ARAB REGIONAL PLATFORM
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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Fifth Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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

08 - 11 November 2021
Rabat, Morocco

The Arab Scientific and Technical Advisory Group for Disaster Risk Reduction

AR-STAG
Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAG)
SENDAI FRAMEWORK
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

UNDRR
مكتب الأمم المتحدة للحد من مخاطر الكوارث

The Arab Scientific and Technical Advisory Group for Disaster Risk Reduction

Voluntary Action Statement

2024-2021

Ladies and gentlemen, conferees,

The world is facing major and profound transformations on several environmental, economic and political fronts. The consequences of these transformations are magnifying, and their impacts and repercussions are interacting at the levels of economic growth and the rates of socio-economic development. Many of international and regional transformations the world has witnessed, in addition to the pandemic of the century, might have cast their shadows on scientific research, technological development and innovation system, especially with regard to reducing disaster risk.

With the emergence and outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic a relationship crisis unfolded between science and specialists on one hand, and society, media and decision-makers on the other hand, and the fragility of the scientific culture emerged for the majority. This directly impacted our understanding, interaction and dealing with the developments of the epidemic. Although today, more than ever, we live amid an accelerating pace of scientific progress, disruptive innovations and technological effervescence, and in an environment of pathological consumption of millions of products, services and applications, it seems as if science has no place in our culture, even among our elites.

The focus on science and technology has been a priority for achieving the Sendai Framework, by establishing applied scientific work as a basis for disaster risk reduction (DRR). The Sendai Framework, with its multiple paragraphs, highlights the importance of science-based disaster risk reduction decisions. It calls for strengthening scientific and technical work on resource development and supporting coordination between existing networks of scientific research institutions at all levels and in all areas.

Since its establishment in 2017, the Arab Scientific and Technical Advisory Group for Disaster Risk Reduction (AR-STAG) has sought to enhance the role of science and technology in DRR within the implementation of the

Sendai Framework in Arab countries, providing scientific information and advice, in addition to coordinating strategic partnerships to increase resilience and strengthen DRR programs.

And during the sixth meeting of the AR-STAG, which was held on October 30, 2021 ahead of the participation in the Fifth Regional Platform, the progress achieved in the implementation of a report on the reality of science and technology in the field of DRR in the region was reviewed and assessed, in addition to the preparations for the first regional conference on policies alignment with science and technology in DRR, and the contributions to regional and international scientific activities and events, such as:

- Contributing to the development of the technical report on Hazard Definition and Classification issued in 2020 and the risk profile 2021 issued by the International Science Council (ISC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).
- "ATLAS on Natural Hazards in the Arab Region: A tool for socio-ecological systems resilience and adaptation'" in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office
- Regional Assessment Report on disaster risk reduction in the Arab region (RAR-Arab States) in collaboration with the UNDRR Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS).
- Contributing to the Regional Coordination Committee for Arab States concerned with the "Making Cities Resilient 2030" initiative (MCR2030).
- Celebrating the International Day for DRR in a number of Arab countries.

In addition to various scientific activities and contributions for individuals representing the AR-STAG.

After deliberation, the following pillars of action and priorities for the next three years were identified:

1- Develop a roadmap aimed at enhancing the future role of science and technology in the field of DRR, based on the outcomes of the report issued on the “Reality of Science and Technology in the Arab World” and in accordance with the weaknesses that were identified.

2- Holding a regional conference or symposium on the science-policy interface with a focus on DRR. The symposium aims to bring policy and science closer together to reduce disaster risk in the Arab region, expand the work of the group's network, exchange experiences and knowledge, develop joint projects, and disseminate best practices in scientific evidence -based decision-making.

3- promote the inclusion of disaster risk reduction studies, research and innovation in higher education and scientific research through ministries of higher education and relevant regional organizations, and the introduction of teaching materials on risk reduction in educational curricula as a very effective starting point for expanding the scientific network on DRR.

4- Strengthening and preparing a sectoral methodology to integrate science and technology into development plans, especially proposing action plans in the field of DRR at the sectoral level, which have proven to be efficient in enhancing resilience.

5- Developing a communication network between scientific institutions working in the field of DRR, promoting research priorities, multidisciplinary technology and disaster risks in an integrated environment, and defining their priorities; strengthening the efforts made by the parties in the area of risks and disasters monitoring, networking between universities and existing initiatives; and integrating the various needs of stakeholders at all levels.

6- Designing and implementing a strategic plan for investment in science and technology to reduce disaster risks.

7- Working on developing plans and ideas for establishing interactive educational facilities (such as virtual museums) and events (such as the Expo) to spread knowledge and raise awareness among citizens to reduce disaster risks.

8- Working on the scientific contribution to support the establishment of a geospatial room to promote integrated solutions for climate change and disaster risk reduction at the regional level and support decision makers.