

# Fifth Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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

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**“The Arab Civil Society Major  
Group (ACSMG)” for DRR  
2024-2021**



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Five years after the United Nations adopted a number of important international agreements that put more obligations on the countries that signed them; namely, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) (2015-2030) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and since the last decade to mobilize all possible efforts for the implementation of these agreements has begun, we must stand now to take stock of what has passed and what has been achieved, and of the challenges faced in their implementation in order to draw the way forward for the next period, and define the roles of the relevant stakeholders, while focusing on the role of the Arab civil society.

Furthermore, we must bear in mind the developments that have taken place since the end of 2019 and which have changed the world with the emergence of a new and unexpected threat, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced all countries to reconsider their strategies and priorities, and to take exceptional measures to confront this new threat.

Undoubtedly, the role of Arab civil society organizations (CSOs) has become evident through organizing and leveraging capacities and ideas and working to direct them in a way that suits the requirements of the crisis in coordination with governments, in addition to mobilizing efforts and providing assistance to their societies in various Arab countries.

A reference should be made as well to the intensity of natural disasters, especially those due to climate change, which exacerbated during the past few years, both at the global and regional levels, and resulted in many losses and victims, which confirms that our Arab region has become one of the hot spots and requires concerted efforts of actors, and additional efforts from Arab civil society for preparedness and action in order to reduce the disasters risks that threaten their societies, infrastructure and future aspirations.

Considering the risks and disasters witnessed in the Arab region, it is now imperative to evaluate what has been implemented and to determine the pillars of action and priorities for the next three years. The updated Civil Voluntary Action Statement was prepared using a consultative approach, and was discussed during the regional consultation workshop, which was held virtually in October 2021 as part

of the preparations for the 5th Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk reduction which was held virtually in November 2021.

Arab civil organizations from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Sudan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt participated in this regional dialogue, which was moderated by the "Arab Network for Environment and Development" (RAED).

In the same context, RAED organized a virtual consultative meeting for the "Arab Civil Society Major Group for DRR" (ACSMG) on October 18, 2021, in which participated the representative of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - Regional Office for Arab States (UNDRR-ROAS) in Cairo and 31 members of the group representing associations from 14 Arab countries (Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Egypt, and Yemen). This consultative meeting was different from previous meetings because of the participation of some Arab associations active in the field of serving people with disabilities. in order to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders within the members of the group.

**The CSOs' contributions to the priorities of the action plan of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2021-2024) and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction will focus on:**

**Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk**

- Raising societal awareness about the concepts and issues of DRR to prevent, mitigate, prepare and respond to disasters, and recover from their effects, and rehabilitate after them, while focusing on building the capacities of the different categories.
- Integrating the concepts of disaster risk reduction into formal (basic and tertiary) and informal education systems and working on leveraging the traditional and local knowledge and practices of indigenous people to supplement scientific knowledge.

- Emphasizing the importance of media and the use of social media and highlighting the importance of building the capacity of media professionals to include DRR issues in print and audio-visual media messages.
- Strengthening the role of Arab youth in the prevention, preparedness, recovery and rehabilitation phases, especially the role scientific personnel, while encouraging scientific research.

### **Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to Manage Disaster Risk**

- Reinvigorating the partnerships of CSOs, their government, local authorities, academic and research entities, and the private sector, while considering CSOs as key partners in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of DRR strategies at the local and national levels in order to enhance the resilience of local communities.
- Establishing and strengthening national DRR platforms that include relevant stakeholders, to establish a sustainable coordination mechanism which participates in following up on the progress achieved in implementing national and local strategies and action plans.
- Develop and strengthen regional cooperation programs for DRR that are comprehensive and inclusive of vulnerable groups such as women, elderly, persons with disabilities and displaced persons.
- Strengthening the regional civil DRR efforts and operationalizing partnerships with international and regional entities and bodies such as the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) and the League of Arab States (LAS) among others, coordinating with them in order to share experiences, lessons learned and success stories, taking advantage of the available support to implement regional programs, projects and activities which address regional challenges, contributing to the implementation of Arab and national strategies, and enhancing societal resilience.

### **Priority 3: Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience**

- Maximizing the use of modern technologies, early warning systems (EWS) and digitization.

- Working to mobilize resources as much as possible to implement DRR action plans at the local level, by seeking to establish effective partnerships with international, regional and national entities and bodies and the private sector in order to increase investment in the field of DRR and implement societal initiatives using a participatory approach which will enhance resilience.

**Priority 4: Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction**

- Identifying disaster-prone hot spots at the national level in Arab countries.
- Providing scientific expertise to participate in the preparation of the Regional Assessment Report.
- Enhancing the participation of Arab civil society in all international and regional events such as the Arab and global DRR Platforms, with an emphasis on effective proactive coordination in global events and platforms in order to coordinate positions to ensure a unified Arab opinion.
- Working on operationalizing " Words into Action" (WiA) guidelines to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which focus on Disaster Displacement.
- Work to support communities prone to displacement as a result of natural or man-made disasters such as conflicts, whether in terms of economic or social needs or meeting the basic needs of shelter, food and water.
- Contributing effectively to the implementation of recovery plans from COVID-19 pandemic at the national and regional levels.

Finally, Arab CSOs reaffirm their commitment to continue their efforts in the field of disaster risk reduction, and to take a firm and positive position for Arab civil society, in commitment to:

- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- The national DRR strategies.



- The recommendations of the Arab Coordination Mechanism for Disaster Risk Reduction for at the LAS.
- The priorities of the action plan of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2021-2024.
- The recommendations of the Arab Partnership Meetings held by the UNDRR-ROAS.
- The outcomes and recommendations of global and regional DRR platforms.