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Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



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**Promoting Resilience Through Post-Crisis Recovery**  
**Brussels, Belgium | June 6-8, 2017**

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Background

Recovery is defined as “The medium and longer-term rebuilding and sustainable restoration of resilient critical infrastructures, services, housing, facilities and livelihoods required for full functioning of a community or a society affected by a disaster, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and Build Back Better<sup>1</sup>, to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.<sup>2</sup>” Recovery includes reconstruction. The importance of recovery is increasing as the number of people affected by disasters around the world continues to rise. From 2012 to 2014, 994 disasters impacted more than 326 million people across the globe<sup>3</sup>. The cost of physical damage caused by these events is also rising, largely due to growth of physical assets, from an estimated US\$20 billion on average per year in the 1990s to about \$100 billion per year in the first decade of this century<sup>4</sup>. The impact on countries is further exacerbated by the fact that disasters and conflicts, or at least fragility, frequently occur together, often devastating countries that are least able to sustain them. As climate change, urbanization and migration accelerate, the need for recovery will continue on an upward trajectory. Despite ongoing and expanding efforts to minimize hazard impacts through disaster risk reduction, the recovery function remains relevant and necessary.

### Recovery in the Sendai Framework

As a result of the strong advocacy efforts undertaken by the World Bank, UNDP, European Union and other partners, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction includes as Priority 4 a focus on “build back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction”. This priority provides an important premise for engagement of all national governments, UN system and multilateral agencies to implement recovery in a transformative manner that reduces risks and builds resilience in an increasingly complex world of multiple and colliding risks.

There is a recognition that recovery is much more than returning to pre disaster conditions, it is about ensuring that affected communities build physical and socio-economic resilience to disasters. Recovery is a critical opportunity to build back better and reduce future disaster risks through development measures such as risk-informed land use planning and improved building standards and their enforcement. The concept of ‘Build Back better’ is not only about upgrading infrastructure with disaster resilient construction technologies but also about introducing stronger governance systems, improved basic services, diversified livelihoods for people and better social protection mechanisms for poor and vulnerable families. Governments play a key role in ensuring

<sup>1</sup> Build Back Better: The use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalisation of livelihoods, economies, and the environment.

The report of the Open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction endorsed by the General Assembly, January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The report of the Open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction endorsed by the General Assembly, January 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). 2014. Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2013: The numbers and trends. Institute of Health and Society (IRSS) Université Catholique de Louvain – Brussels, Belgium.

<sup>4</sup> Natural Disasters: Mitigating Impact, Managing Risks, IMF (2012).



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that the “build back better” concept is applied in post disaster recovery processes, particularly in effectively planning recovery processes, providing technical and financial resources and coordinating the recovery processes. Governments must be able to develop specific institutional, policy and legal frameworks and capacities to be able to support recovery interventions efficiently and effectively so that these efforts are sustainable and reduce vulnerability to future disasters. They must do this in a context in which recovery is becoming a complex undertaking with multiple stakeholders supporting and bringing together their financial and technical resources for implementation, and meeting rising aspirations of the people. Recovery not just restores, it also connects with development in a short period of time, often a challenging task for governments and other agencies.

### **Resilient Recovery – The focus of the conference**

The experience of recovery programs points to the widespread recognition that a well-planned and well-resourced institutional and financial system are necessary to support recovery. Disaster recovery is efficient if institutions, policies, laws and financial mechanisms are set up prior to the disaster so that dedicated personnel and resources are able to deliver recovery benefits to people in an effective and timely manner and in the context of a supportive policy environment. For countries experiencing complex emergencies, when conflict and disasters overlap, the recovery process is even more challenging because the social contract is broken and existing capacities or assets might have been weakened. Several Governments, particularly those who manage recovery often, are better prepared with setting up institutions, defining roles, policies and finances for recovery. “Preparedness for recovery” has been undertaken by India, Indonesia, USA, Australia and New Zealand, and a number of countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa. While being a relatively new practice, preparedness for recovery is gaining significant traction - considering its benefits and the increasing frequency of recovery processes around the world.

### **WRC3’s Objectives**

The third edition of the World Reconstruction Conference (WRC3) will strengthen the discourse on recovery in a changing world, with a focus on the growing demand for strengthening recovery systems ex-ante, promoting interventions and practices leading to resilient recovery, and enhancing the global knowledge resources on recovery. The conference will also build capacity for disaster risk reduction in recovery and reconstruction, including discussion and training on tools and methodologies. WRC3 will build on the first and second World Reconstruction Conferences held in May 2011 and September 2014 which brought together over 500 experts and practitioners from governments, international organizations, NGOs, academia, and the private sector to share their best practices and lessons on recovery and explore the nexus between resilient recovery efforts and sustainable poverty reduction. The conference will have strong link with the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) which is being held in Cancun, Mexico in May, 2017, will feature the outcomes of the GPDRR and discuss the synergies on implementing Priority 4 of the Sendai framework.

The **overall goal** of the WRC3 will be to identify effective and forward-looking approaches to achieve resilient post-crisis recovery in which climate and disaster risk reduction, fragility and conflict considerations are mainstreamed.

The conference will have the following specific objectives:

- **Promoting building back better through recovery as a path to resilience and sustainable development**

The availability of resources and favorable policy climate following a disaster or a conflict makes it possible to introduce changes that build resilience against future shocks or crisis. Recovery processes, in fact, present the opportunity for introducing change and making the right development decisions through recovery programs that “Build Back Better” (BBB) by integrating resilience into the restoration of physical



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infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalisation of livelihoods, economies, and the environment. This translates into building safer structures by enforcing disaster resilient construction standards; supporting vulnerable groups through insurance and social protection measures; empowering women and disadvantaged groups through joint titling of land, property, and assets; and improving and expanding basic services to build resilient communities. It is hence essential to ensure that a BBB approach is promoted and universalized through recovery to increase the resilience of nations and communities.

- **Making recovery inclusive for greater equity and equality**

To be effective and equal, disaster recovery must be participatory and inclusive. Recovery must also be fair and equitable, non-discriminatory, and address the needs of all disadvantaged groups. In order to do so, recovery programs must be based on the needs and priorities of the people affected by the disaster. It is, therefore, critical to engage the affected population in determining such needs and priorities and, as importantly, in the planning of recovery interventions to ensure that they truly respond to people’s needs. Through local NGOs and civil society groups, governments can create opportunities for active and meaningful participation of the communities through all phases of a recovery program.

- **Leveraging consensus on recovery as a means to implement Sendai and other global frameworks for development and resilience**

The Sendai Framework, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an impetus for countries to graduate towards risk informed development in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and, in so doing, the likelihood and impact that disasters have on their economies and people. SDGs are related to poverty, hunger, peace and all the important services such as health, water and sanitation, and education. Sustainable cities and communities are critically linked to how communities recover when they are affected by disasters or conflicts. Investing in the capacity to manage and reduce climate, disaster or conflict risk, and equally in strengthening the capacities of governments to plan and implement peacebuilding and recovery processes, is therefore essential for maintaining access to services and building resilient communities. As recovery provides the opportunity to implement measures and develop capacities that reduce climate; disaster and conflict risk in the short, medium and long term and build back better, it should be conceived as an important means to implement these global frameworks and become an essential part of the discourse on sustainable development.

Overall Goal

To identify effective, forward-looking approaches to achieve resilient post-crisis recovery, in which climate and disaster risk reduction, fragility and conflict considerations are mainstreamed

Support Implementing Sendai Framework Priority 4

Promoting BBB through recovery as a path to resilience and sustainable development

Making recovery inclusive for greater equity and equality

Leveraging consensus on recovery as a mean to implement the SFDRR and other global frameworks for development and resilience



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## Conference content

The two and a half day conference will feature high-level plenaries and thematic sessions, and will serve as a platform for the organizing partners and participants to organize a diverse range of featured events.

The discussion will be organized around **four main thematic areas** and a plenary session will be marking each of them:

### 1. Recovery Interventions

Associated to opening and plenary 2: “Efforts on post-disaster and crisis recovery”

The increasing frequency of disasters around the world over the past twenty years has naturally translated into an increase in the number of recovery programmes, providing a wealth of experiences and practices that have enriched the quality of these interventions. Additionally, with the growing importance of recovery and its evolution from simple physical reconstruction to a more complex and comprehensive process restoring also the socio-economic fabric of affected communities, more stakeholders have become engaged in recovery as per their mandate and specialization.

With the objective of reviewing past experiences and current practices to draw lessons and suggestions for further improvements, the thematic sessions around this theme will provide country examples on recovery processes. To highlight these experiences, a thematic session will be dedicated to the growing engagement of the European Union in post-crisis situations - providing an overview of approaches and latest experiences, including from countries within the Union.

Thematic sessions under this theme would include:

- Lessons and Ways Forward after a Decade of Experience with PDNAs: Examples from ACP countries
- Livelihood Recovery and Social Protection
- Post-Disaster Recovery Financing - Challenges and Opportunities
- Linking Humanitarian Response and Recovery
- Building Back Better with Eurocodes, Governance, Standards and Opportunities for Advancing Building Regulations for Resilience;
- Special Session: An Update from 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Climate Change and Resilience
- Education and Health in Recovery
- From Urban Reconstruction towards Resilient Cities
- Environment in Recovery
- Special Session: Early Lessons from Post-Earthquake Recovery in Nepal

### 2. Recovery in conflict and fragile situations:

Associated to plenary 3 “Recovery in conflict and fragile situations”

Many developing countries face recurrent disasters in contexts of conflict and fragility. Between 2008 and 2013, for example, an average, 27.5 million people annually were displaced by disasters, most of them in Asia and Africa and in countries that are fragile and conflict-affected. In such situations, the interaction between disasters, conflict and/or fragility creates and perpetuates vulnerabilities that place communities at risk, further entrenching poverty and inequality. Trends such as climate change and increasing urbanization are making these issues worse particularly for the poor and most vulnerable population groups, which are disproportionately affected by disasters and/conflict. While fragility and conflict contexts provide new challenges for the



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effectiveness of disaster recovery, disaster recovery can in turn offer a unique opportunity for addressing underlying vulnerabilities, risk factors and drivers of conflict and fragility.

The thematic sessions around this issue aim at creating a deeper understanding of the disaster-conflict interface and the need for integrating conflict sensitivity in recovery efforts in fragile or conflict-affected countries. Also, they propose a discussion on how the current tools for recovery assessment and planning can integrate concerns for conflict and fragility situations and develop comprehensive integrated interventions in support of the affected population.

Thematic sessions under this theme would include:

- Post-crisis Displacement and Resettlement
- Recovery Assessment and Planning Tools Applied in Drought Situations
- Conflict sensitivity in recovery
- Women in Recovery
- Private sector as an engine for peace and social cohesion

### 3. Recovery Preparedness

Associated with plenary 4 “Preparing and planning for recovery - strengthening institutions and capacities”.

While recovery is becoming a more established practice area, the general level of preparedness and capacities for recovery management remains rather limited in most regions with recovery systems and practices still under development. For recovery processes to be efficient and effective, it is critical that governments establish in advance dedicated institutional, policy and financial mechanisms and have strong management capacities for recovery. Over the past 10 years, there has been increasing recognition and demand from countries for technical assistance for ex-ante capacity development for resilient recovery, conducting post-disaster assessments, and developing comprehensive recovery frameworks.

In order to respond to the lack of capacities in managing recovery, UNDP and GFDRR have developed a joint global program on preparedness for recovery with the objective of enhancing recovery capacities of governments at national and sub-national levels. Ultimately, the countries will be able to use their own internal resources to manage recovery and will be less dependent on international assistance. The program will achieve its objectives by implementing a series of activities under four components: (i) Strengthening of recovery Systems (ex-ante); (ii) Post-Disaster Needs Assessment and Recovery Planning (ex-post); (iii) Supporting the Transition to Recovery; and (iv) Knowledge Products and Tools.

The technical sessions around this thematic area will contribute by discussing practices and tools that support better preparedness for effective and efficient recovery implementation.

Thematic sessions under this theme would include:

- Policies and institutional arrangements for recovery
- Innovations in Remote Post-crisis Assessments and Recovery Monitoring;
- Cultural Heritage Reconstruction - an Engine for Social Recovery
- Engaging Civil Society and Local Government in Resilient Recovery
- Large Scale Housing Reconstruction - Latest Experiences



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#### 4. Leveraging political consensus on Sendai Priority 4:

Associated to closing plenary on Sendai Priority 4.

The inclusion of recovery into the Sendai Framework as its priority 4 “*Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to Build Back Better in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction*” has been a crucial recognition of the importance of recovery as an essential part of the discourse on development. However, as this important step has been taken, there is now a pressing need to implement this priority. This requires paying greater attention to institutional and financial aspects of recovery, developing tools and methodologies further to strengthen this practice and maintaining the commitment of national governments and the international community to dedicate resources and efforts to such endeavor.

As Sendai becomes the overarching framework of the conference, the closing plenary will provide the opportunity to draw some conclusions and guidance on practical ways forward on the implementation of priority 4.

A discussion paper will be developed on each of these themes and each associated session will be led by one or more partner organizations. The WRC3 will also provide space to discuss: i) the Recovery Frameworks developed and implemented by national governments over the past two years; ii) release the thematic modules of the Disaster Recovery Framework guide; iii) present a retrospective on the UN-EU-WB tripartite agreement on post-crisis assessment and recovery planning; iv) share the findings of the review of the PDNA methodology.

The conference agenda will be finalized through consultations among the organizing partners and thematic partners from UN, governments, civil society and private sector organizations.

#### **Logistics**

The conference will be held in Brussels on June 6-8, 2017, back to back with the European Development Days (EDD 2017) held from 7 to 9 June, and will attract around 500 participants with significant representation from Africa, Caribbean and Pacific islands. The WRC3 closing ceremony will be held on June 8 at the EDD 2017.