

Fifth Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

**From Risk to Resilience: Accelerating
Local Action for Disaster Risk Reduction**

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Rabat, Morocco

Prioritized Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction 2021-2024



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1. Preamble

- 1.1.** The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) provides the way forward to prevent and reduce disaster risk in order to achieve resilient and sustainable development. Under the leadership of national governments and embracing all actors at all levels, the Sendai Framework provides a solution to save lives, to protect livelihoods and assets, and to reduce the financial burden on governments to bail-out the aftermath of failed “development.” The Sendai Framework highlights the need for agreed regional and sub-regional strategies and mechanisms for cooperation and to reviewing the progress made during regional and global platforms.
- 1.2.** Following the adoption of the Sendai Framework, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has been organizing bi-annual Arab Partnership Meetings for DRR, bringing together Arab governments and DRR stakeholders and regional UN and international organizations to review the progress achieved in implementing Sendai Framework in the region.
- 1.3.** To ensure the smooth implementation of the Sendai Framework and close monitoring of the progress made in the region, Arab governments and stakeholders agreed on the need for developing an actionable plan for the short-, medium- and long-term. Accordingly, the first Prioritized Plan of Action on DRR in the region was developed for the period from 2018 to 2020 and was adopted as an outcome document at the Africa-Arab Platform on DRR held in Tunisia in October 2018. The Action Plan for 2018-2020 recognized the progress achieved by the Arab countries since the adoption of Sendai Framework and recommended prioritized actions to accelerate its implementation, with a specific focus on target (e) of the Sendai Framework which calls for the development, adoption and implementation of national and local DRR strategies.
- 1.4.** Progress in implementing the Sendai Framework for DRR in the region, through the Prioritized Plan of Action 2018-2020, was reviewed during several regional meetings including the 3rd Arab Partnership Meeting for DRR in May 2019 in Geneva; the Regional Review Workshop in Cairo in August 2019; the 4th Arab Partnership Meeting for DRR in Cairo in December 2019; the 5th Arab Partnership Meeting for DRR held virtually in November 2020, and the 6th Arab Partnership Meeting for DRR held on June 30 and July 1, 2021.
- 1.5.** The Fifth Arab Conference on DRR, to be organized virtually in Morocco from 8 to 11 November 2021, will produce three outcome documents, namely: i) The Prioritized Plan of Action 2021 – 2024 (medium-term), ii) The Rabat Declaration for DRR, and iii) The Voluntary Action Statements of regional DRR stakeholder groups. This Prioritized Plan of Action 2021 – 2024 builds on the previous Prioritized Plan of Action 2018 – 2020. It recognizes the progress achieved in the first

phase (2018-2020) and recommends prioritized actions towards completing outstanding tasks from the first phase, particularly achieving Target (e) of the Sendai Framework. Finally, it prioritizes actions to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework in the medium-term, with a specific focus on strengthening institutional arrangements and DRR coordination mechanisms (i.e. National Platforms for DRR), developing national people-centered multi-hazard early warning systems (PCMHEWS), carrying out risk assessments at the national levels, and beginning the implementation of disaster risk reduction [plans] at the local level.

1.6. In order to take stock of the progress achieved in implementing the Sendai Framework in the region, compared to the previous years (2005-2014), a Regional Assessment Report on DRR in the Arab Region (RAR) has been developed through a collaborative process involving regional UN and technical organizations. The findings of this RAR, in terms of the status quo of the DRR in the region, served as critical input to the development of this Prioritized Plan of Action for the period 2021-2024.

2. Brief Overview of the progress achieved in implementing the Sendai Framework in the Arab region

2.1. Countries across the region made notable advances in reducing mortality rates due to certain hazards. Since its adoption, the Sendai Framework has provided a structured approach for Member States and stakeholders to build upon the progress achieved over decades.

2.2. Based on the cooperation between the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - Regional Office for Arab States (UNDRR-ROAS) and the League of Arab States (LAS), key achievements have been made in measuring the impact of DRR and building alignment. This includes piloting the policy planning related to climate change adaptation, sustainable development goals (SDGs), and disaster risk reduction in four Arab least developed countries, followed by ongoing efforts to integrate climate change adaptation into national DRR strategies in these four countries, taking into account best practices arising from the UNDRR Comprehensive Risk Management Methodology.

2.3. Regional mechanisms for coordination and partnerships for DRR have been strengthened leading to advanced knowledge and mutual learning. Meetings of Arab Coordination Mechanism for Disaster Risk Reduction (ACMDRR) and the Arab Partnership Meetings on DRR are now held regularly and act as a vehicle for identifying priorities, reviewing progress achieved in the implementation of the Arab Strategy for DRR (ASDRR 2030) and the Sendai Framework, and promoting regional and international best practices while sharing lessons learnt.

2.4. Countries in the Arab State region have progressed well in reducing disaster risks at the regional, national and local levels.

- 2.5.** Most countries in the region have identified a focal point for disaster risk reduction. Some of these focal points have also been designated as the official national coordinator of the Sendai Framework Monitoring System. UNDRR-ROAS continues to support this process by helping countries to develop national platforms that are aligned with, and adhere to, the context of 'Words-into-Action' (WIA) guidelines on National focal points, national platforms and local platforms for disaster risk reduction¹. To this end, 15 Arab countries have developed their national platforms to support the implementation of DRR.
- 2.6.** UNDRR-ROAS is also helping Arab countries in monitoring and reporting on progress in achieving the global targets of the SFDRR through the "Sendai Framework Monitor" System, using the latest technical guidelines 2.
- 2.7.** The region has progressed in developing national DRR strategies, plans and policies. Out of 22 Arab countries, five have ratified their national DRR strategies, 12 are still in the process of developing their national DRR strategies, while 5 have not yet initiated this process.
- 2.8.** Developing local disaster risk reduction strategies remains a challenge in the region. Only 21 Arab cities, from 8 Arab countries, out of the 312 cities that joined the previous program of the "Making Cities Resilient Campaign", have finalized their local DRR strategies/resilience action plans.
- 2.9.** A number of Arab countries have started to report on their disaster losses, to provide a practical basis for a risk-informed analysis and the development of DRR policies. 6 Arab countries have national historical disaster loss databases, and 11 countries have such databases by using DesInventar, a system to calculate losses due to disasters.
- 2.10.** Despite the remarkable efforts in disaster risk reduction, Arab countries continue to face increasing losses due to disasters and the intensity of natural hazards. During the past four decades, more than 150 million people have been affected by disasters in the Arab region, with more than 120 million people affected by drought, resulting in more than 189,000 deaths. Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, water scarcity, and migration trends have been recognized as risk drivers across the region, along with conflicts and political turmoil.

¹ Words into Action guidelines: National focal points for disaster risk reduction, national platforms for disaster risk reduction, local platforms for disaster risk reduction (<https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/53055>).

² Technical guidance for monitoring and reporting on progress in achieving the global targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (<https://www.undrr.org/publications/technical-guidance-monitoring-and-reporting-progress-achieving-global-targets-sendai>).

3. Prioritized Plan of Action 2021-2024

This Action Plan relies on the previous Prioritized Plan of Action (2018-2020) and prioritizes actions required at the regional, national and local levels for the next four years. The Arab Regional Platform for DRR will monitor, assess and review periodically the progress made in implementing the following prioritized actions every two years. This plan is based on the recommendations and priorities shared by governments and stakeholders through multiple consultations that have been organized in the past few years at the Arab Partnership Meetings for Disaster Risk Reduction meetings.

3.1. Actions at the regional level:

- Establishing a regional coordinating mechanism to: 1) promote and improve qualitative and quantitative multi-hazard risk assessment practices and mechanisms to link, share and utilize them; 2) strengthen national people-centered early warning systems for multiple and transboundary hazards; and 3) develop and enhance pre- and post-disaster recovery frameworks.
- Organizing annual partnership meetings that include multi-stakeholder participation to ensure consistency between sustainable development, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction agendas, taking into account the New Urban Agenda, thus enhancing regional cooperation and coordination.
- Establishing mechanisms to promote research-based digitization actions to model regional vulnerabilities, enhance resilience, and ensure that regional dialogues are taking place among all stakeholders at the regional, national and local levels with the involvement of media.
- Investing in the creation of a fund to finance DRR at the national and local levels and encourage the private sector and international partners to invest in financing disaster risk reduction for resilience in the Arab region.
- Developing model legislation and policies for free emergency health support systems for victims and to address the impacts of disasters mental health at the regional, national and local levels.
- Issuing a regional guide and innovative mechanisms to standardize the different DRR concepts.
- With the support of the LAS, promoting systematic mechanisms for scientific and technical exchange of experiences and capacities, including at the bilateral level and among regional institutions.
- Supporting and encouraging scientific research in the field of disaster risk reduction, especially cross-border risks.

- Supporting and enhancing the assistance provided to Arab countries, especially Arab Least Developed Countries (ALDCs) and Arab Small Island Developing States (ASIDS), in developing policies, legislation and national communications plans in emergency situations.
- Developing a regional mechanism for stakeholder groups to monitor and report on their voluntary action statements.
- Promoting and supporting gender equity responsive disaster risk reduction actions.
- Promoting the integration of biological hazards into existing regional DRR strategies and ensuring the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) across the region.
- Strengthening regional coordination between the United Nations, the regional organizations and the national associations to implement the Sendai Framework and encourage the use of emerging communications and technologies to manage natural and health hazards, while building the capacities and skills through training programs.

3.2. Actions at the national and local levels:

Arab countries must ensure the achievement of the actions of the Prioritized Plan of Action 2018-2020 at national and local level. This is particularly critical due the need to accelerate the achievement of Target E of the Sendai Framework; By completing the development and endorsement of national DRR strategies, and strengthening efforts to develop and implement local action plans to enhance resilience with specific targets, indicators and timeframes to prevent new disaster risks and reduce existing ones and their effects. Furthermore, Arab countries must ensure the implementation of the following prioritized actions, particularly those falling under the 3rd and 4th Priorities for Action of the Sendai Framework. These prioritized actions are as follows:

Understanding disaster risk (Priority 1)

- Conduct and regularly update multi-hazard and multi-sectoral risk assessments and develop risk profiles and maps to analyze hazard trends, impacts and vulnerability at national and local levels. Assessment of past, current and expected future risks for each sector to develop plans to reduce these risks.
- Establish and update multi-hazard disaster damage and historical loss databases, at national and local levels, to be used in national and local risk assessments and ensure disaggregation of data geographically and socio-economically, including by age, gender, and disability.
- Set up budgets that identify the financial needs under this priority, at the national and local levels, then develop financial mechanisms to secure the necessary funding resources with the involvement of the private sector in the development and implementation of the financial mechanisms.

- Strengthen technical and human capacity building in developing and implementing DRR action plans at all levels including for local and national officials, National Statistical Offices (NSOs), the private sector, NGOs and at the community levels.
- Integrate DRR concepts in educational curricula and youth and children training programs to understand disaster risks through DRR awareness campaigns.

Strengthening disaster risk reduction governance for manage disaster risk (Priority 2)

- Enhance science-based and risk-informed governance and decision-making to achieve long-term resilience, with the engagement of all relevant authorities, researchers and stakeholders, including the private sector.
- Develop or upgrade DRR legislations and establish mechanisms to assess the potential impacts of disaster risks on large-scale development and infrastructure projects at the national and local levels. Include DRR components in urban planning and residential areas management and enforce construction laws at the national and local levels to ensure all new infrastructures are disaster risk-resilient including in post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction. Develop new legislation or update relevant legislation to mainstream DRR in development sectors (including the private sector) and set budget allocations for risk reduction. Improve and strengthen the necessary legislations to activate PCMHEWS and sensitize the local and national community on dealing with hazards.
- Strengthen multi ministry, multi sectoral and multi stakeholder local and national platforms with an emphasis on women’s effective participation and equal rights in leadership; Engage local actors, science and technology communities, private sector, children, youth and people with disabilities in all phases of DRR at all levels.
- Building the capacity of local authorities to develop local indicators to measure the engagement of stakeholders, marginalized populations and civil society organizations with local authorities.
- Develop / update PCMHEWS at the national and local levels ensuring linkages between their four components, namely i. multi-hazard risk assessments, ii. forecasting and prediction, iii. Message development and dissemination, and iv. Preparedness and response plans. Strengthen the technical and human capacities on PCMHEWS at both local and national levels.
- Strengthen coordination among health, agriculture, veterinary, and DRR institutions to respond to any future biological hazards (pandemics, zoonotic diseases, plant pest’s diseases, etc.).
- Use Sendai Framework Monitor custom indicators to monitor and report on the progress in implementing National DRR strategies.

Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience (Priority 3)

- Mainstream DRR and resilience measures into new development initiatives at the national and local levels, covering the social, economic and environmental aspects of resilience.
- Increase resource allocation to enhance local capacity building for effective decentralization (institutional and technical capacities) to achieve resilience at local levels.
- Encourage the private sector to invest in resilient businesses, insurance mechanisms, and climate-resilient infrastructure; participate in PCMHEWS at the national and local levels.
- Establish social protection and risk transfer mechanisms at the national and local levels.
- Promote and support the participation of cities in the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR 2030) program.
- Accelerate the actions of the UN country teams to implement the UN Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction in order to increase the resilience of operations and procedures at the country level.

Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery rehabilitation & construction (Priority 4)

- Develop disaster recovery plans and link them to national, local and sectoral DRR and resilience building programs.
- Encourage governments to support the initiatives of the different stakeholder groups and support community participation at the local level in the preparedness for an effective response and to build back better in the recovery phase.
- Encourage authorities and communities to participate in PCMHEWS with their four components, mainly: 1) multi-hazard risk assessments, 2) Forecasting and prediction, 3) Message development and dissemination, and 4) preparedness and response plans.
- Encourage countries to assess their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, use lessons learned to build back better, and strengthen their disaster response and recovery plans.
- Ensure COVID-19 recovery plans, including measures to reduce factors that contribute to social vulnerability, integrate DRR considerations and address biological and health hazards as part of the broader systemic risks.

4. Monitoring the implementation of the Prioritized Plan of Action (2021-2024)

- This Prioritized Action Plan has been developed to guide the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the region on the medium term for the period 2021-2024. The overall roles and responsibilities of international, regional and subregional organizations and entities in implementing this plan are in accordance with those stipulated in the Sendai Framework.

- The implementation of the Prioritized Plan of Action 2021-2024 will be monitored every six months at the Arab Partnership Meetings for DRR organized by the UNDRR-ROAS, bringing together Arab governments, stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction and regional UN and international organizations to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the regional level. The monitoring process will also be supplemented by other sources of information and data reported by Arab countries on the Sendai Framework Monitor by March 31 and October 1 of each year.

- Prioritized actions to strengthen the Sendai Framework Monitor at the regional and national levels include:
 - Review and enhance data collection methods to ensure collecting data on disaster losses disaggregated by hazard type, location, age, sex, disability and income are collected, including data on displacement trends.
 - Increase efforts in collecting data on disaster loss and damage to report on the Sendai Framework targets and indicators and relevant SDG goals and indicators, disaggregated where possible, by sex, age and disability.
 - Enhance research on the linkages between hazards and displacement, and the intersection between disaster and conflict in relation to displacement in the region.
 - Strengthen the collection of disaggregated data on the specific interests of the priority groups identified in the Sendai Framework: Women, children, youth, elderly, people with disabilities, migrants, indigenous people, etc.
 - Establish/strengthen links between the data and analysis of the Sendai Framework Monitor System and the existing national disaster loss databases.
 - Strengthen and develop the capacities of national statistical offices to adequately collect and share data with policy and decision-making authorities to enhance the science-policy interaction on disaster risk reduction.
 - Include DRR-related indicators in national development plans and national climate change adaptation plans, in line with the common SDGs-SFDRR indicators to ensure coherence in implementation and monitoring of the global post-2015 agendas.
 - Develop ad hoc, nationally defined indicators to monitor the implementation of the national DRR strategies, with the option to use the Sendai Framework Monitor to report on the progress achieving in implementing these indicators, thus complementing the reported progress against global Sendai targets and indicators.

- Promote stronger institutional arrangements and enhance the role of national multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder DRR coordination mechanisms in developing central national disaster data platforms as effective tools for data collection and validation to enable Member States to report on the Sendai Framework Monitor and check the progress achieved in reducing risks.