





*The overall objective of the Conference is to boost dialogue and awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the Europe and the CIS region and beyond. The Conference will help strengthen political commitment of key actors for sustainable, risk-informed DRR efforts. It will also help increase awareness, engagement and oversight capabilities of the state authorities in Disaster Risk Management (DRM), and facilitate exchange between practitioners from the region on DRM governance, education, innovative solutions and capacity development, contributing to better preparedness, and more effective early response and recovery.*



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THE MORE GOVERNMENTS, UN AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES AND CIVIL SOCIETY UNDERSTAND RISK AND VULNERABILITY, THE BETTER EQUIPPED THEY WILL BE TO MITIGATE DISASTERS WHEN THEY STRIKE AND SAVE MORE LIVES. ”

– UN SECRETARY GENERAL

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# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1. The countries of the Europe and Commonwealth of the Independent States (ECIS) have a long history of devastating disasters that have caused economic and human losses across the entire region. Almost all types of natural and technological hazards are present, including earthquakes, floods, landslides, mudslides, debris flows, avalanches, droughts and extreme temperatures. Earthquakes are the most dangerous hazard, causing destruction to human life, buildings and infrastructure alike, while also triggering various secondary events.
2. The ECIS region is also exposed to technological disasters including dam collapses and hazardous material release. Often these disasters transcend national borders and overwhelm the capacities of individual countries to manage them. Most countries in the region have limited financial resources and physical resilience. Furthermore, the level of preparedness and prevention varies from country to country and regional cooperation does not exist to the necessary extent.
3. Two important factors are contributing to the severity of disaster risks in the region:
  - » Uncontrolled urbanization. At the end of the Socialist era, most of the ECIS countries entered, in haste, the transformation of their centrally-planned economies into market-based systems. This led to sudden decentralisation, privatisation and rapid urban change. The changing economic and social contexts had new significant impacts on urban developments, when trends in urbanisation changed both in ratio and geographical aspects
  - » Climate change has increased the frequency and severity of hydro-meteorological incidents, in the form of flash flooding, droughts, desertification, and storms during the recent years. Urban areas are especially vulnerable to the adverse impact of disasters. This is particularly true for capitals and bigger cities, which are undergoing intense economic development and diverse activities. Very often such phenomena are accompanied by a rapid growth of population growth. Most of these cities are highly vulnerable to earthquakes and all of them are potentially vulnerable to floods. In a simple risk assessment, taking into account the hazard zonation and populations of the cities cities' hazard zonation and populations, earthquakes emerge as by far the major risk, while the risks posed by floods and landslides are far less significant.
4. The response to these challenges lies in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and

management of it. DRR, in its modern version, is a comprehensive system for human security combining top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment approaches. It is achieved by horizontal and vertical cooperation among all state and non-governmental bodies involved in sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. It aims to protect people, their health, industrial, cultural and environmental properties and values from natural and man-made hazards and disasters. To reach its goals, Sendai Framework for DRR: 2015-2030 has recommend complex sets of activities, that includes: identification and measurement of disaster risk, knowledge development through education, awareness raising, strengthening institutional and legislative base, financial protection and multi-sector contingency planning, amongst others.

5. Successful DRR requires new approaches, mechanisms, sets of skills and competencies that will form the basis for increasing public demand and political commitment to local actions and budget allocations.

» The lack of appropriate technical capacities, government commitments and the uphill battle to mainstream DRR in broader government policies are among the key challenges faced by countries of Europe and the CIS region in making DRR work.

» More broadly, for governments and communities to become resilient to the effects of natural, technological and environmental hazards, there needs to be:

- ^ awareness of the risks for all possible hazards.
- ^ commitment to reduce risks to people, and enhance public participation at all levels risk-informed resistant development: planning, implementation, assessment and review.
- ^ increased partnership and expanded risk reduction networks across different sectors of society.

6. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management are at the center of the ambitious 2030 development agendas. Specifically:

» The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes and reaffirms the urgent need to reduce the risk of disasters. Disaster risk reduction cuts across different SDGs. There are 25 targets related to disaster risk reduction in 10 of the 17 SDGs, firmly establishing the role of disaster risk reduction as a core development strategy.

» The priority directions and the 13 guiding principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction call for a transformation of traditional emergency response and relief activities toward risk informed sustainable development. It should



target bringing DRR to the center of development practice and emphasizing on resilience of the communities and governance, reduction of mortality rates, affected people, economic loss and damage to the critical infrastructures, increase of countries with DRR national platform and country specific DRM strategies.

- » The 2017 Global Platform for DRR specifically highlighted the urgency for systematic accountability in all 4 SFDRR priority directions, identifying additional priorities, within the overarching framework set by the SDGs, such as the monitoring the implementation of Sendai Framework, coherence with the sustainable development and climate change agendas, international and private-public cooperation and building a coalition of countries for critical infrastructure.

7. Against the backdrop of the remaining challenges of making DRR work in the region, and relying on the global frameworks of Sendai and SDGs, this Conference will aim to fill the gap in regional dialogue and

action in the Europe and Commonwealth of the Independent States countries.

- » It will build upon an extensive network of DRR practitioners, supported by UNISDR, UNDP, UNICEF as well as functioning within other bi-lateral and multilateral formats.
- » It will continue the dialogue started in Cancun (Mexico), during the 2017 Global Platform for DRR, where the Armenian delegation presented briefly the work in progress regarding to the Sendai implementation, interlinked with SDGs, as well as the ongoing initiatives that are directly addressing the issues which were identified as priority directions of Cancun Global Platform<sup>1</sup>.
- » It will create an excellent opportunity for all participants across the ECIS region to present their national policies, best practices and identified shortcomings, as well as discuss and obtain much important experiences from the region. To facilitate this experience, **the facilitators have introduced many panel discussions, which will be conducted in an open and creative atmosphere for achieving the objective described above.**

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<sup>1</sup> They include: identifying the monitoring implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR; Increase of the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies; Coherence with the sustainable development and climate change agendas; Gender-sensitive and inclusive disaster risk reduction; and International cooperation initiatives, including public-private. In this regards, Armenia has considerable achievements, which will also serve as a good baseline for detailed collaboration.

## 8. Why in Armenia?

- Armenia has a well-functioning National Platform for DRR established in 2010, a coordination mechanism to enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination for the sustainability of DRR activities through a consultative and participatory process in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and SFDRR.
- » The SFDRR and SDG awareness and understanding has been established as the cornerstone of the new Armenia Disaster Risk Management National Strategy adopted in March 2017 and is being increasingly advocated within various professional capacity building initiatives highlighting the decentralization of DRM, the strengthening the relevant policy making, public administration and rapid response preparedness capacities, comprehensive school safety and incorporation of DRR in education, modernized integrated early warning systems, and formulation of common DRM monitoring methodology as key priority directions for further enhancement.
- » Armenia has already initiated the development of monitoring and evaluation processes of the SFDRR implementation in the country and organization and coordination of DRM related private-public partnership

through its well organized thematic working groups, in close cooperation with the UNISDR and with the donor support from ECHO and UNDP.

- » Armenia made significant progress in introducing and institutionalizing the Comprehensive School Safety approach and contributing to the Worldwide Initiative for Safer Schools aiming at protecting learners and education workers; planning for educational continuity in the face of expected hazards; safeguarding education sector investments; and strengthening climate-smart disaster resilience through education.

Building on the abovementioned achievements, with a clear sense of value of mutual learning, Armenia offers a platform for regional dialogue, thus making a contribution to global knowledge exchange and south-south cooperation in the field of DRR. **In this context, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and UNDP in partnership with UNISDR, UNICEF, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), Asian Institute of Technology, Save the Children, OxYGen, Habitat, Armenian Red Cross Society and Armenian Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform, in close cooperation with local and international DRR partners, have initiated the 3-day “Resilience Building for Sustainable Development” International Conference in Yerevan, Armenia.**



## DATE:

On 11-13 October, 2017

## VENUE:

- » **Day 1-2:** Conference Hall of MATENADARAN. Scientific Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts named after Mesrop Mashtots. (address: 53 Mashtots Ave, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia)
- » **Day 3:** National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia (address: Baghramyan 19, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia)

## CONFERENCE LANGUAGE:

- » English-Armenian-Russian-English simultaneous translation will be provided.

## MAIN ORGANIZERS:

- » Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia
- » United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- » Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform of Armenia

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

- » United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- » United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- » Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)
- » Asian Institute of Technology
- » Save the Children International Armenia Representative office
- » OXYGen Foundation for Protection of Youth and Women Rights
- » Habitat for Humanity Armenia
- » Armenian Red Cross Society

## TARGETED AUDIENCE:

- » High-level DRM public officials and key experts from national legislative and executive state authorities, regional and municipal governments,
- » High level representatives of international and local organizations working in DRR field
- » UN DRR practitioners from participating countries of Europe and Commonwealth of the Independent States
- » High level officials and key practitioners and researchers from academic, DRR educational and training institutions
- » Other relevant DRR stakeholders from participating countries.

# WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Conference is to boost dialogue and awareness on DRR in the Europe and the CIS region and to strengthen political commitment of key actors for sustainable, risk-informed DRR efforts.

## The objective of the 3-day Conference is to:

- » Increase the awareness and engagement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and other participating countries in Disaster Risk Governance,
- » Mark the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017;
- » Strengthen DRR related policy dialogue, development and oversight,
- » Increase awareness level and deepen understanding on DRR governance concepts and application,
- » Identify nationalized contextual modalities for improved risk-informed development,
- » Discuss region-specific public and private investment de-risking modalities.
- » Increase political commitment and social demand for sustainable, risk-informed, disaster resilient and gender sensitive sectoral development, aiming for successful mainstreaming of DRR into development policies, programmes and processes,
- » Enhance localization of the Sendai Framework for DRR, Sustainable Development Goals and Armenia DRM National Strategy,
- » Ensure regional knowledge management and exchange of DRM education, Comprehensive School Safety, innovative solutions and experience between practitioners on capacity development, DRR governance, preparedness, early response and recovery frameworks,
- » Formulate and build consensus of modalities for further cooperation.
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# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

## Expected Outcomes

1. Recommendations on strengthening the role of parliaments in DRR policy making and oversight
2. Recommendations on localization of the Sendai Framework for DRR specific SDGs
3. Recommendations on integration of DRR through public-private partnership, DRR Innovations and Regional (Cross-border) cooperation and partnership
4. Practical methods for DRR integration into sectoral and sub-national development
5. Recommendations on development of culture of safety and resilience through education, science, public information and awareness, and research
6. Agreement on modalities of implementation of the formulated recommendations.