

20<sup>th</sup> May 2017

To: IRDR IPO staff  
IRDR SC  
ICoEs  
National Committees

Dear colleagues,

We are writing on behalf of the three co-sponsors of the programme to provide you with an update on the latest developments of IRDR and the outlook for the coming few months:

As you know, IRDR went through an [external review](#) last year commissioned by the three co-sponsors, namely ICSU, ISSC and UNISDR. This provided a detailed assessment of the challenges and opportunities for IRDR in the next three years. We have taken the findings of this review very seriously and have been working with Rajib Shaw, the previous Executive Director, host and funder of the programme to address the issues identified and provide the enabling conditions for the scientific community to engage in IRDR and deliver the knowledge needed to effectively reduce disaster risks and foster stronger engagement with the policy and stakeholder communities. We foresee excellent opportunities for the programme's development in the coming years.

We would like to update you on the following particular developments:

- The co-sponsors have asked the IRDR Scientific Committee to lead on the development of a strategy that clarifies IRDR's focus and intended outputs for the next three years, in close consultation with the broader IRDR network.
- Following the adoption of the Sendai framework, several international initiatives are emerging to promote integrated research on disaster risk and we have worked with our partners to support the close engagement of IRDR. They include the decision by Future Earth to initiate the creation of a Knowledge Action Network (KAN) on disaster risks and resilience. We have facilitated a process whereby this effort can involve a partnership with IRDR and the World Climate Research Programme. The aim is to facilitate collaboration between these established international scientific programmes, coordinate activities of mutual interest, identify knowledge and capacity gaps, support new research projects and joint outreach activities. A meeting between these three parties took place at ICSU at the end of March, and a series of discussions and consultations will be organized over the next 12 months to identify needs, shared interests and an overall vision for the KAN.

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- The [Belmont Forum](#) has approved the scoping of a Collaborative Research Action on Disaster Risk, Reduction, and Resilience to support integrated and transdisciplinary research on key aspects of the Sendai framework. IRDR will be represented at the first scoping meeting planned for early June 2017 at the Academia dei Georgofili in Florence. This provides an opportunity for the IRDR network to advance its collective mission of promoting integrated research on disaster risk, and via the KAN initiative described above, to contribute to shaping the Belmont's work.
- Following the resignation of Rajib Shaw as Executive Director of the International Programme Office of IRDR at the end of March 2017, we are pleased to announce that RADI is currently negotiating with Mr Qunli HAN to take on the position, probably around September 2017. Mr HAN is currently the Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, and Secretary of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme at UNESCO until June 2017. He has extensive experience of managing international scientific programmes and a background in remote sensing and GIS. Rajib Shaw remains involved in IRDR as an advisor to the IPO until the new Executive Director has taken office, allowing for a hand-over period. We are grateful to Rajib for his continued support and look forward to being able to confirm the appointment of Qunli.
- The Scientific Committee of IRDR will be partially renewed, as per the Terms of Reference, towards the end of the year.
- Over the next few months, the activities of IRDR will continue as planned. In particular, IRDR will have a strong presence at the UNISDR Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction that will take place on 22-26 May in Cancún where many of the IRDR ICoEs will also meet. IRDR has worked with ICSU to prepare policy briefs on key issues for the implementation and monitoring of the Sendai Framework and showcasing the contributions that the scientific community has made to date on these issues. Discussions among the ICoEs to stimulate exchange and joint activities are especially welcomed in order to mobilise the wealth of expertise within the IRDR network, catalyse new activities and knowledge to achieve greater collective impacts from the local to the global level.

Together with the host and funder, who have been closely associated in these developments, the co-sponsors are committed to supporting DRR efforts across scientific communities and contribute to the achievement of the Sendai framework.

I look forward to our continued collaboration and I would like to thank you for your dedication to the programme's success.

Best regards



Heide Hackmann  
Executive Director