



World
Reconstruction
Conference 4

CONCEPT NOTE

FOURTH EDITION OF THE WORLD RECONSTRUCTION CONFERENCE (WRC4)

13-14 May 2019, Geneva, Switzerland

Theme: “Inclusion for Resilient Recovery”

I. BACKGROUND

International frameworks as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change all advocate for an increasing focus on resilience and inclusion.

Experience in post-crisis situations demonstrates that disasters, particularly in conflict and fragile contexts, tend to have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable who are likely to be hit hardest. A report¹ by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) emphasizes that disasters hit people living in poverty particularly hard for five reasons: (i) overexposure, (ii) higher vulnerability, (iii) less ability to cope and recover, (iv) permanent impact on education and health, and (v) effects of risk on saving and investment behaviours. These reasons remain valid for all people with other forms of vulnerability.

Inclusion in disaster recovery and reconstruction is a key condition for peoples’ resilience. A more inclusive recovery fosters equal rights and opportunities, dignity and diversity, guaranteeing that nobody from a community is left out because of their age, gender, disability or other factors linked to ethnicity, religion, geography, economic status, political affiliation, health issues, or other life circumstances. Inclusion of all components of society is an effective way to make recovery an all-encompassing process that could contribute to reduce poverty, promote shared prosperity and increase resilience.

The World Reconstruction Conference (WRC) is a global forum that provides a platform for policy makers, experts, and practitioners from government, international organizations, NGOs, the

¹ S. Hallegatte and al., 2016: “Unbreakable: Building the resilience of the poor in the face of natural disasters”, GFDRR/WB, 201 pp.



academia, and private sector from both developing and developed countries to come together to collect, assess, and share experiences in disaster recovery and reconstruction and take forward the policy dialogue.

II. THE WORLD RECONSTRUCTION CONFERENCE 4

The fourth World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4) will be held in Geneva on May 13-14, 2019 under the theme ***“Inclusion for Resilient Recovery”*** on the experience and lessons learnt from the previous editions. WRC4 will focus on the dimension of inclusion in recovery, building on the recognition and consensus of previous WRCs that recovery can risk reinforcing existing inequalities, that a resilient recovery is imperative to sustainable development and poverty reduction and that to be resilient, recovery must building back better.

As with the first edition held in Geneva, the WRC4 will be organized in conjunction with the **6th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR)**, May 13-17, 2019 and its theme is aligned with the thematic focus of the GPDRR that is ***“Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies”***. A special session at GPDRR will report back on the outcomes of WRC4 to the larger GP community. This session would offer the opportunity to build the linkages between the two events, both advocating for inclusion practices to promote resilient societies.

The traditional WRC partners (EU, UNDP, World Bank) will have the opportunity to renew and expand their partnership with UNISDR on a common platform for the two events.

The WRC4 is expected to bring together experts, practitioners and stakeholders from various governments, international organisations, and other institutions and community-based organizations (associations active on gender equality and/or women’s empowerment, disabled people’s organizations, indigenous peoples’ rights, ex-combatants, youth participation, and migrants’ integration).

III. OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the WRC4 is to build consensus and to renew and accelerate efforts towards realizing inclusive recovery processes. To this end, the conference will discuss the challenges and inherent biases in the process of recovery and the reasons for which certain population groups are systematically excluded.

The conference will have the following specific objectives:

- **Identifying effective ways to ensure inclusive recovery and reconstruction processes** for governments, international organisations, NGOs and civil society groups to create

opportunities for active and meaningful participation of the communities in recovery to make this process more inclusive

- **Building consensus on gender-responsive approaches to promote shared recovery benefits.** Due to pre-existing gender inequalities, women are generally hardest hit by a crisis and remain a marginalized group in most societies, even more so when gender-based discrimination intersects with other forms of vulnerability such as physical disability, belonging to minority groups, etc.
- **Enhance inclusion of people with disabilities in recovery and reconstruction.** Constraints in accessing natural resources, risk warnings, information on coping and responding, transportation and emergency shelters, in addition to socio-cultural barriers limiting participation and movement, are worsened by disasters and other crises. People with disabilities, who make up 15% of the world population, are disproportionately affected by these impacts, given their specific livelihood circumstances, their socio-political isolation (perpetuated by stigma, discrimination and exclusion), and related information asymmetry and constraint in decision-making processes due to lack of access to these processes and lack of meaningful inclusion.
- **Fostering inclusion in disaster preparedness and response.** To be effective and equal, disaster preparedness and response must be participatory and inclusive to address the needs of all groups. It is, therefore, critical to engage the affected population in determining such needs and priorities.

The WRC4 will further contribute to the international discourse on inclusion by raising awareness, facilitating discussion, sharpening thinking, and setting the agenda for future engagement.

The conference is expected to have the **following outcomes**:

- knowledge production and sharing of good practices on inclusion for resilient recovery
- describing innovative approaches, tools and methodologies for mainstreaming gender, disability, youth and other vulnerable groups' inclusion in recovery and reconstruction
- building networks between communities of stakeholders on recovery and inclusion
- recommendations to policy makers and disaster managers on inclusion for resilient recovery.

IV. CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

In so doing, the conference contributes to the implementation and achievement of the following international policies and legal instruments that all acknowledge and encourage inclusion and participation. Most pertinent are:

a. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda² for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of achieving a more inclusive, resilient, and fair societies and cities. While being a cross-cutting theme across all SDGs³, the following Goals explicitly refer to inclusion:

- Goal #5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal #8: to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth with employment creation
- Goal #10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal #11 - Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal #16 - Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies

b. The Sendai Framework for DRR Priority 4: ‘Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction’

Inclusion is a key principle in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which clearly mentions that *“Governments should engage with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards⁴.”* Particularly, priority 4 mentions that ‘Empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key’ and the framework further specifies how:

- (i) Women’s participation is critical to effectively manage disaster risk and design, resource and implement gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes; adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as to build their capacity to secure alternate means of livelihood in post-disaster situations;
- (ii) Children and youth are agents of change and should be given the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction, in accordance with legislation, national practice and educational curricula;

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

³ www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment

⁴ https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

- (iii) Persons with disabilities and their organizations are critical in the assessment of disaster risk and in designing and implementing plans tailored to specific requirements, taking into consideration, inter alia, the principles of universal design;
- (iv) Older persons have years of knowledge, skills and wisdom, which are invaluable assets to reduce disaster risk, and they should be included in the design of policies, plans and mechanisms, including for early warning;
- (v) Indigenous peoples, through their experience and traditional knowledge, provide an important contribution to the development and implementation of plans and mechanisms, including for early warning;
- (vi) Migrants contribute to the resilience of communities and societies, and their knowledge, skills and capacities can be useful in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction.⁵

All these actions pertain to DRR. The WRC4 will offer the opportunity to translate these actions to post-disaster/crisis recovery contexts.

c. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change⁶ acknowledges that climate change is a shared concern of humankind. Parties should, when acting to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations for human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous people, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.⁷

d. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)⁸, encourages States to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters (Article 11 CRPD). This legal instrument has been ratified by 178 countries.

⁵ Sendai Framework for DRR, Priority 4, Paragraph 36, page 23.

⁶ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

⁷ Paris Climate Change Agreement, Conference of the Parties, Twenty-first session, Paris, 30 November to 11 December 2015

⁸ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

e. Other International Policy Frameworks and Instruments

Other international instruments and frameworks are also in place to guide effective implementation of inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DRM). For instance, the World Humanitarian Summit Commitments to Action⁹, Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda¹⁰, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action¹¹, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

V. INCLUSION IN FRAGILE, CONFLICT AND VIOLENT CONTEXTS

Disasters and fragile/conflict/violent situations are showing growing overlap in many countries in the world making recovery more challenging. In these cases, while post-disaster recovery and reconstruction processes are ongoing, peacebuilding activities are implemented in parallel, with the same stakeholders and targets. Inclusion is very important for both processes and the WRC4 will be a suitable platform to discuss inclusion in disaster recovery situations, as well as in conflict/fragility ones.

Natural hazard-induced disasters exacerbate pre-existing conflicts, and conflict and fragility increase the impact of disasters, notably by increasing vulnerability to natural hazards. However, an inclusive and equitable recovery process may yield positive benefits easing the stressors of conflict and bringing peace and stability. Responding to fragile and conflict situations goes far beyond dealing with the physical impact of the conflict.

UNDP notes that “societies whose political institutions are more inclusive and participatory tend to be more peaceful and resilient, just as societies practicing exclusion tend to be more vulnerable to fragility and conflict. Inclusive political processes are crucial to sustaining peace and conflict prevention, as they contribute to remedying structural inequities and other root causes of conflict”¹². In contexts affected by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV), peacebuilding and recovery processes should be inclusive of different groups of society from the onset of the process. Including all in the planning process helps mitigate the potential of triggering grievances, exacerbating existing tensions between different social groups, and aggravating interpersonal violence and especially gender-based violence.

⁹https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/WHS_Commitment_to_Action_8September2016.pdf

¹⁰ <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

¹¹ <https://humanitariananddisabilitycharter.org/wp-content/themes/humanitarian-disability-charter.org/pdf/charter-on-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-action.pdf>

¹² <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/inclusive-political-processes.html>

VI. INCLUSION AND BUILDING BACK BETTER (BBB)

Building Back Better (BBB) is not just about infrastructure but also about strengthening governance systems, improving life-line services, diversifying livelihoods, and providing social protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable households and communities. Therefore, BBB and inclusion are intrinsically linked to each other.

The recent GFDRR/World Bank publication *“Building Back Better: Achieving resilience through stronger, faster and more inclusive post disaster reconstruction”*¹³ highlights that “Building back more inclusively ensures that post-disaster support reaches all affected population groups”. This emphasizes the importance of providing reconstruction support to low-income households, which are typically more exposed, more vulnerable, and less comprehensively supported.

The inclusion of marginalized groups in terms of participation and consultation during assessment, planning and decision-making processes regarding recovery is essential, and should be used as an entry point to promote socio-economic inclusion of most vulnerable communities. The two are inter-connected. The benefit derived from an inclusive consultative processes is manifold: it enables affected populations to voice their inputs into the planning and decision-making process, and makes the recovery process more responsive to their specific socio-economic and cultural needs; it also provides opportunities for promoting socio-economic inclusion (for example, if an affected community is resettled to a place where there is limited access to sources of livelihood, it becomes immaterial that they have good, safe houses, as they will continue to experience economic exclusion).

VII. FUNCTIONS AND DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION

As highlighted by the Inclusive Community Resilience for Sustainable Disaster Risk Management (INCRISD)¹⁴, inclusion has the following fundamental functions:

- It ensures the full and meaningful participation and leadership of all groups and individuals in identifying and reducing risk.
- It promotes equality of rights and opportunities for all in the face of risk.
- It appreciates and responds to the diverse characteristics, capacities and vulnerabilities of all.

¹³ Stephane Hallegatte, Jun Rentschler, Brian Walsh, 2018: Building Back Better: Achieving resilience through stronger, faster and more inclusive post-disaster reconstruction

¹⁴ Inclusive Community Resilience for Sustainable Disaster Risk Management (INCRISD) funded by European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), under the 7th DIPECHO Action Plan for South Asia



- It contributes to resilience for everyone by transforming power relations and removing barriers that keep excluded people out.

However, ensuring inclusion in recovery remains a challenge. International normative frameworks, for example, increasingly recognize and encourage the inclusion of all segments of society and, particularly of vulnerable groups, in recovery processes as equally in the design and implementation of any development policy or plan. Yet, this seldom translates to on-the-ground programs that effectively do so and there is insufficient attention to the specific needs and challenges of inclusion, particularly in the case of the most vulnerable groups. Considerable further progress is needed to fully realize inclusive recovery processes.

Content

The two-day conference will comprise four high level plenaries, and a series of interactive thematic sessions.

Agenda

The agenda will be articulated into plenary, special, thematic and country-based sessions.

A detailed agenda can be found below.



AGENDA¹⁵

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019 | Geneva

8:00– 9:00	REGISTRATION			
9:00- 10:30	OPENING CEREMONY: Leave no one behind - making inclusion a reality (Room 1)			
10:30- 11:00	COFFEE BREAK			
11:00- 12:30	Facilitating Recovery and Inclusion through Satellite Earth Observation (Room 3)	BBB in infrastructure: making it stronger and accessible to everyone (Room 1)	Ensuring the inclusion of displaced persons in recovery (Room 18)	Community-led recovery (Room 4)
12:30- 14:00	LUNCH			
14:00- 15:30	PLENARY: Inclusion for people with Disabilities (Room 1)			
15:30- 16:00	COFFEE BREAK			
16:00- 17:30	Lessons from South Asia: inclusion towards vulnerability reduction (Room 3)	Conflict Sensitivity and Social Inclusion: Tools for Effective Reconstruction in Contexts Affected by Fragility, Conflict and Violence (Room 1)	Civil protection for inclusive recovery (Room 4)	Fostering Social Inclusion through Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery (Room 18)
18:00- 20:00	RECEPTION			

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019 | Geneva

8:00 - 9:00	BREAKFAST			
9:00 - 10:30	PLENARY: Inclusion vs. Exclusion – Risks and Opportunities (Room 2)			
10:30- 11:00	COFFEE BREAK			
11:00- 12:30	Financing mechanisms for more inclusive recovery (Room 4)	Urban Reconstruction in Post-Conflict settings (Room 2)	BBB and Inclusive Recovery for Small Islands States (Room 15)	Addressing the Inequality of Risk and Promoting Women’s Leadership in Recovery (Room 3)
12:30 - 14:00	LUNCH			
14:00 - 15:30	Renewable energy for displaced communities (Room 3)	Ecosystem based-recovery: the case of Kerala floods 2018 (Room 18)	From local government to civil society, from urban to rural settings: making recovery inclusive. (Room 4)	How can disaggregated data support inclusion? (Room 15)
15:30 - 16:00	COFFEE BREAK			
16:00- 17:30	CLOSING PLENARY: Inclusion as a right for all (Room 2) Projection in Rooms 3 & 4			

¹⁵ The Agenda is susceptible to change as the sessions’ preparation is still ongoing