UNISDR
The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Submission by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
To the UNFCCC Executive Committee Call for Inputs for the initial two-year workplan for the implementation of the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss & Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts

Climate change is altering the face of disaster risk, not only through sea-level and weather temperatures, but also through increased socio-economic vulnerability resulting from water stresses, impacts on agriculture, food security, ecosystems, and health. Climate change adverse effects are linked to extreme events and slow-onset disasters resulting in losses and damages in lives, assets, livelihoods and ecosystems. Understanding, assessing and managing climate risk is intrinsically connected to managing climate change and strengthening resilience to its adverse effects.

The world cannot afford to perpetuate disconnect between disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate change. Knowledge and information generated through risk management approaches and disaster risk reduction activities contribute to climate risk management and to understanding and managing losses and damages linked to climate change impacts. Managing disaster risk enables countries and communities to sustain their socio-economic development; it saves lives, potentially reduces economic losses and improves effectiveness of disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

The adoption of Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts at COP19 in Warsaw opens new opportunities for converging knowledge and data on disaster losses, thereby improving risk assessment and risk management approaches, which in turn enables climate adaptation and mitigation work. It is expected that plans under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage build upon existing capacities and initiatives globally, regionally and nationally on disaster risk reduction and risk management. Work on loss and damage should promote local and national owned disaster loss data and related risk assessments for more effective planning and prioritization of climate adaptation actions and climate risk management policies.

UNISDR's primary role in relation to loss and damage is to develop specific policies at the international level on the linkages between reducing disaster risk and responding to climate change, guiding national and regional action to integrate policies and practices, and strengthening capacities to support the integration of disaster reduction and climate change by all actors. Furthermore, UNISDR supports countries establish national disaster loss accounting systems that capture historical human, infrastructure and economic losses and damages of disasters. Such databases are considered initial step towards risk assessment and planning for disaster risk management.

UNISDR
The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

In this context, and with respect to the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, UNISDR is undertaking several actions that could support and enhance the Warsaw Mechanism's Executive Committee (EC) plans as elaborated below on:

(a) Enhancing knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including slow onset impacts:

(i) In this area, UNISDR is actively developing a Global Risk model that includes several climate related hazard risk assessments. Data, maps and results developed are being put in the public domain so that countries can take advantage and use this data without a cost. While these probabilistic assessments are aimed at national level, not suitable for planning and DRR/CCA work at local level, it is an important contribution to countries where it can be used as a basis for a policy dialog and, where no other data or assessment exists as a starting point for countries to understand the climate risks they face.

(ii) The scientist team behind this model is working in the incorporation of climate change scenarios that will provide a better understanding of future risks and can support more comprehensively work on Adaptation.

(iii) Along with the risk model, UNISDR has been engaged over the years in the Disaster Loss data collection initiative, in partnership with UNDP, World Bank and other international and regional organizations. This initiative has helped more than 70 countries to date to build disaster loss databases, which are an essential and crucial first step towards understanding risks. Disaster loss database capture climate related disaster inputs in a very detailed and disaggregated manner over significant periods of time, enabling in this way the uncovering of trends and patterns of risk. In particular, climate related disaster impacts are starting to show the influence of Climate Change in terms of increased frequency, intensity and changes on location and other patterns.

In the context of the above, and <u>for the 2 year work plan of the Executive Committee, UNISDR recommends that the EC considers the following activities</u>:

- Coordinate, validate, contribute, and facilitate linkages with Climate Change community to promote and disseminate the results produced by UNISDR on disaster loss and damages associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

- Promote the incorporation of national disaster loss data in the development of NAMAs and NAPs, and facilitates sharing of methodologies and good practices in application of the disaster loss data in national planning. Extensive risk considerations, also well supported in disaster loss databases, can inform adaptation work and provide much more precise quantitative measures of loss and damage associated with high frequency climatic events.

- While the number of countries that have built disaster loss databases is high, there is still much to do to achieve global coverage from the bottom-up. The EC may advocate for the creation of disaster loss databases as one of the best practices which can support simultaneously both CCA and DRR work in countries. The EC may also support organization of regional or national workshops to introduce disaster loss accounting tools that are linked to comprehensive risk analysis and risk management. This will help ensure coherence and synergy in planning for climate risk management planning. The national disaster loss data that is developed on international and standardized methodology across the globe improves an evidence-based decision-making processes and risk-sensitive investments.

(b) Strengthening dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders

(i) In this area, UNISDR, as guardian of the Hyogo Framework for Action, is now coordinating the consultations that will lead to the development of a Post-2015 Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. As part of the new framework it is foreseen much stronger links between the Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.

In the context of the above, and for the 2 year work plan of the Executive Committee, UNISDR recommends that the EC considers the following activities:

- Participate actively in the preparatory process of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015, which will adopt the new post-2015 DRR framework.

- Promote coordination and foster dialogue between climate change community and experts working on loss and damage at national level with those working on disaster risk reduction particularly in countries at high risk from adverse effects of climate change.