Park, Director, WMO Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific; and Ms. Charlotte Benson, Principal Disaster Risk Management Specialist, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Asian Development Bank.

11. The Committee was informed of the recommendations of the Expert Dialogue on Scaling Up Regional Cooperation in Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems in Asia and the Pacific with a focus on flood and drought, which was organized by ESCAP, the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia, and the Met Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland prior to the Committee session. The experts recommended that further development of data, information and monitoring networks for transboundary early warning systems and the development and enhancement of regional learning and engagement platforms be supported; that data sharing and the benefits of data sharing between and among member States be promoted; that further capacity-building for providers and users of forecasting and disaster risk information be supported to ensure the operationalization of forecasting and early warning systems; and that efforts to ensure the reach of early warning systems and to ensure they are actionable by end-users, particularly vulnerable communities in the disaster risk hotspots in the Asia-Pacific region, be increased.

12. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Afghanistan; Bangladesh; India; Indonesia; Nepal; Pakistan; and Republic of Korea.

13. The Committee noted the work of the secretariat in strengthening its partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and recognized the importance of further strengthening the cooperation between ESCAP and other regional associations in Asia and the Pacific to promote disaster risk reduction.

14. The representative of Afghanistan requested that a pilot project of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network be implemented in his country.

United Nations “Delivering as one” for disaster risk reduction and resilience

(Agenda item 3 (b))

15. The Committee had before it the report of the thematic working group on disaster risk reduction and resilience of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (ESCAP/CDR/2019/INF/1).

16. The representative of Cambodia made a statement.

17. Representatives of the following United Nations agencies made statements: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; and WMO.

18. The interest of WMO in formally joining the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, in particular the thematic working group on disaster risk reduction and resilience, or a similar issue-based regional coordination group of the United Nations on disaster risk reduction, arose out of its presence in the region, consisting of the Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific, based in Singapore, and due to its long-standing regional initiatives and capacity development programmes in Asia and the Pacific.

Enhancing geospatial information applications and services for disaster resilience

(Agenda item 3 (c))

19. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion, which emphasized the progress made in the region in the applications of space technology for enhancing disaster resilience and sustainable development. The panel

comprised Mr. Andrew Barnicoat, Chief, Positioning and Community Safety Division, Geoscience, Australia, and President, Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific; Mr. Preethi Sanath Panawennage, Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies, Sri Lanka; Mr. Anond Snidvongs, Executive Director of the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency, Thailand; Ms. Orbita Roswintiarti, Deputy Chairperson for Remote Sensing Affairs, National Institute of Aeronautics and Space, Indonesia; and Mr. Rajeev Jaiswal, Deputy Director, Disaster Management Support Programme Office, Indian Space Research Organization, India.

20. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Mongolia; Myanmar; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Turkey.

21. The representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat also made a statement.

22. The representative of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development reported on the outcomes of the twenty-third session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee.

23. The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction noted that the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee had reviewed the initial results of the survey on needs and contributions with regard to the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030). The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction also noted that the publication entitled “Geospatial Information for Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Asia-Pacific” was being prepared by the secretariat.

24. The Committee reconfirmed its commitment to support the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) as well as for related Commission resolution 75/6. The Committee requested the secretariat to enhance its efforts to assist member States in improving the use and sharing of geospatial information for resilient and sustainable development and the implementation of the Plan of Action.

25. The Committee was informed of the progress made by member States in space technology and geospatial information applications for disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and damage assessment, which would contribute to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

26. The Committee expressed its support for the work of the secretariat of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific, which was transferred to ESCAP in November 2018.

27. The Committee noted the importance of regional cooperation in space applications in addressing the gaps in knowledge and capacity to access and effectively utilize space technology and space-based data, information, tools and services to support disaster risk reduction and resilience and recognized the continued need for cooperation.

28. The Committee expressed its appreciation to member States that had provided support to other countries under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, Sentinel Asia and the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific by providing satellite image products, geospatial portals, operational tools, capacity-building, training and services.

29. The Committee noted the successful launch of the first satellite in Sri Lanka and that the Government of Sri Lanka had offered the data from the satellite to other countries.

Disaster-related statistics

(Agenda item 3 (d))

30. The Committee had before it the report of the Committee on Statistics on its sixth session (ESCAP/CST/2018/6) and the note by the secretariat entitled “Disaster-related Statistics Framework: results of the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/74/24).

31. The Committee benefited from a presentation (via recorded video) by Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia, and Chair of the Committee on Statistics at its sixth session.

32. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

33. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies also made statements: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; and WMO.

34. A representative from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also made a statement.

35. The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction recognized the usefulness of the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific in producing comprehensive and comparable disaster-related statistics. The Disaster-related Statistics Framework, the main result of the work of the Expert Group, aided in monitoring and reporting on progress in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

36. Noting persistent challenges with terminology and methodology for monitoring the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the Committee agreed on the need for further technical assistance, capacity development and regional exchange of country experiences in the production of disaster-related statistics. In that regard, the Committee appreciated continued close collaboration among relevant international organizations, as exemplified by the partnership between the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and ESCAP on the production of training materials for the implementation of the Disaster-related Statistics Framework.

Data and information management platform for disaster resilience through the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management

(Agenda item 3 (e))

37. The Committee had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on its third session (ESCAP/75/11).

38. The Committee benefited from a panel that comprised Mr. Suprayoga Hadi, Primary Planner of the Deputy Minister for Regional Development, Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia; and Mr. Teruyuki Kato, Director, Hot Spring Research Institute, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan.

39. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Iran (Islamic Republic of); and Turkey.

40. A representative of the United Nations Development Programme also made a statement.

41. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations and other entities also made statements: Asian Disaster Reduction Centre; and Tohoku University.

42. The Committee welcomed the efforts to share information and strengthen disaster resilience through disaster loss accounting and regional cooperation activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management. The Committee was further apprised of efforts under way to work closely with national statistical offices.

43. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed appreciation for the support provided by the secretariat to the joint United Nations response to the recent floods in his country.

C. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme on disaster risk reduction

(Agenda item 4)

44. The Committee was informed of the proposed programme plan for 2020 of ESCAP endorsed by the Commission under decision 75/11, including changes made in accordance with the management reform approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/266.

D. Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session

(Agenda item 5)

45. The representative of Turkmenistan proposed a multi-stakeholder consultation to be held on the sidelines of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 73/297 on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, and informed the Committee that his delegation would submit a draft resolution on the United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.

E. Other matters
(Agenda item 6)

46. A representative of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat delivered a presentation on the ECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. The representative informed the Committee that given the transboundary nature of industrial accidents and the overlapping memberships of ECE and ESCAP, there were opportunities for collaboration between the two regional commissions to implement the Sendai Framework through the use of guidance materials and the exchange of information and good practices. The representative invited ESCAP member States to attend the ECE Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, to be held in December 2020, and the subregional workshop on mining and tailings safety in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and other countries in Central Asia, to be held in November 2019.

F. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixth session
(Agenda item 7)

47. The Committee adopted the present report on 30 August 2019.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

48. The Committee held its sixth session in Bangkok from 28 to 30 August 2019. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. Opening statements were delivered by Police Lieutenant General Nadhapit Snidvongs, Vice Minister for Interior, Thailand; Mr. Mohammad Qaseem Haidari, Deputy Minister for Disaster Management, National Disaster Management Authority, Afghanistan; and Mr. Mohsen Mohammadi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ESCAP.

B. Attendance

49. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Turkey; Turkmenistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

50. Representatives of the following Permanent Observers to ESCAP attended: Argentina; Germany; Hungary; Mexico; Nigeria and Switzerland. In addition, the representative of Sweden attended as an observer.

51. Representatives of the following offices of the United Nations Secretariat attended: Office for Outer Space Affairs; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; and United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, Islamic Republic of Iran.

52. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended: International Telecommunication Union; United

Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation; World Food Programme; World Health Organization; and WMO.

53. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: ASEAN; ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management; Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre; Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction; International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development; Mekong River Commission; and Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia.

54. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Academy of Sciences, Uzbekistan; Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Nepal; Afghan Red Crescent Society; Asia-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management, Sri Lanka; Asian Institute of Technology; Centre for Environment and Development, Sri Lanka; China Meteorological Administration; Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts; Environment and Development Association; Hot Spring Research Institute of Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan; Indian Institute of Materials Management; Institute for Global Environmental Strategies; International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Iora Ecological Solutions; Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency; Keio University, Japan; Miyamoto International, Inc.; National Centre on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, Islamic Republic of Iran; Stockholm Environment Institute; Thammasat University, Thailand; Tohoku University, Japan; and Tongmyong University, Republic of Korea.

C. Election of the officers

55. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Mohammad Qaseem Haidari (Afghanistan)
 Vice-Chairs: Mr. Taitusi Nacolakia Vakadravuyaca (Fiji)
 Mr. Velix Vernando Wanggai (Indonesia)

D. Agenda

56. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Changing geography and intensification of disaster risks in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. Regional action: operationalizing the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network:
 - (a) Strengthening risk assessment and multi-hazard early warning systems;

- (b) United Nations “Delivering as one” for disaster risk reduction and resilience;
 - (c) Enhancing geospatial information applications and services for disaster resilience;
 - (d) Disaster-related statistics;
 - (e) Data and information management platform for disaster resilience through the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.
4. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme on disaster risk reduction.
 5. Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-sixth session.
 6. Other matters.
 7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixth session.

E. Other events

57. The second ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week was held in conjunction with the Committee session. The following expert group meetings, side events and special sessions were also held:

- (a) 26 August 2019: Developing resilient infrastructure to support disaster risk reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals, co-hosted with the United Nations Office for Project Services;
- (b) 26 and 27 August 2019: Expert Group Meeting on Information and Communications Technology for Disaster Risk Management;
- (c) 27 August 2019: side event of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management on sand and dust storms;
- (d) 27–29 August 2019: Twenty-third session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development;
- (e) 28 August 2019: review of the Asian Development Bank’s 2004 Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy, organized by the Asian Development Bank;
- (f) 28 August 2019: Expert Group Meeting on Internet Traffic Management among Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Vietnam;
- (g) 26–29 August 2019: Expert Dialogue on Scaling Up Regional Cooperation in Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems in Asia and the Pacific with a focus on flood and drought, co-hosted with the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia, Met Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Department of International Development of the United Kingdom;
- (h) 26 August 2019: Multi-Global Navigation Satellite Systems Steering Committee, co-hosted with Multi-Global Navigation Satellite Systems Asia;
- (i) 28 August 2019: World Summit on the Information Society regional review, co-hosted with International Telecommunication Union;

(j) 29 August 2019: Environment and disasters: filling the gap in the Asia-Pacific Region, co-hosted with the United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; and the Government of Turkmenistan;

(k) 28 August 2019: Young Research Professional Forum, co-hosted with Multi-Global Navigation Satellite Systems Asia;

(l) 29 August 2019: Asia-Pacific Regional Community Networks Summit, co-hosted with the Internet Society;

(m) 29 August 2019: eighth meeting of the working group on risk assessment and awareness of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, hosted by ASEAN;

(n) 29 August 2019: Combining capabilities: public-private partnerships in disaster management, co-hosted with the United Nations Development Programme and the Connecting Business Initiative.

58. An exhibition on the theme “Building disaster resilience through empowerment, inclusion, and equality” was displayed in the United Nations Conference Centre from 26 to 30 August 2019. Participants in the exhibit included the following: Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies; Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Multi-Global Navigation Satellite System Asia; United Nations Institute for Training and Research Operational Satellite Applications Programme; and ESCAP.

Annex

List of documents

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