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Resilience across the post-2015 frameworks: how to create greater coherence

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Key messages

- 'Resilience' features in all of the four major post-2015 frameworks on development, climate, disasters and humanitarian issues.
- Resilience provides a useful umbrella under which to address the range of hazards and risks that a country or community might face.
- Coordinating actions taken to deliver against each framework can also help to avoid duplication, maximise gains and manage trade-offs between different risks and goals.
- Greater institutional incentives are needed to reinforce coherence on resilience across the agreements, particularly among UN agencies and national governments.

1. Introduction

In 2015 and 2016 the world's governments agreed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai Framework), the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (the Paris Agreement) and the World Humanitarian Summit framework (WHS). These frameworks articulate a set of goals and targets that, if achieved, will create a future where significant progress will have been made on the disaster, sustainable development, climate and humanitarian challenges of today. Delivering this global vision by 2030 in a sustainable and inclusive way requires that we act upon all the major frameworks negotiated and agreed throughout 2015 and 2016.

'Resilience' features in all four of the major frameworks and agreements. Each articulates the importance of resilience in achieving global change in a variety of sectors, contexts and scales. This briefing summarises findings and recommendations from an analysis of resilience across the post 2015 frameworks. It argues that taken together, the different contributions of these frameworks make for a more complete resilience agenda than if they are taken separately. Why? Because building resilience will require action that spans the development, humanitarian, climate and disaster risk reduction arenas.

There is significant potential for designing financing mechanisms, policies and programmes that can deliver on more than one set of targets or frameworks. Done well, this will increase the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and achievability of the frameworks. Joined-up monitoring mechanisms that track progress on resilience across the frameworks can also ensure that action in one area does not contradict plans or undermine progress in another. Without awareness of how each framework presents and promotes action on resilience, the development, humanitarian, climate and disaster risk reduction communities run the risk of not achieving the full potential that the new international policy environment offers.

However, 'resilience' is not presented coherently across the frameworks, and there is still a long way to go to promote greater understanding of resilience as an outcome rather than as a set of activities or inputs. Below is a brief summary of the role resilience plays in the frameworks:

Development

- **The Sustainable Development Goals** form the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They represent the latest global targets in pursuit of poverty reduction, sustainable development and peace. Resilience features in two goals and eight targets, linked to poverty, built infrastructure and human settlements, agricultural production and vulnerability to climate extremes and disasters. This represents a marked shift from the goals' predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in which resilience did not appear.

Climate Change

- **The Paris Agreement** made at the 2015 Paris climate conference (known as COP21) featured resilience as an integral component of climate change adaptation, linked to concepts of building adaptive capacity and reducing climate change vulnerability. This gave resilience a more prominent role than in previous climate change agreements, where references to resilience have come and gone over time. The Paris Agreement also places emphasis on the resilience of, and links between, socioeconomic and ecological systems.

Disasters

- **The Sendai Framework** builds on its predecessor, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015. Its overall goal is framed around strengthening resilience in order to achieve its expected outcome of reduced disaster risk and losses. Resilience also features across its global targets and indicators. The emphasis on anticipatory action in building resilience reflects a broader shift within the disasters community away from the idea of managing disasters and towards the idea of managing risk.

Humanitarian

- **The World Humanitarian Summit** signalled the start of a formal global process to expedite reform in the humanitarian sector. Resilience features heavily in its 'Agenda for Humanity' and related consultation documents, reflecting its increased importance across the sector over the past decade. The concluding Commitment to Action employs resilience in a number of ambitious agendas, including vulnerability reduction and risk management, increased capacity for early action and preparedness, the localisation of aid and more joined-up action to bridge the humanitarian and development divide.

The relative political weight of the frameworks will affect the processes of collaboration and coherence over resilience outcomes. The SDGs and the Paris Agreement are chefsache – discussed at head of state level and regarded as major influencers of the global agenda. Yet it cannot be taken for granted that countries feel ownership of the all of the outcomes. Nor can we assume that all people support greater coherence across the frameworks. A number of humanitarian agencies have challenged calls for such coherence in the belief that humanitarian action must remain distinct in its ethos and approach, notably by remaining neutral, impartial and independent in the delivery of assistance.

Nevertheless, there is great value in coherence across the frameworks. Taken individually, none of the frameworks engages with the full spectrum of shocks, stresses, disturbances and risk drivers that might affect a system. Taken together, they better reflect the range of

risks that a country might face. 'Resilience' provides a useful umbrella under which to address a number of areas that might otherwise be treated in isolation. These include the underlying risk drivers common to the development and humanitarian agendas, inconsistencies between development and humanitarian donor/financing systems, and the weak integration of disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts into wider development planning.

Coordinating actions taken to deliver against each framework can also help to avoid duplication, maximise gains and manage trade-offs between different risks and goals. As each framework seeks to 'build resilience' and manage risk using different timeframes, geographical focuses, scales, sectors and hazards, coherence offers a means to address the complexity of the real-world challenges facing national governments, using the lens of 'resilience' to bind different agendas together.

For areas of overlap across the four frameworks, working together is common sense. Solutions need to be linked, and this can only be achieved through connected implementation plans. Coordinated efforts will create efficiency, while linked monitoring processes will reduce the burden on national governments. Importantly, efforts to deliver on the frameworks at the local level must not conflict: everyone needs to 'pull in the same direction'.

The ink is still drying on the frameworks negotiated and agreed in 2015 and 2016. The tough work starts now in moving from an overarching global set of ambitions to making changes in practice and ultimately creating impact on the ground. Greater awareness of how each framework presents resilience and drives related actions will help the development, humanitarian, climate and disaster risk reduction communities achieve the full potential that the new international policy environment offers. To this end, we make five recommendations.

Rececommendation 1: Pursue solutions that deliver resilience across the global frameworks

This recommendation calls for national actions that deliver resilience across the frameworks.

- Sensitisation about the different frameworks with national and sub-national government representatives is needed in advance of consultations designed to consider aligning existing plans and policies to the frameworks across scales.
- Each country should undertake a process to articulate the interim targets required to track progress towards the 2030 goals, across the four frameworks. Annual progress reviews can track the pace of change in relation to nationally defined 'stepping stone' targets.

- National resilience workshops should be held to help define an overall vision, roles, responsibilities and budgets for delivering the national priorities that embed the global targets, using a common understanding of effective risk management and resilience outcomes.
- National governments should determine whether and how the national platforms for the four frameworks can/should coordinate. This may not be desirable for some humanitarian mechanisms that value independence, but is worth exploring for those related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation – for example the strengthening of national disaster management agencies and platforms.
- There are opportunities at national and regional level to be more ambitious than the global frameworks prescribe. As part of the national vision, local through to national implementation plans require clear articulations of the 'end game'. This vision should define what successful resilience-building looks like.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that delivery on one framework is consistent with the attainment of others

This recommendation calls for coherence in ambition and in managing the full range of disturbances and risk drivers.

- Practical actions intended to deliver resilience outcomes should be informed by global science, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, and under the assumption that the average global temperatures will rise by at least 1.5 degrees and likely closer to 2. Solutions to disaster, development and humanitarian challenges devised in response to the other frameworks need to be in line with level of ambition achieved through the Paris Agreement to ensure they are adapted to the severity of the climate change impacts we will face.
- The SDGs related to economic growth must be delivered in ways that do not undermine the attainment of the Sendai Framework. Ministries of finance and planning in developing countries are critical to ensuring that investment decisions do not create greater levels of vulnerability and risk.
- Implementing actions designed to address resilience goals under any of the frameworks should assess risk from a multi-hazards and manage potential trade-offs in resilience for different timeframes, geographical focuses, scales, sectors and hazards.
- Donor support and financial mechanisms must reinforce the ambition to take a systemic approach to managing the full range of disturbances and risk drivers in all investment decisions.

Recommendation 3: Incentivise coordination and collaboration

This recommendation calls for greater leadership and improved incentives for coherence in building resilience across the frameworks.

- National governments should create commitments to support coherence on resilience across the four frameworks. Constant repetition of this ambition in each of the processes designed to make and monitor progress against the frameworks will signal public commitment to coherence, encouraging other actors to do the same.
- Led by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the convening bodies responsible for overseeing the international frameworks should map exactly how each of the goals, targets and indicators across the frameworks relates to the others – including points of coalescence and of difference.
- Indicators still in development can combine efforts, following the example of the agreement between the two expert working groups (the IAEG and OIEWG) on the adoption of the Sendai indicators for the SDG process.
- In response to the UN Secretary-General's call, high-level UN officials are committed to developing a common definition of resilience as part of the WHS commitments. This can build on the terminology and definitions process already underway by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), with a further goal of developing a common understanding of resilience as an outcome, rather than a set of activities/inputs.
- The criteria for portfolio development in donors and regional development banks should recognise and reward initiatives designed in ways that deliver progress on multiple resilience goals and targets.
- The major conferences designed to review progress on the frameworks should include special high-level sessions to incentivise and plan for greater coherence. Inviting counterparts in the other frameworks will support this process through cross-framework learning.

Recommendation 4: Map, assess and coordinate finance for resilience

This recommendation calls for finance to be transparent, coordinated and appropriate to the scale of actions required to build resilience.

- Seek to determine the full cost of achieving the 2030 goals and targets, at the international and national levels, to make it possible to devise a coherent plan for financing.
- Establish or extend the mapping of the financing mechanisms within a country to include new or proposed financing mechanisms designed to deliver on the post-2015 frameworks. Using this information, points of synergy can be identified, for example, where goals and financing modalities within national climate change plans are similar to those made by stakeholders at the WHS.
- Points of confluence in the financing modalities for the four frameworks should be identified and options considered for co-delivery. Domestic government and donor coordination meetings alike should include periodic reviews to articulate how funds are contributing to the various goals and targets, to seek opportunities for collaboration.

Recommendation 5: Track progress jointly together to better inform decision-making

This recommendation calls for more appropriate resilience indicators and more joined-up monitoring systems to expose and tackle trade-offs.

- Adaptation and resilience indicators chosen for the international frameworks need greater academic and statistical scrutiny. For many, the current indicators across the four frameworks do not adequately capture the complexity of resilience outcomes. A form of 'City Group' of the UN Statistical Commission should be established to explore and determine more rigorous indicators for resilience.
- The design of national and sub-national indicators and corresponding monitoring systems must not only capture data on sex, age and disability, but also extend to data on discrimination and marginalisation. Unofficial data sources, such as citizen-generated data and grassroots surveys can be taken into consideration to capture these elements.
- Chaperones of the frameworks (UN in the international arena and governments at the national level) should demand greater cooperation between the monitoring working groups for each framework.
- Monitoring and data collection should be embedded in national statistics offices and support a culture of evidence-based learning at the national and sub-national level. Where national statistics offices are not functioning or lack the capacity required, international donors should directly invest in their development.
- Predefined progress reviews within the frameworks, such as those in the Paris Agreement, should be considered opportunities to jointly review progress towards the linked resilience targets and indicators. Monitoring processes need to capture the potential trade-offs between progress on targets. Lessons from monitoring resilience in other programmes reveal that progress on one type of resilience capacity can come at the expense of progress on others.

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Notes

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