



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction**Seventh session**

Bangkok and online, 25–27 August 2021

Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its seventh session**I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention****A. Matters calling for action by the Commission**

1. The following recommendations of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its consideration and possible action:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends a scale-up of regional and subregional cooperation strategies that integrate disasters, including climate-related disasters, and associated health perspectives, to complement national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends further capacity-building activities to manage and mitigate cascading risks using innovative technology tools.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends technical advice and capacity-building support on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, including by taking note of the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and other relevant regional and subregional frameworks and initiatives.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

2. The following decisions adopted by the Committee are brought to the attention of the Commission:

Decision 1

The Committee takes note of the recommendation of the thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, held on 24 August 2021, to organize consultations with member States and expert meetings to shape appropriate policy tools/guidance that will support the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework by taking note of the Bangkok Principles.

Decision 2

The Committee decides to continue conducting policy analysis and research to support regional cooperation with a focus on building back better to manage the cascading risks associated with natural and biological hazards, including by taking note of the Bangkok Principles and taking into account other relevant regional and subregional frameworks and initiatives, and requests the secretariat to assist member States in enhancing work on disaster risk reduction issues.

Decision 3

The Committee underlines the importance of the analytical findings of the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021* on supporting the risk-informed policy decisions of member States, and requests the secretariat to further deepen its analytical research and disseminate the findings through the Risk and Resilience Portal of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network.

Decision 4

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for hosting the seventh session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held from 23 to 28 May 2022, and for its promotion of disaster risk reduction, climate action and health resilience in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Decision 5

The Committee also expresses its appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for the hosting of the fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in October 2022 and its promotion of geospatial data and space technology applications for disaster risk reduction, natural resource management and climate adaptation actions.

Decision 6

The Committee takes note with appreciation of the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Korea to host an Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on digital cooperation, in October 2022, while noting that multi-stakeholder engagement and international digital collaboration are essential to address digital inclusion and build disaster and climate health resilience.

Decision 7

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Governments of Italy, Switzerland and Thailand for their new contributions in 2020 and 2021 to the

Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries.

II. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

3. The Committee held its seventh session in Bangkok and online from 25 to 27 August 2021. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP; the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO); the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; and the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

B. Attendance

4. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

5. Representatives of the following Permanent Observers to ESCAP attended: Hungary; Italy; Nigeria; South Africa; and Switzerland.

6. Representatives of the following offices of the Secretariat attended: Economic Commission for Europe; and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

7. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; ITU; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and WMO.

8. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure; Economic Cooperation Organization; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Pacific Community; Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia; and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Asian Institute of Technology; Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and The Rockefeller Foundation.

10. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chairs examined the credentials of all the representatives and found them to be in order.

C. Election of officers

11. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Ms. Khadeeja Naseem (Maldives)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Rachmat Budiman (Indonesia) Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura (Japan)

D. Agenda

12. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Emergence of cascading risks and expanding disaster riskscape.
3. Scaling up subregional and regional cooperation frameworks to manage cascading risks.
4. Overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level.
5. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventh session.

E. Other events

13. The third ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week was held in conjunction with the Committee session. The following expert group meetings, side events and special sessions were also held:

- (a) 23 August 2021: theme session on the disaster-climate-health riskscape, co-organized with the United Nations Satellite Centre;
- (b) 23 and 24 August 2021: regional learning platform on strengthening disaster, climate and health resilience, co-organized with the ASEAN secretariat, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, the Government of Thailand, the Government of the Republic of Korea, the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Meteorological Organization;
- (c) 24 August 2021: thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;

(d) 24–27 August 2021: twenty-fifth session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development;

(e) 25 August 2021: ministerial panel on disaster, climate and health resilience;

(f) 26 August 2021: side event on sand and dust storm risk assessment in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management;

(g) 26 August 2021: side event on celebrating two decades of satellite imagery applications for enhanced disaster resilience, co-hosted by the United Nations Satellite Centre;

(h) 27 August 2021: side event on risk communication in public health emergencies, co-hosted by the Government of Thailand.

Annex I

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CDR/2021/1	Summary of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021	2
ESCAP/CDR/2021/2	Scaling up cooperation frameworks to manage cascading risks	3
<i>Conference room papers</i>		
ESCAP/CDR/2021/CRP.1	Thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030	4
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CDR/2021/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CDR/2021/L.2	Draft report	7
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/CDR/2021/INF/1	Overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level	3, 4
<i>Information available online</i>		
www.unescap.org/events/2021/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-seventh-session	Information for participants	
www.unescap.org/events/2021/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-seventh-session	List of participants	
www.unescap.org/events/2021/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-seventh-session	Tentative programme	

Annex II

Chair's summary of proceedings of the seventh session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

I. Introduction

1. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the seventh session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction was held as a three-day online meeting, three hours per day, from 25 to 27 August 2021. The Chair's summary does not elaborate on the details of any country statement, but rather succinctly summarizes the points of convergence of views of Committee members on the topics under agenda items 2–6. The country statements received, as delivered during the session, are available on the website of the Committee (www.unescap.org/events/2021/committee-disaster-risk-reduction-seventh-session).

II. Summary of discussions

A. Emergence of cascading risks and expanding disaster riskscape (Agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the summary of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021 (ESCAP/CDR/2021/1).

3. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made statements or submitted written statements: China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Mongolia; Pakistan; and Russian Federation.

4. The Committee was informed of the changing contours of disaster risks in the region during a panel discussion on the importance of investing in multi-hazard early warning systems for both natural and biological hazards and promoting climate risks and early warning systems, particularly in least developed countries and small island developing States. The lessons learned in disaster risk reduction demonstrate that there were opportunities to integrate science and policy interfaces that could support countries to be better prepared for future pandemics and be more people centric in the process.

5. Recognizing that disasters were still occurring and negatively impacting people, that climate change was inhibiting the collective and individual efforts for sustainable development and that all countries were still facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee noted the need to operationalize resilience to all types of disasters, including those intensifying due to climate change, by implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 which served as a foundational mechanism and the global architecture of international cooperation for disaster risk reduction.

6. The Committee recommended that the secretariat continue its activities to promote multi-hazard early warning systems, including through the impact-based forecasting approach for the detection of hazards with reasonable lead time, promoting an emergency cooperation mechanism for natural disaster prevention, contributing to effective reduction of cascading disaster risks and developing assessments of socioeconomic exposure to dynamic hazards using an integrated approach to formulate proper intervention measures.

7. The Committee commended the analysis contained in the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021: Resilience in a Riskier World – Managing Systemic Risks for Biological and Other Natural Hazards*, which would help to guide the region to strengthen resilience and enable the member States to strengthen their capacities for effective disaster response. The Committee further commended the launch of the thematic online portal on disasters and expressed its appreciation for the support that it would provide in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region. In that regard, the Committee recommended that the portal be used as a key tool to facilitate risk-informed policy decisions for development and investments in Asia and the Pacific and noted that it provided an effective platform for analysing the regional riskscape and risk geography.

8. Considering the multifaceted issues in disaster risk reduction and the core significance of disaster risk reduction in terms of implementing and assisting development processes, the Committee recommended strengthening international cooperation and bolstering the central role of ESCAP with regard to developing government interaction with the involvement of the largest partners, including the private sector.

B. Scaling up subregional and regional cooperation frameworks to manage cascading risks
(Agenda item 3)

9. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on scaling up cooperation frameworks to manage cascading risks (ESCAP/CDR/2021/2), the information document on the overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level (ESCAP/CDR/2021/INF/1) and the conference room paper on the thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (ESCAP/CDR/2021/CRP.1).

10. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements or submitted written statements: China; India; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Thailand; and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

11. The Committee was informed of the outcomes of the thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which included the recommendation to leverage and scale up regional cooperation measures and subregional initiatives to promote policy coherence to support the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework by taking note of the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

12. Recognizing the linkage between health and disaster risk reduction and the gaps in implementing the health aspects of the Sendai Framework, the Committee highlighted the need to develop effective policy, action and coordination that took into account both health resilience and disaster risk reduction, including by taking note of the Bangkok Principles. In that regard, the representative of Thailand recommended initiating the actions presented by the thematic expert meeting on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework. The representative of Nepal recommended focusing on integrating multi-hazard vulnerability assessment, including the risks of and projections regarding pandemics.

13. The Committee recommended strengthening and developing multi-hazard early warning systems which would enable anticipatory action. In that regard, the Committee expressed its appreciation for the cooperation between the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and ESCAP to develop joint modelling solutions for integrated health and disaster early warning systems, the efforts of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, and the collaboration between the Asia Regional Resilience to a Changing Climate and ESCAP to build regional integrated multi-hazard early warning systems and institutionalize the regional learning platform.

14. The Committee, highlighting the need for a reformulated profile of disasters and expressing its appreciation for the analysis contained in the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021*, urged the development of cooperation at the subregional and regional levels to promote subregional and regional initiatives based on the existing frameworks and common commitments, including the health aspects of the Sendai Framework.

15. The Committee noted the unprecedented spike in disasters as a result of the convergence of natural hazards such as locusts with the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, the representative of Pakistan requested that member States consider the creation of a pool of regional reserves of resources and capacities to respond to disasters. The representative of Nepal noted the importance of enhancing preparedness for climate-related disasters using space-based technologies. The representative of Mongolia proposed to initiate a North-East Asia cooperation mechanism for disaster risk reduction to share experiences in times of disasters.

16. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the deliberations of the ESCAP regional learning platform. In that regard, the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recommended that the ESCAP regional learning platform continue its activities in order to support the ongoing regional technical dialogues and information-sharing, build capacity and cooperation for flood and drought early warning, and explore linkages to related forums and initiatives such as the South Asian Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum.

C. Overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level

(Agenda item 4)

17. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on scaling up cooperation frameworks to manage cascading risks (ESCAP/CDR/2021/2) and the information document on the overview of the work of the secretariat and the United Nations system at the regional level (ESCAP/CDR/2021/INF/1).

18. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; Japan; Maldives; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

19. The Committee was informed about the work of the secretariat and the four work streams under disaster risk reduction: integrated multi-hazard early warning systems; data and statistics; technology innovation and applications; and knowledge for policy.

20. The Committee was informed about the activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) implemented since the sixth session of the Committee, in 2019. The

activities, among others, included conducting the *APDIM Preliminary Assessment of the Gaps and Needs for Disaster Risk Information and Data Management Platforms in Asia and the Pacific Region*; conducting the sand and dust storms risk assessment in Asia and the Pacific; and developing the “Guideline on Monitoring and Reporting the Impact of Sand and Dust Storms through the Sendai Framework Monitoring”. In addition, the Centre had expanded its partnership and cooperation with a number of regional and international organizations on disaster information management. The Centre would further expand its activities and cooperation in the future, guided by its strategic programme of work which was endorsed by the Centre’s Governing Council.

21. The Committee was informed by the Co-Chair of the Issue-Based Coalition on Building Resilience of a number of its deliverables, including developing knowledge products and policy guides, supporting capacity-building of United Nations country teams and organizing knowledge exchanges.

22. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the Risk and Resilience Portal of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network to understanding the linkages between climate change and disasters and the compounded and systemic nature of risks. In that regard, the representative of Maldives requested support from the secretariat to develop additional analyses and revise and update existing analyses using the Risk and Resilience Portal, including both natural and biological hazards in the risk profile with regard to that country’s changing risk profile as a result of climate change.

23. The Committee recognized the increasing strategic importance of space technology and technological applications for improving hazard management and developing early warning services with increased spatial resolution, strengthening capacity to provide creative solutions and assistance to critical sectors, strengthening regional cooperation, and realizing a post-COVID-19 era built on environmental growth and resilience. In that regard, the representative of Indonesia informed the Committee about the fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, which would be held in Indonesia in October 2022, and extended invitations to the countries to participate. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the secretariat’s efforts to provide timely satellite imagery and products to member States for disaster early warning, response and damage assessment under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development. The representative of Sri Lanka expressed appreciation for the role of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

24. The Committee, highlighting the transition to the digital economy, noted that closing the digital gap and strengthening connectivity between the digitally isolated were key to building back better and ensuring that no one was left behind. In that regard, the representative of the Republic of Korea proposed to host the first Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on digital cooperation, in October 2022, to strengthen regional cooperation and advance the Asia-Pacific digital economy to ensure building back better from COVID-19.

25. The Committee was informed of disaster risk reduction-related activities of the Economic Commission for Europe, notably on industrial safety, flood and drought risk management and climate change adaptation and sustainable forest management.

D. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme

(Agenda item 5)

26. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; and Indonesia.

27. The Committee was informed about the secretariat's proposed programme plan for 2022 to enhance the capacity of countries with regard to enhancing disaster risk reduction efforts to build back better, assist member States in harnessing the advances in space technology applications, promote sharing knowledge and good practices and creating synergies with other existing regional initiatives.

28. The Committee highlighted the importance of community engagement in disaster risk reduction and recognized the need to promote the integration of disaster, climate and health considerations as an investment that would sustain the development process. In that regard, the representative of Indonesia informed the Committee of the upcoming meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2022.

29. The Committee took note of the jointly signed agreement between the China National Space Administration and the space agencies of India, the Russian Federation and South Africa to cooperate with regard to sharing remote sensing satellite data in a joint effort on disaster prevention and mitigation as well as other global development issues.

E. Other matters

(Agenda item 6)

30. No other matters were discussed.
