

# Disaster Risk Reduction to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TOOLKIT  
FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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**UNDRR**

UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

# Parliamentarians and DRR

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) puts responsibility for risk reduction squarely at the foot of the state. Risk reduction requires whole-of-society involvement, but primary responsibility is borne by the state. Parliaments and parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to catalyse, oversee and monitor disaster risk reduction laws and policies and their impact at local levels. The Sendai Framework explicitly calls for parliamentarians to develop new or amend existing disaster risk reduction-related legislation, set budget allocations and hold governments accountable for public protection. In 2019, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) passed a resolution (Box 1) calling on parliamentarians to include disaster risk reduction (DRR) in their strategies for implementing and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.

In addition to their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions, parliaments play a bridging role between government, civil society and citizens, and are duty-bound to represent and to encourage participation of all sectors of society. This is critical when it comes to reducing risk; COVID-19 has demonstrated that in this age of systemic risk we are not safe until we are all safe.

IPU and UNDRR designed a [toolkit](#) to assist parliaments and parliamentarians to initiate, strengthen and oversee national, subnational and local development, progress and investment to develop and implement DRR legislation and policy. This brochure presents key highlights from the toolkit.

## How can parliamentarians facilitate DRR?

The toolkit offers 10 actions parliamentarians can take to advance risk reduction in their countries, which in turn strengthens implementation of the Sendai Framework and progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to the actions identified, specific examples are included that show how these actions can be adapted to a nation's specific risk profile and geography and implemented at national and regional levels.

### Legislate



**1 Create DRR legislation – with clearly defined roles and responsibilities across all of government – after conducting risk and vulnerability assessments and developing multi-hazard and multi-sectoral DRR strategies and policies.**

The East African Community (EAC), a regional inter-governmental organization comprising Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, passed the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2016), 27 which provides a regional legislative framework for the management and reduction of disaster risk. This Act also creates a mechanism for accountability and fosters coordination and exchange among EAC member states on disaster risk reduction efforts. Furthermore, the roadmap for the implementation of the law includes targets and activities crucial for achieving effective DRR including awareness raising, cross-sectoral and cross-institutional collaboration and capacity development on

disaster risk reduction, among others. The law underwent public hearings, enabling public participation in the legislative process and thus increasing the legitimacy of the Act.

**2 Review and amend existing sectoral legislation to integrate DRR that reflects international commitments and includes the latest knowledge, while ensuring that DRR can be adapted to evolving requirements.**

In 2019, the United Kingdom amended its 2008 Climate Change Act to make long-term GHG emissions reduction targets legally binding, allowing for legal action if targets are missed. An independent advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), has been created to advise government on meeting targets, perform independent analyses and monitor progress.

### BOX 1

#### 141st IPU Assembly, Resolution: "Addressing Climate Change"

(Belgrade, Serbia, 13–17 October 2019)

Calls on all parliamentarians to work with their governments in partnership with all stakeholders to implement the Paris Agreement by moving towards rapid implementation of the SDGs, thereby contributing to the enhancement of resilience and adaptation to climate change, and in particular open a dialogue with the younger generation;

Calls on national parliaments to urge their governments, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, to support the development of comprehensive national resilience mechanisms, strengthen disaster risk reduction and prevention, enhance disaster preparedness for effective responses, and invest in risk-reduction measures and societal resilience for disasters including, inter alia, desertification, deforestation, sand storms and mass flooding;

Strongly appeals for a significant shift and enhancement in financial, technological and capacity-building assistance for developing countries towards adaptation rather than mitigation.

## Oversee



- 3** | **Ensure that all parliamentary oversight functions and activities consider DRR and risk-informed decision-making, and provide access to sufficient information in standardized, consistent formats.**

In 2020, when the European Parliament voted on the European Climate Law, members of the European parliament (MEPs) voted to reject proposals that weakened the commitment to GHG emission reduction, increasing it to a 60 per cent reduction by 2030 against 1990 levels and stating that all EU countries should be at net zero emissions by 2050, making the targets binding.

## Budget and finance



- 4** | **Develop and inform DRR financing strategies and financial instruments to fund long-term DRR initiatives – including funds for oversight of data collection, reporting and regulation enforcement – at all levels of government.**

The Republic of the Philippines was one of the first countries to integrate and localize DRR across governments. The 2010 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act provides a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, community-based approach to DRR with a governance framework that integrates local and subnational governments and provides them with funding. The Act also created the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF), requiring local governments to set aside 5 per cent or more of annual revenue from regular sources into a LDRRMF for the regional councils to use

They also required the European Commission to submit a 2040 climate target proposal, create a European Climate Change Council – an independent scientific body to scrutinize EU climate policies and targets – and table an EU carbon budget by December 2021 that details the remaining carbon emissions threshold to keep within the Paris Agreement’s temperature requirement. Member states will also have to develop and implement adaptation strategies to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change.

for DRR, prevention, preparedness and quick response for government departments such as Agriculture, Health, Education, Public Works and Transport. Unspent funds are allocated for DRR activities for use within five years.

- 5** | **Integrate and mainstream DRR into public and private investment decisions to deliver risk-informed investment.**

In 2017, Fiji was the first emerging nation to issue its own sovereign Green Bond, raising US\$ 50 million, to support climate change mitigation and adaptation. Green bonds are fixed income, liquid financial instruments used to raise funds dedicated to climate mitigation, adaptation, and other environment-friendly projects as defined in the Green Bond Principles.

## Represent



- 6** | **Promote inclusion and an all-of-society approach that ensures citizen engagement in DRR, with a focus on multi-sector consultation and coordination.**

In 2009, Canada established the Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Platform is nationally overseen and led – with more than 700 members representing the subnational and national public sector, scientists, academia, the public, civil society, indigenous people and private sector – and provides a whole-of-society approach to reducing risk. Canada’s Platform on DRR hosts a National Roundtable for DRR in different geographic locations annually to support whole-of-society participation and provide opportunities to discuss domestic implementation of the Sendai Framework. Anyone in Canada is allowed to join the Platform and participate in the roundtables.

- 7** | **Foster development of multi-sector scientific, academic and technical agencies and institutions to provide knowledge, advice, oversight and innovation for DRR priorities and initiatives.**

In 2012, the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST) created Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards), a multidisciplinary research centre. NOAH used international expert volunteers and collected data to create low-cost, localized maps of potential hazard impacts and vulnerabilities for communities to enable evidence-based DRR decision-making.

## Advocate



### 8 Advocate that government shifts from an event-centred response and recovery approach to DRR with a multi-hazard approach.

In 2008, Peru introduced Works For Taxes, which mobilized private-sector investment and expedited public works infrastructure, especially at the subnational level, where funds and public-sector capacity are limited. The tax scheme allowed Peru to address some of the public-sector infrastructure development constraints: lack of technical capacity, quality of feasibility and investment studies, and lower costs and shorter timelines. Using this taxation strategy, private companies finance public works projects and, after project completion, the company's costs are audited and verified. These costs can then be offset against their future tax payments – up to 50 per cent of annual income tax balances. To further encourage DRR, Parliament passed the Sanitation Sector Modernization Law (2013), requiring water utilities to spend 1 per cent of revenue received from water tariffs for climate change adaptation, natural infrastructure, and watershed conservation and to include these in their budgeting and planning processes.

### 9 Advocate that the data, expertise and experience of national and international agencies and institutions and of other countries with similar hazard and geographic profiles be leveraged to inform DRR frameworks and strategies.

In 2017, Fiji pioneered a Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) – with the support of the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

(GFDRR), and input from other small island developing states – to analyse and assess vulnerabilities to climate change, potential economic losses, and the effects on national development plans. It included projections of medium- to long-term impacts from hazard risks and actual events on the economy, livelihoods, poverty levels, health and food security. Infrastructure and asset inventories were also conducted. Innovative analyses included modelling using Fiji's Road Authority database to assess the transportation assets that would have high economic losses. A climate adaptation and risk resilience investment plan, with costs, timelines and prioritized DRR strategies, was also created.

### 10 Advocate that DRR is integrated into climate change adaptation and development plans

Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture has been active in aligning CCA and DRR policies into sectoral policies for agriculture, focusing on institutional capacity for research and development, climate-resilient cropping systems, water efficient irrigation and risk transfer. Parliamentarians approved the National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan 2016-2020 to enhance synergies between DRR and CCA in Ghana and increase farmers' resilience to the negative impacts of climate change. The Plan outlines programme areas where CCA and DRR are aligned – developing crop varieties and livestock breeds that are tolerant to flooding and droughts, diversifying land use and enhancing farmers' resiliency to droughts and floods – and the importance of institutionalising weather-related risk transfer schemes.

## When to act: NOW

After any disaster event there is a window of opportunity during which the public and parliaments have been exposed to disaster and see the need for something to be done to prevent further disaster losses. During this time, they will be inclined to support DRR policies and legislation, organizational and institutional reform, and budget allocations.<sup>1</sup> As the costs of disaster response and recovery increase, there is greater interest in avoiding further costs and to prevent future disasters. Parliamentarians can seize this opportunity and legislate DRR integration across all of government, allocate funds for DRR, improve oversight of existing initiatives, establish dialogues and committees to assess risks and make DRR recommendations, and introduce build back better principles into the recovery process. Parliamentarians can also expect multi-partisan support for including DRR during this period. They can also use this window to mandate, facilitate and fund DRR at subnational and local levels where DRR initiatives are most effective.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated how global interconnectivity results in increased impacts and multi-hazard risks. The development and legislating of recovery packages and the funds being allocated for recovery have given parliamentarians around the world an opportunity to see the interconnected and cascading impacts of disasters and to consider how much cheaper prevention and risk reduction would have been. This opportunity can be seized by parliamentarians to advocate for greater DRR and to hold governments accountable for how they are managing disaster risks.

<sup>1</sup> Birkman et al. *Extreme events and disasters: a window of opportunity for change? Analysis of organizational, institutional and political changes, formal and informal responses after mega-disasters* Nat Hazards 55 (2010), 637–655.



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