



United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

## **Towards a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**

### **Introduction**

1. The *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) – Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, is the inspiration for knowledge, practice, implementation, experience and the science for disaster risk reduction. As we head toward the end of the current HFA, it is important to outline an approach and shape the discussions on a continuation to be considered at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015.
2. The paper ‘*Towards a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*’ provides background information (Section A); an outline of trends, progress and challenges (Section B); and, a discussion on what form of a post-2015 framework (Section C). The paper also outlines a consultation process, timeline (Section D), and maps out main events to 2015 (see Timeline).

### **A. BACKGROUND**

3. The adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005 and its subsequent endorsement by the General Assembly of the United Nations (A/RES/60/195) were the culmination of a process started in 1990, with the declaration of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/RES/42/169).
4. In 1994, *the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World* was adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disasters. In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/54/219 adopted the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and created the secretariat of the ISDR (UNISDR) with the purpose to ensure its implementation.
5. In 2003 and 2004, the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) carried out a review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. The Yokohama Review formed the basis of the HFA and was submitted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005.
6. As part of the implementation, it was agreed that the HFA would be appropriately reviewed. UNISDR was requested to “prepare periodic reviews on progress towards achieving [its] objectives and priorities.” Subsequently, UNISDR conducted a Mid-Term Review of the HFA in 2010-2011 through a participatory approach involving disaster risk reduction stakeholders.
7. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/199 requested UNISDR to facilitate the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.<sup>1</sup> The Chair’s

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<sup>1</sup> Disaster risk reduction offers a comprehensive framework with which stakeholders can take coherent and complementary actions through political, social, technological, and economic and humanitarian processes to build resilience.

Summary of the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011 referred to a first outline of a post-2015 framework at the next Global Platform in 2013. A draft should be finalized towards the end of 2014 to be ready for consideration and adoption at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015.

## **B. TRENDS - PROGRESS and CHALLENGES**

### **Exposure to disaster risk is increasing**

8. Between 2002 and 2011, there were 4130 disasters recorded, resulting from natural hazards around the world where 1,117,527 people perished and a minimum of US\$1,195 billion was recorded in losses. In the year 2011 alone, 302 disasters claimed 29,782 lives; affected 206 million people and inflicted damages worth an estimated US\$366 billion.<sup>2</sup>
9. More people and assets are located in areas of high risk. The proportion of world population living in flood-prone river basins has increased by 114%, while those living on cyclone-exposed coastlines have grown by 192% over the past 30 years. Over half of the world's large cities, with populations ranging from 2 to 15 million, are currently located in areas highly vulnerable to seismic activity. Rapid urbanization will further increase exposure to disaster risk.<sup>3</sup>

### **All countries are vulnerable**

10. While developing countries, particularly Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, are disproportionately affected, the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami sent a clear message that developed countries are also vulnerable to such severe disasters. Unsustainable development practices, ecosystem degradation, poverty as well as climate variability and extremes have led to an increase in both natural and man-made disaster risk at a rate that poses a threat to lives and development efforts.
11. A new global ranking, by Maplecroft, calculating the vulnerability of 170 countries to the impacts of climate change over the next 30 years, identifies some of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, as facing the greatest risks to their populations, ecosystems and business environments. In this ranking 16 countries are rated with 'extreme risk,' to future climate effects largely due to significant forecasted growth.<sup>4</sup>

### **Economic consequences**

12. In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in the exposure of economic assets and earning potential to physical hazards. In higher-income countries economic assets and jobs are being created but so is the risk of losing economic assets and livelihoods from a disaster. Loss of economic assets and jobs from disasters has an even greater impact on low and middle-income countries. Despite the magnitude of potential costs and loss of income, reducing disaster risks is still often perceived as a lesser priority than fiscal stability, unemployment or inflation. The impact of disasters, when all costs are calculated, can therefore represent major losses for all governments for example in energy, health, housing and education.

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<sup>2</sup> EM-DAT The International Database (CRED). <http://www.emdat.be/>

<sup>3</sup> UNISDR Global Assessment Report 2011: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development.

<sup>4</sup> Maplecroft Climate Change Risk Atlas 2011.

13. To take some recent examples, the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami caused a 1% shrink, according to the estimated Japanese growth forecast in 2011. In the Asia-Pacific region, this would mean a 0.1 to 0.21% impact on growth to China, Malaysia, India, Singapore, and Philippines, including a 0.2 to 0.5% impact on export growth in these countries due to disruption in inputs from Japan. The floods in Thailand in 2011 not only cost US\$40 billion, they also led to an estimated 2.5% drop in global industrial production.<sup>5</sup>
14. Economic losses from disasters will continue to increase. Since 1981, economic loss from disasters is growing faster than GDP per capita in the OECD countries. This means that the risk of losing wealth in weather-related disasters is now exceeding the rate at which the wealth itself is being created.<sup>6</sup>
15. There is an increasing amount of foreign direct investment and national private investment in infrastructure and manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and services in many developing and middle income countries. Risk is accumulating rapidly as economies grow. New investments need to incorporate disaster risk reduction and mitigation measures otherwise exposure to risk will continue to rise.

### **Recording disaster losses**

16. Few countries systematically account for disaster losses. A clearer indication of losses will allow for more analysis and modeling of reducing risk. Accounting for disaster losses will encourage governments and the private sector to take ownership over their stock of risk and identify strategic trade-offs when making decisions which may have an impact on risk. If national public investment systems truly account for disaster risk, they can reduce losses at a scale impossible to achieve through stand-alone disaster risk management.

### **Disaster risk management in development planning**

17. The need for disaster risk management<sup>7</sup> (and in particular risk assessments) to be an integral component of development plans and poverty eradication programmes is now well accepted among experts. For countries to reduce their vulnerabilities and exposure to risk, a much bolder approach is required. The approach needs to incorporate development mechanisms (such as national public investment planning systems, social protection, and national and local infrastructure investments) to reduce risks and strengthen resilience.
18. There are various practical links between disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and sustainable development. These links have not been fully internalized in the ways in which national government institutions, international development agencies and the United Nations system itself approaches disaster risk management. It is essential to continue to harmonize, integrate and embed disaster risk reduction within poverty eradication and sustainable development policies and programmes. Reducing disaster risk and re-enforcing resilience is increasingly seen as part of a new development paradigm

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<sup>5</sup> UNESCAP Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2011—Sustaining Dynamism and Inclusive Development: Connectivity in the Region and Productively Capacity in Least Developed Countries.

<sup>6</sup> UNISDR Global Assessment Report 2011: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development.

<sup>7</sup> Disaster risk management is an approach which can be used in development planning and programmes in order to reduce development-induced risks and vulnerability. The disaster risk management approach includes risk identification, risk assessment, risk treatment and risk communication, which is a part of disaster risk reduction.

where well-being and equity are core values and human and natural assets central to planning and decision-making.

19. The concept of building or reinforcing resilience is helpful in this regard. This implies the development of unified tools supporting greater coherence and coordination among different approaches. A disaster risk management approach leading to an outcome of strengthened resilience would lead to less duplication of efforts, optimized use of available resources; an increased potential for collaborative alliances and joint actions among disciplines; and the ability to provide better guidance for policy makers and practitioners in program design, implementation and evaluation.
20. Exposure to future disasters has the greatest potential to be reduced if disaster risk management approach is incorporated in land use, urban and spatial planning, and in post-disaster reconstruction planning. However, latest data shows that only 15% of low-income countries report success in using land use planning and urban development to reduce risk. Analysis of land use planning processes at the local level reveals that only hazard information are used, and that information is not used for investment or planning decisions.

### **Governance and accountability**

21. Most governments have not fully developed coordinated and coherent action on disaster risk reduction across different sectors and between central and local governments. Institutional arrangements, legislation and policy for disaster risk reduction tend to be anchored, when in place, in disaster response which may not have the authority or capacity to influence decisions related to national development planning and investment. There is a growing recognition about government's responsibility for effective disaster risk reduction policy planning and implementation conducted through a transparent and multi-stakeholder approach.
22. The scale and range of internal and international accountability mechanisms has not been fully explored, nor the potential for such mechanisms to be applied to the field of disaster risk reduction. Accountability measures can guide government and public awareness of, and support for, disaster risk reduction policies. A culture of accountability improves the effectiveness of governance and service delivery.
23. National legislation offers the opportunity to promote the introduction of, and monitor compliance with, monitoring and accountability mechanisms as do parliamentary oversight and national auditing systems. Access to information, particularly information on disaster risks, can also generate a social demand for disaster risk management. A key accountability measure to communities is the extent to which a government is able to address the risk of poorly planned and managed urbanization, environmental degradation, and poverty.

### **Setting of targets**

24. The setting of targets has both inherent challenges and advantages when it comes to generating stronger accountability and accelerating implementation plans. A discussion on a target regime may focus on the areas in which targets could be most effectively established. For example, these may include national risk assessments, early warning systems, water risk management, financial investments in disaster risk management, risk-sensitive land use planning, the enforcement of building codes, and municipal-level disaster recovery plans.

25. The identification and establishment of targets may also be more appropriate at a national or regional level. On the basis of nationally defined targets a regional approach to targets may be considered keeping in due account regional specificities to hazards and progress in HFA implementation. It may also foster cooperation on trans-boundary issues.

### **Local context and action at the community level**

26. Communities and local people assess risk whether it is a natural hazard (e.g. flood, earthquake, landslides) or man-made disaster (e.g. conflict, environmental and industrial accident). Understanding of the local context of vulnerability and exposure therefore is fundamental for reducing risk and determining what mitigation practices can be implemented. Often this will require not only knowledge of natural hazards but also the prevailing political and socioeconomic conditions.
27. The involvement of local governments and communities in the design and implementation of disaster risk management programmes is well-accepted good practice. Such practice is far from being universally applied. Not enough resources are allocated to local governments for disaster risk management. There is limited data on localized losses and difficulties connecting local context with national monitoring systems, loss accounting and risk assessments.
28. Despite the greater spotlight on larger scale more centrally planned adaptation strategies, in some cases communities undertake their own risk reduction efforts – also called “autonomous adaptation,” with very little guidance or coordination from central bodies. In these cases, supporting community action is the appropriate approach.
29. A culture of planning and regulation based on partnerships and joint ownership between local and central governments and risk-prone communities is still far from pervasive. Studies, research and consolidated practice confirm that the involvement of communities, and more in general the adoption of a participatory approach to risk management, represent the most cost-effective and sustainable mechanism for reducing risks.

### **Guidance on “how” to reduce disaster risk**

30. There is a significant amount of information on what good practice is in disaster risk management and what works. There is guidance in some areas including risk assessments with a view to eventually arriving at a common definition of disaster and risk; integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management; working at national and local levels; and, vulnerability of communities to the impact of hazards. There has been a strong call to develop and provide more guidance, principles and tools on how good practice is achieved.

### **Progress in the implementation of the HFA**

31. Global, regional and national efforts for disaster risk reduction and reinforcing resilience are increasing. International momentum for disaster risk reduction is currently at play whether in discussions and planning around sustainable development, climate change adaptation, the Millennium Development Goals or more broadly public and private investment strategies. The HFA has been a key to increasing understanding, knowledge and developing approaches and priorities for reducing disaster risk and building resilience. The HFA has been instrumental in embarking on a path of change that is now irreversible.

32. The HFA has proved effective in galvanizing and bringing together the many stakeholders in disaster risk reduction including national and local governments, parliamentary forums, inter-government organizations, non-government organizations, community-based organizations and practitioners, the private sector, academic and technical institutions, the media and international organizations. The HFA has also proven important in supporting regional cooperation and agreements on disaster risk reduction.
33. The HFA has assisted governments to introduce national disaster risk reduction legislation; to set up early warning systems; and, strengthened disaster preparedness and response. HFA Monitor Reports also suggest there has been significant progress against the objectives, goals and priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action. One example is the measurable progress in the reduction in the number of deaths linked to hydro-meteorological hazards as a result of better understanding and improved preparedness and early warning systems.
34. The HFA has helped to link disaster risk reduction to managing climate-related risks and climate change adaptation. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Managing the Risk of Extremes and Disasters (IPCC/SREX) (Summary released in November 2011) demonstrates that many measures to address natural hazard risk such as good land use planning, environmental protection and preparedness and early warning systems are effective no-regret actions to adapt to climate change. Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have also identified the HFA as a pillar of their efforts to adapt to climate change.
35. The HFA is also contributing to the on-going debate leading up to the Rio+20, UN Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012, with many disaster-prone countries making the point that disaster risk reduction offers an approach towards achieving sustainable development without increasing vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards.

### **C. FORM OF A POST-2015 FRAMEWORK**

36. What should a post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction be like? Many views and several options have been expressed ranging from a more nuanced version of the existing HFA; some overall guiding principles; a set of normative standards; a framework with a target regime; a legally based instrument for disaster risk reduction; or a combination of the above. There is also a case for pursuing greater leverage for disaster risk reduction as a part of development plans, goals, and targets in the successor to the MDGs as well as outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development.
37. The current HFA has substantively contributed to further disaster risk reduction, but the goals and priorities for action are still far from being achieved. A post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction should build on the current HFA and focus on those elements that are still in need of further action. For example, an unpacking or stronger work on Priority for Action 4 – the Underlying Risk Factors is worth considering. Priority for Action 1 around Governance, Local Level Implementation and Multi-stakeholder Participation could also be a strong focus for a post-2015 framework. Gender perspectives in disaster risk reduction could also be better addressed in a post-2015 framework.

38. A set of underlying values and principles is another potential springboard for the development of an international agreement. Principles and values for disaster risk reduction will contribute to meaningful cooperation for achieving sustainable development.
39. As in other international cross-cutting fields, the development of more standards could help support the implementation of high-quality practice, especially in a field as complex as disaster risk reduction. Specific areas within disaster risk reduction would need to be identified to prioritize those most in need of high-quality and urgent attention.
40. Whatever form a post-2015 framework takes it should offer the opportunity to scale-up disaster risk reduction efforts that can be measured against development outcomes. It should emphasize greater outreach at local and community levels and reflect on the substantive issues, especially the economic case for greater investment in disaster risk management. Finally, discussions that define a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction need to be broad, consultative and inclusive of all stakeholders.

#### **D. PROCESS TOWARDS A POST-2015 FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

41. The facilitation of the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction is conducted on the basis of a request from the General Assembly; multiple resolutions providing guidance on disaster risk reduction; findings collected through the Mid-Term Review process; successive country-level reporting cycles through the HFA Monitor; the analysis of the Global Assessment Reports; deliberations at the Global Platforms as well as outcomes of regional ministerial meetings, regional and thematic platforms.
42. Over the same period of time that a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be discussed, the international community will also have met at the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Conference in June 2012, as well as set the path towards the post-2015 development agenda, the target date for the Millennium Development Goals. Reducing disaster risk will need to be taken in full consideration in these agendas as well as other main events to discuss a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (see Timeline).
43. Considering the range of stakeholders and the cross-cutting nature of disaster risk reduction, it is critical to engage all relevant parties throughout the process. This will also be ensured through a dedicated inter-active platform on [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org), wide use of internet-based consultations and an open dialogue with all stakeholder groups, including governments and local authorities; international, regional organizations and thematic platforms; the private sector; science and technical based institutions; NGOs, civil society and community-based organizations.

#### **Timeframe**

44. The consultative process will need to produce a draft for endorsement at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015. There are two phases. The first will be the consultations focusing on the general substantive issues up to and including the Fourth Session of the Global Platform in May 2013. This is the phase where emerging trends, challenges and solutions can expect to be debated, where the connection between other important areas, such as climate change adaptation, sustainable development and poverty eradication, environment and preparedness can be explored. An outline or an initial submission from the first phase of consultations is expected at the Global Platform in 2013.

45. The second phase will move from the discussions held at the Global Platform and will lead up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015. The second phase will focus on determining key priorities and what form the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction should take. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction consultations and draft is to be completed towards the end of 2014 in advance of endorsement at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015 in Japan. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will also seek endorsement at the UN General Assembly in 2015.

### **Advisory group**

46. Following the completion of the Mid-Term-Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: *Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA)* the Chair's Summary of the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction welcomed the continued work of an Advisory Group to support the follow-up to the Global Platform and contribute to the formulation of a post-2015 framework.
47. The objective of the Advisory Group is to give guidance on substantive and process related matters to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction around the post-2015 framework. The Advisory Group is not a drafting committee but will provide technical input and contribute to outreach, and follow-up to the work processes. Members of the Advisory Group are invited by the SRSG.

### **Consultations**

48. All disaster risk reduction stakeholders are expected to contribute and participate in the discussions and preparatory work leading to a final draft of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. A timeline of main events and meetings is attached. UNISDR will coordinate the overall HFA related process through its headquarters in Geneva and regional offices and will assist in garnering input from other stakeholder processes.
49. A set of broad strategic questions, with relevant sub-questions, will be formulated in consultation with stakeholders, with a view to stimulating focused discussions around the substantive areas of focus for a post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework. These questions will be addressed in the course of stakeholder meetings at regional and national level. In-depth and *ad hoc* analytical studies will be commissioned or coordinated by UNISDR and partners to inform the process as it evolves. On-line consultations will also be organized to ensure the broadest outreach possible of all stakeholders involved. A calendar of consultation meetings will be made available on the UNISDR dedicated website on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction by March 2012.

### ***The first phase (March 2012 to May 2013)***

50. a) Outcomes of workshops at regional and sub-regional levels with various stakeholder groups: A series of regional consultations will be facilitated by UNISDR, through its regional offices, to focus on the substantive questions that ought to be featured in a post-2015 framework. Other consultations with specific stakeholders' groups to explore their views on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. These include, but are not limited to: countries; local governments and administrations; civil society; the scientific community; the private sector; UN and regional organizations.

*Action: UNISDR secretariat, UNISDR Regional Offices, Regional and National Platforms  
When: March 2012 through February 2013*



b) In-depth studies: Topics for specific thematic studies, of a limited number, will be identified in the first quarter of 2012. Independent consultants, member states, as well as national research and academic institutions will be invited to undertake these studies with an aim to obtain a more analytical and in-depth view on specific issues for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Attention will be given to studies that help identify solutions, support a strategic shift in disaster risk reduction from the “what” to the “how”.  
*Action by: UNISDR secretariat, independent consultants, stakeholders, research institutes.*  
*When: March 2012 - February 2013*

c) On-line debates: To ensure that specific topics, as emerge from regional and stakeholder consultations, can be fully explored and debated, UNISDR will organize on-line consultations moderated by senior experts to reach as wide an audience as possible. Depending on availability of resources and stakeholder interest, UNISDR plans to organize debates until May 2013 and additional debates prior to the World Conference.  
*Action by: UNISDR secretariat upon suggestions from stakeholders on topics for debate.*  
*When: May 2012 through October 2014*

### ***The second phase (from May 2013 Global Platform to the 2015 World Conference)***

51. a) Analysis of Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: UNISDR will produce an analysis of progress achieved by member states and stakeholders in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. This analysis will be based on reports submitted by countries through the HFA Monitor, various editions of the Global Assessment Report, and the inputs from the first phase of consultations.

*Action by: UNISDR secretariat in consultation with stakeholders. When: 2014*

b) Meetings at regional level: Consultations will be held at regional level, through Regional Platforms and Ministerial meetings, to consider drafts of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. At this stage, regional consultations may also be used to identify, and agree on, achievement to be featured in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

c) On-line debates and submissions: UNISDR will continue to host, through its dedicated on-line space, live discussions on emerging issues related to the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. UNISDR will also call for submissions based on the background papers and initial drafts.

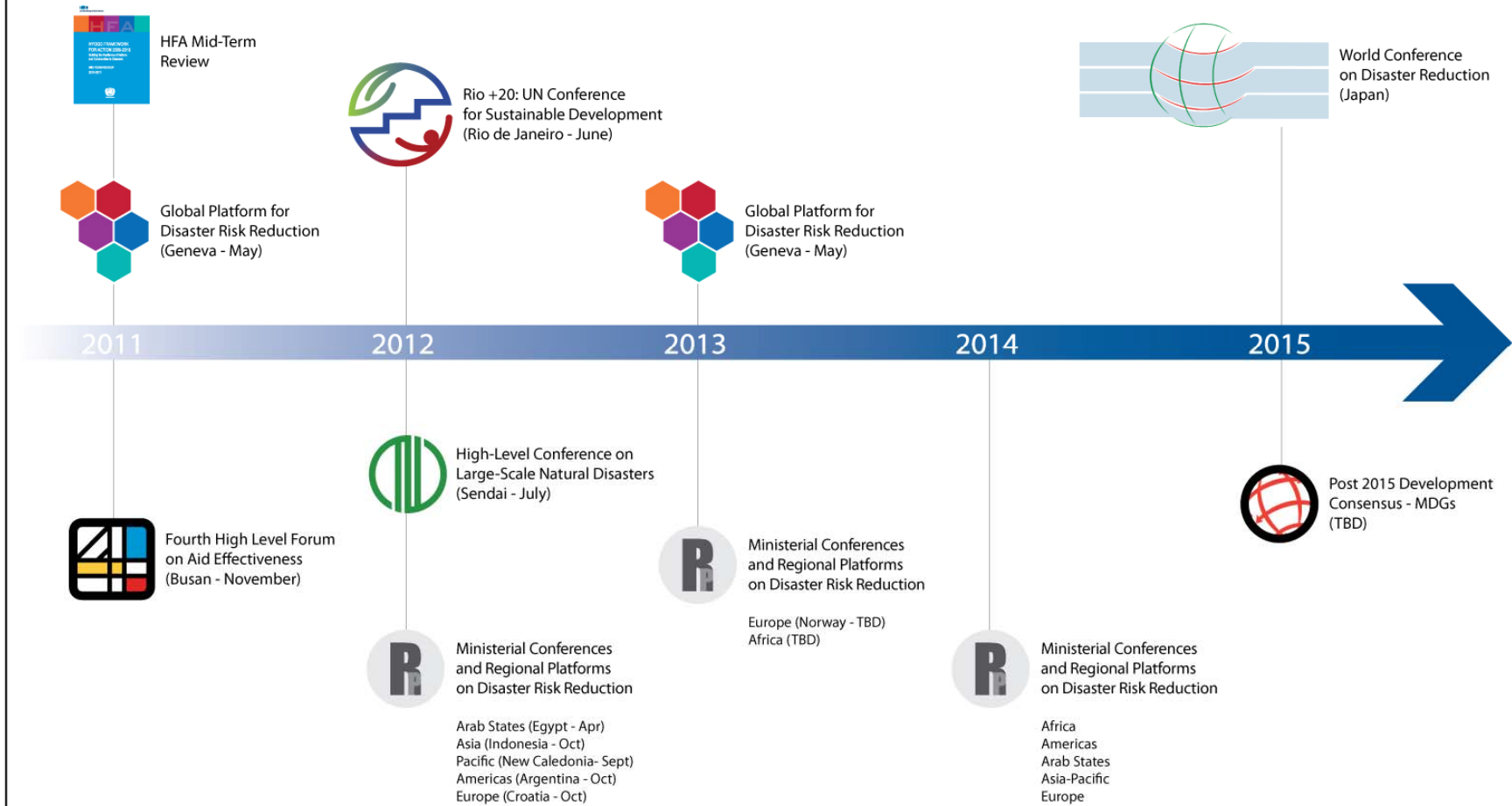
*Action by: UNISDR secretariat and stakeholders. When: June 2013 – 2014*



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# Timeline of Main Events for Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Version: 16 February 2012



*Note: These reflect the key milestone events for disaster risk reduction. Other events and consultation meetings will also be part of the process.*