

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

**Eighth session**

Bangkok and online, 25–27 July 2023

**Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its eighth session****I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention****A. Matters calling for action by the Commission**

1. The following recommendations of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its consideration and possible action:

**Recommendation 1**

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction recommends that the secretariat further develop a regional strategy to support the achievement of early warnings for all by 2027 by strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems in Asia and the Pacific in coordination with member States and relevant partners.

**Recommendation 2**

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction recommends that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific facilitate cooperation and policy dialogue on transformative adaptation, which protects lives, livelihoods and food, energy and other critical systems, taking a balanced and comprehensive disaster and climate risk management approach that includes the scaling up of innovations to address transboundary hazards.

**Recommendation 3**

Taking note of the report on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction recommends that the secretariat, in partnership with relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, support the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the regional level, taking into account the critical role of the health sector in addressing disaster challenges, and strengthen regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms to unlock financing, including through the private sector, for building resilience.

## **B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

2. The following decisions adopted by the Committee are brought to the attention of the Commission:

### **Decision 1**

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction endorses the secretariat's proposals to further develop a regional strategy in support of the global and country-level implementation of the four pillars of multi-hazard early warning systems – namely, disaster risk knowledge and management, observations and forecasting, dissemination and communication, and preparedness to respond – taking note of the discussions during the thematic expert meeting entitled “Regional learning platform for multi-hazard early warning systems” held on 24 July 2023.

### **Decision 2**

Welcoming the key findings of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023* and the data-driven analysis available in the Risk and Resilience Portal, the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction underscores the importance of the recommendations on transformative adaptation and requests the secretariat to deepen its analytical research, knowledge-sharing and capacity development, taking into account the findings of the report.

### **Decision 3**

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction requests that the secretariat facilitate the building of national capacities for disaster preparedness, adaptation and resilience, including through the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network, by leveraging innovations, including digital and geospatial applications, and by sharing information, expertise, resources and good practices for developing regional multi-hazard early warning systems.

### **Decision 4**

The Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction encourages members and associate members to make financial and in-kind contributions to the ESCAP multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness as a means of accelerating efforts to achieve early warnings for all in Asia and the Pacific.

## **II. Organization**

### **A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

3. The Committee held its eighth session in Bangkok and online from 25 to 27 July 2023. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP; the Vice-Minister of the Interior of Thailand, Police Lieutenant General Nadhavit Snidvongs; the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO); the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Mr. Jagan Chapagain; the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); and the Chair of the eighth session of the Committee.

## **B. Attendance**

4. Representatives of the following member States attended: Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

5. Representatives of French Polynesia, an associate member, also attended.

6. Representatives of the following Permanent Observers attended: Italy, Mexico, Sweden and Switzerland.

7. Representatives of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, an office of the Secretariat, attended.

8. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds also attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ITU, secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Children's Fund, WMO and World Food Programme.

9. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations also attended: Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, Asian Reinsurance Corporation, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission, Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

10. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities also attended: Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, IFRC, Institut panafricain pour la paix et la démocratie, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, International Committee of the Red Cross, Pan-African Institute for Development and Tohoku University.

11. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chairs examined the credentials of all the representatives and found them to be in order.

## **C. Election of officers**

12. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair: Ms. Marilou G. Erni (Philippines)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Phuchphop Mongkolnavin (Thailand)  
Mr. Seyed Reza Nobakhti (Islamic Republic of Iran)

**D. Agenda**

13. The Committee adopted the following agenda:
  1. Opening of the session:
    - (a) Opening addresses;
    - (b) Election of officers;
    - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
  2. Targeting transformative adaptation.
  3. Trends emerging from the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Asia and the Pacific, including the implementation of its health aspects.
  4. Supporting the implementation of the Executive Action Plan on Early Warnings for All, 2023–2027, through a regional strategy.
  5. Overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level.
  6. Future focus of the subprogramme.
  7. Other matters.
  8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighth session.

**E. Other events**

14. The fourth ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week was held in conjunction with the Committee session. The following expert group meetings, side events and special sessions were also held:

(a) 24 July 2023: side event on the regional learning platform for multi-hazard early warning systems with expert thematic sessions on disaster risk knowledge, co-organized with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; side event on detection, monitoring and forecasting of hazard, co-organized with WMO and RIMES; side event on warning dissemination and communication, co-organized with ITU and the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development; and side event on preparedness and response capabilities, co-organized with IFRC and the United Nations Development Programme;

(b) 24–27 July 2023: weather forecasting and climate prediction training, co-organized with RIMES;

(c) 24–27 July 2023: regional workshop on innovative geospatial applications for sustainable development;

(d) 24–27 July 2023: consultation on the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific with the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management;

(e) 25–27 July 2023: twenty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development;

(f) 25 July 2023: side event on why it is so difficult to take anticipatory action when managing disasters and on overcoming mainstream challenges and unlocking solutions, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;

(g) 25 July 2023: side event on innovation in climate adaptation and resilience in Asia, organized by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center;

(h) 26 July 2023: side event on the role of women in early warning systems, organized by IFRC;

(i) 26 July 2023: side event on risk data governance and policy design, co-organized by the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction;

(j) 26 and 27 July 2023: side event on the regional learning platform with expert spotlight sessions on: building resilience to slow the onset of disasters in small island developing States, co-organized with the regional hub of the United Nations Development Programme, the National Institute of Environmental Studies and RIMES; facilitating disability- and gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction; bridging the gap in risk-informed decision-making for infrastructure resilience, co-organized with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center; and building the resilience agenda through technology, co-organized with the United Nations Satellite Centre, the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;

(k) 27 July 2023: side event on the state of the climate in Asia, co-organized with WMO.

### **III. Account of proceedings**

15. The discussions held during the session have been summarized in an account of proceedings (see annex II).

## Annex I

### List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CDR(8)/1/Rev.2	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CDR(8)/2	Summary of the <i>Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023</i>	2
ESCAP/CDR(8)/3	Building resilience to cascading risks, including disasters, climate change and health crises	3
ESCAP/CDR(8)/4	Regional strategy to achieve early warnings for all by 2027 in Asia and the Pacific	4
ESCAP/CDR(8)/5	Future focus of the subprogramme	6
ESCAP/CDR(8)/6	Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its eighth session	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CDR(8)/L.1	Draft report	8
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/CDR(8)/INF/1	Overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level	5
<i>Information available online</i>		
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/events/2023/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-eighth-session">www.unescap.org/events/2023/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-eighth-session</a>	Information for participants	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/events/2023/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-eighth-session">www.unescap.org/events/2023/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-eighth-session</a>	List of participants	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/events/2023/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-eighth-session">www.unescap.org/events/2023/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-eighth-session</a>	Tentative programme	

## Annex II

### Account of proceedings

#### I. Introduction

1. The eighth session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Bangkok and online from 25 to 27 July 2023. The account of proceedings contains a summary of the discussions and proceedings of the session.

#### II. Summary of discussions

##### A. Targeting transformative adaptation (agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the summary of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023* (ESCAP/CDR(8)/2).

3. Representatives of the following member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made oral statements or submitted written statements: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Viet Nam.

4. The Committee welcomed the analysis contained in the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023: Seizing the Moment – Targeting Transformative Disaster Risk Resilience* and expressed support for the proposed framework of transformative actions to be taken, including through the Risk and Resilience Portal, to strengthen member States' capacities to respond to disasters in an effective, balanced and inclusive manner. Appreciation was expressed for the Portal, and the Committee noted that more attention should be paid to the sharing of technology and resources.

5. Having recognized that disasters were becoming more frequent owing to climate change and that they were having an increasing impact on people, including because of the high costs resulting from destruction, the Committee highlighted the need for greater cooperation in the area of transformative adaptation, in particular with a view to better understanding risks, strengthening food security, improving infrastructure resilience, encouraging innovation, developing and implementing technologies, sharing tools, resources and information on best practices and lessons learned, establishing early warning systems, taking early action and initiating risk-informed early action partnerships, including through the further implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 while ensuring inclusiveness in disaster resilience efforts. It was recommended that a balanced approach be taken to reduce the risk of all kinds of hazards with a view to expanding the gamut of solutions for increasing resilience to climate-induced and geophysical hazards.

6. The Committee noted that there was insufficient financing for disaster risk reduction and, in that regard, called for increased financing support through the loss and damage fund, disaster risk pooling mechanisms and the tailoring of financial instruments.

7. The Committee was informed about the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be hosted by the Government of the Philippines, at which additional concrete actions would be discussed to address

risks. A fundamental shift was needed towards an all-hazard, whole-of-society, anticipatory and integrated approach to climate and disaster risk governance that relied on the active engagement of the private sector, among others, for transformative adaptation to take place across the Asia-Pacific region.

**B. Trends emerging from the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Asia and the Pacific, including the implementation of its health aspects (agenda item 3)**

8. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on building resilience to cascading risks, including disasters, climate change and health crises (ESCAP/CDR(8)/3).

9. Representatives of the following member States made oral statements or submitted written statements: China, India, Indonesia and Japan.

10. A panel of experts informed the Committee about the key aspects of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework, which included the need for ex-ante investments in disaster risk reduction, the inclusion of the Sendai Framework in national disaster risk reduction strategies and the need to integrate health in disaster risk reduction strategies aimed at dealing with multiple hazards, including heatwaves.

11. The Committee, highlighting the continuing high economic burden of natural and biological hazards and the critical role of the health sector in addressing disaster challenges, and in that respect recalling the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, noted that none of the four priority areas set out in the Sendai Framework had been fully addressed and that the investments in disaster risk reduction and the efforts to build back better had been inadequate.

12. The Committee recommended that the secretariat do more to strengthen understanding of disaster risks and disaster preparedness, break down silos to better integrate health and disaster risk management, promote the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the regional level and provide capacity-building and technical assistance for disaster risk reduction, including in the form of effective disaster risk reduction proposals that could lead to the mobilization of resources.

**C. Supporting the implementation of the Executive Action Plan on Early Warnings for All, 2023–2027, through a regional strategy (agenda item 4)**

13. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on a regional strategy to achieve early warnings for all by 2027 in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CDR(8)/4).

14. Representatives of the following member States made oral statements or submitted written statements: Armenia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Maldives, Russian Federation and United States of America.

15. The Committee was informed by a panel of experts about the outcomes of the meeting on the regional learning platform for multi-hazard early warning systems, during which a regional strategy for early warnings in Asia and the Pacific was discussed. The experts summarized the discussion, which was focused on how to increase the interoperability and exchange of information on early warnings at the global, regional, national, subnational and community



levels, essentially to strengthen knowledge about the risk of disasters, as well as observation, monitoring and forecasting capabilities. They also discussed the sharing of regional weather and climate data and information and the management of transboundary early warning systems, including by facilitating seamless data-sharing and supporting the development of regional databases and platforms. The experts noted the need to evaluate the achievements of the investments made in early warnings during the previous 20 years through the ESCAP multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness.

16. The Committee, taking note of the Executive Action Plan on Early Warnings for All, 2023–2027, and recalling its decision 1, endorsed the secretariat’s proposals to further develop a regional strategy in support of the global and country-level implementation of the four pillars of multi-hazard early warning systems – namely, disaster risk knowledge and management, observations and forecasting, dissemination and communication, and preparedness to respond – taking note of the discussions during the thematic expert meeting entitled “Regional learning platform for multi-hazard early warning systems” held on 24 July 2023.

17. With regard to the above-mentioned regional strategy, the Committee highlighted the need for greater cooperation and coordination among stakeholders, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to ensure that the early warning systems of the region were inclusive, transboundary, end-to-end, multi-hazard, multisectoral and member-driven.

18. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that the secretariat enhance inclusive triangular cooperation for early warning systems based on the specific characteristics of hazards, build databases to identify risk trends and patterns, improve and advocate not only for the collection of robust risk and disaster data but also the harmonization of data formats and protocols and promote and improve systematic observation and forecasting. The Committee reiterated the importance of adopting a preventive approach to dealing with cascading and slow-onset hazards such as droughts and sand and dust storms and of including health in early warning systems. It highlighted the success of subregional solutions and mechanisms for mitigating the risks and impacts of hydrometeorological, geophysical and other hazards. The Committee expressed appreciation for the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023* and the Risk and Resilience Portal, which had enhanced knowledge in the region about risks, including slow-onset disasters.

19. The Committee, noting the impact of early warnings in terms of reducing economic losses, recommended that the secretariat help to unlock financing, including through the ESCAP trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness, to support the development of the regional strategy mentioned in its decision 1 and that it enhance coordination among stakeholders for the implementation of early warning systems and the strengthening of end-to-end information for vulnerable groups.

#### **D. Overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level (agenda item 5)**

20. The Committee had before it an information document on the overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level (ESCAP/CDR(8)/INF/1).

21. Representatives of the following member States made oral statements or submitted written statements: China, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan and Philippines.

22. The Committee was informed about the work of the secretariat in geospatial information applications for disaster risk reduction and resilience, the issue-based coalition on building resilience and the activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management.

23. The Committee acknowledged the importance of digital technologies and, in that regard, also acknowledged the contribution of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) and the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management in furthering geospatial information applications in the region. It expressed appreciation for the work of the secretariat in that regard. The Committee was informed about the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms to be held in Tehran on 9 and 10 September 2023.

24. Recalling its recommendation 1, the Committee reiterated that the secretariat should further develop a regional strategy to support the achievement of early warnings for all by 2027 by strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems in Asia and the Pacific in coordination with member States and relevant partners. The Committee noted the need to identify the real gaps in early warning systems in countries in the region. The Committee took note of regional cooperative initiatives that were in line with the disaster risk reduction and resilience priority theme of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030). The Committee expressed support for the virtual satellite constellation for disaster risk assessments and noted with appreciation such initiatives as machine learning for the rapid mapping of disaster hotspots and youth forums.

**E. Future focus of the subprogramme (agenda item 6)**

25. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the future focus of the subprogramme (ESCAP/CDR(8)/5).

26. The secretariat informed the Committee about the proposed programme plan for 2024 to leverage cooperation in disaster risk reduction, adaptation and climate-resilient pathways for action, assist member States, as appropriate, in harnessing the innovations in risk analysis and advances in space technology applications, and promote knowledge-sharing and good practices that create synergies with other existing regional initiatives.

**F. Other matters (agenda item 7)**

27. No other matters were discussed.

**G. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighth session (agenda item 8)**

28. On 27 July 2023, the Committee adopted the report on its eighth session.