

PRESS RELEASE

UNDRR 10th Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction calls on governments to take urgent action

- Urgent action on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) needed to protect progress towards poverty reduction and ensure continued drop in mortality
- Report outlines major potential risks to human life and property, including climate change, air pollution, biological hazards and drought
- New risks emerging, including the Natech category, eg. Where an extreme weather event realises a “hidden” technological risk, causing disruptions with cascading impacts on business continuity
- If governments do not adopt appropriate strategies to manage risk, then these threats could slow or even reverse progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



GENEVA, May 15th 2019

The world faces new, emerging, and much larger threats than ever before, linked to climate change, environmental degradation, and the growing potential for one disaster to produce or exacerbate another, says a new report from the United Nations.

The Global Assessment Report 2019 (GAR19) published by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) at the [Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), outlines major risks to human life and material property, ranging from air pollution and biological hazards, through to earthquakes, drought, and climate change.

“Extreme changes in planetary and socioecological systems are happening now; we no longer have the luxury of procrastination. If we continue living in this way, engaging with each other and the planet in the way we do, then our very survival is in doubt,” said Mami Mizutori, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNSUSTAINABLE PATTERNS OF GROWTH

The report warns that unsustainable patterns of economic activity hide the build-up of systemic risks across sectors citing for example, dangerous over-dependence on single crops in an age of accelerating global warming.

“We witness severe inequalities of burden sharing between low and high income countries, with the poorest bearing the highest toll and greatest costs of disasters. Human losses and asset losses relative to GDP tend to be higher in the countries with the least capacity to prepare, finance and respond to disasters and climate change, such as in small island developing States,” the report argues.

There is growing potential for one disaster to produce or exacerbate another as happens often in the case of heavy rains which trigger landslides and mudslides following wildfires or periods of long drought, says the new report launched at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

SDGs

If governments do not adopt appropriate strategies to manage risk, then these threats could slow or even reverse progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably eradicating poverty and hunger, and action on climate change.

“The human race has never before faced such large and complex threats. The doubling of extreme weather events over the last twenty years is further evidence that we need a new approach to managing disaster risk if we are to limit disaster losses. Economic losses are making it an uphill battle to hold on to development gains in low and middle income countries,” said SRSG Mizutori.

“At the same time, the resilience gap between rich and poor is made worse by poorly-planned urbanization, the disappearance of bio-diversity and protective eco-systems, population growth in disaster exposed areas which all add to a complex cocktail of risk which drives internal displacement and migration in search of a better life.”

ADOPTING THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK

The report urges governments to put the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction into action, shifting focus from disaster management to reducing risk.

Adopted by UN Member States in 2015, the Sendai Framework aims to reduce the impact of disasters in terms of mortality, numbers of people affected, and economic loss. It requires governments to understand disaster risk, strengthen disaster risk governance, invest in resilience, and enhance disaster preparedness.

According to the last Global Assessment Report in 2015, annual global investments of USD 6 billion in appropriate disaster risk reduction strategies would generate total benefits of USD 360 billion each year.

“We must recognize that an international development financing system that allocates approximately 20 times the funding to emergency response, reconstruction, relief and rehabilitation activities rather than prevention and preparedness, acts counter to sustainability principles,” SRSG Mizutori added.

COMPLEX INTERACTIONS

The complexity of our global economy and the interactions between human and natural systems means that one disaster can quickly provoke another. Population growth and rising consumption are set to put more pressure on the world’s ecosystems than ever before.

Drought is likely to emerge as a complex risk due to its wide-ranging, slow building, and cascading impacts. Drought can affect agriculture, water supply, energy production, transport, tourism, health, biodiversity, and ecosystems.

A special report on drought will be published in 2020.

To read the whole report and access all materials visit:
<https://gar.unisdr.org>

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