



Tackling the Perfect Storm

Empowering Societies for Disaster Resilience

Launch of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019
A High-Level Roundtable Discussion

Organized by



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I. BACKGROUND

The forthcoming *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019* (hereafter referred to as APDR 2019) captures a comprehensive picture of the complexity of disaster risk in the Asia-Pacific region for the first time. New findings show that if drought – a slow onset disaster - is accounted for, the region’s annualized economic loss quadruples to USD\$675 billion. These losses continue to outpace the region’s economic growth and will undermine its ability to reduce poverty and inequality.

APDR 2019 also reveals that a shifting geography and intensification of risks is exacerbating vulnerabilities across the region. Risk hotspots are emerging, where poor and vulnerable people are exposed to fragile environments, in a ‘perfect storm’. Within the transboundary river basins of South and South-East Asia, poverty, hunger and under-nourishment is coupled with exposure to intensifying floods, droughts and cyclones. In North-East Asia and South-East Asia, ICT infrastructure and poor populations are exposed to typhoons and tectonic hazards around the Ring of Fire. The Pacific Small Islands Developing States are exposed to increasing intensities of climate-related hazards. Within East and North-East Asia, Central Asia and South-West Asia, sand and dust storms are intensifying due to land degradation, desertification, climate change and unsustainable land and water use.

APDR 2019 also shows how such disaster risks are threatening development gains. By moving beyond the traditional focus of disaster impacts on economic sectors, it reveals that almost 40 per cent of disaster impacts are on social sectors such as health, education, and livelihoods, resulting in deeper inequalities of opportunity that are transmitted over generations. To reduce poverty and inequality, countries must therefore no longer view economic sectors, social policies and disaster resilience as separate policy domains. APDR 2019 showcases innovative examples from the region of pro-poor disaster risk reduction measures and risk-informed social policies that recognise this need, and are breaking the links between poverty, inequality and disasters. Furthermore, it highlights how emerging technologies can be used to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable groups are included in policy interventions. For example, big earth data analytics can be used to identify vulnerable populations in risk hotspots who have been left behind due to their absence from available data.

As the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) attracts participants from various ministries, the side event will provide a platform for exchanging diverse Asia-Pacific perspectives on the capacities required to utilize these new opportunities for innovative policy that can reduce poverty, inequality and disaster risk. This will be essential for delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. OBJECTIVES

Insights from the side event will contribute to the 2019 theme of the HLPF “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” from a disaster resilience perspective. Speakers will discuss national experiences and evidence on challenges and practical solutions.

The side event will highlight experiences from South-East Asian countries, which have developed a rich body of interventions that address both inequality and disaster risk. Whilst the Philippines and Thailand have implemented disaster risk-sensitive social protection instruments, Viet Nam has pioneered nature-based approaches such as mangrove afforestation to protect livelihoods of low-income groups and strengthen defences against typhoons. The Philippines and Indonesia can also share good practices in using big data and geospatially disaggregated data to strengthen the disaster resilience of the most vulnerable populations.

The side event will also showcase the collective regional efforts of South-East Asian countries and highlight the lessons for other regions. ASEAN has a well-functioning and binding cooperative mechanism for disaster management and response. Steps are being taken towards adopting regional standards and guidelines on disaster risk assessment and risk-sensitive social protection. Furthermore, it will highlight how the disaster-related statistics framework, of the UN Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, can augment traditional statistical sampling techniques.

III. ORGANIZATION AND SPEAKERS

The event is organized by the Philippines and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission from Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM).

The program of the event will be as follows:

<p>Opening Remarks by <i>H.E. Mr. Ernesto Del Mar Pernia</i>, <i>Secretary, National Economic Development Authority (NEDA),</i> <i>Republic of the Philippines</i></p>
<p>Presentation of APDR 2019 by <i>H.E. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana</i>, <i>Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and</i> <i>Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)</i></p>
<p>Launch of the APDR 2019</p>
<p>Panel Discussion</p>
<p>Moderator: Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, ESCAP</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Bambang P.S. Brodjonegoro <i>Minister, National Development Planning,</i> <i>Republic of Indonesia</i></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Thani Thongpakdi <i>Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,</i> <i>Kingdom of Thailand</i></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Dang Dinh Quy <i>Permanent Representative,</i> <i>Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations</i></p> <p>H.E. Ms. Gillian Bird <i>Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations</i></p> <p>Ms. Kirsi Madi <i>Director, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)</i></p>
<p>Interactive Discussion</p>
<p>Closing Remarks</p>
<p>H.E. Ms. Kira Christianne Danganan Azucena <i>Charge d’Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative</i> <i>of the Philippines to the United Nations</i></p>

The Executive Summary of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019* will serve as the main analytical input to the side event.