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JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON INCLUSION FOR RESILIENT RECOVERY

World Reconstruction Conference 4

The Fourth Edition of the World Reconstruction Conference was held in Geneva on May 13-14, 2019 in conjunction with the Sixth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and gathered more than 1000 participants from national and local governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and international organizations from around the world. The conference was jointly organized by the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the European Commission.

WRC4 addressed the theme of "Inclusion for Resilient Recovery" and shared experiences on different dimensions of social inclusion in recovery processes, with a view to advance the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Inclusion ensures the full and meaningful participation and leadership of all groups and individuals in pre- and post-disaster phases. It also promotes equality of rights and opportunities for all in the face of risk and responds to the diverse characteristics, capacities and vulnerabilities of all. An inclusive approach leads to social cohesion and builds resilience of communities exposed to disasters.

The conference noted that impressive development gains have been made over the last few decades. However, hundreds of millions of people have been excluded from human development, innovation, economic growth, or globalization benefits. Adverse natural events, including climate-related events, undermine development gains and contribute to increased vulnerability and exclusion with average annual welfare losses of over US\$500 billion and up to 26 million people pushed into poverty each year. Across countries, a large part of the population (e.g. women and girls, people with disabilities, people in rural areas, indigenous peoples, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, displaced people, gender and sexual minorities, youth, and the elderly) are disproportionately excluded from several dimensions of development, including post-disaster recovery. To remedy this, 193 countries pledged to "leave no one behind" and "endeavor to reach the furthest behind first" through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Five intersecting factors explain who is being left behind and why, and solutions need to be shaped accordingly: discrimination, geography, governance, socio-economic status, and shocks and fragility. The WRC4 focused on the latter factor while recognizing the intersectionality of all five factors. The Conference hosted 20 sessions with plenaries on "Leave no one behind – making inclusion a reality", "Inclusion for people with disabilities", "Inclusion vs. exclusion – Risks and opportunities", and "Inclusion as a right for all". Special focused sessions were held on South Asia, inclusive and green recovery in the Indian state of Kerala and the uses of technology to promote inclusion. Participants identified and shared best practices, lessons and solutions for promoting inclusion and reaching the furthest behind first through various dimensions of post-disaster recovery and pre-disaster resilience building. As intended, the conference provided a platform to share new tools and innovative approaches to increase participation of the most vulnerable in recovery as well as proposed policy recommendations for making recovery inclusive.

Deliberations on the issue of inclusion for resilient recovery have strengthened our resolve to:

- **Support marginalized groups that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards and who risk being made even more vulnerable through the recovery process.**

The poor and marginalized are particularly vulnerable to adverse natural events due to a combination of their financial, socioeconomic, cultural, age, health, age, and gender status; their geographical location; and their lack of access to services, decision-making and justice. In a post-disaster context, these groups can face further obstacles to accessing entitlements such as government relief or recovery assistance. They may be less likely



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to understand how to work through the bureaucracy and/or may not have access to key documentation such as national identity cards or birth certificates. We will promote a more inclusive recovery which protects the rights and opportunities to ensure that poor and marginalized groups are not left behind and adversely affected by recovery efforts. We will do this by putting people at the center of recovery processes, making certain that they have a role in assessments, planning, policy development, implementation, and monitoring of recovery. Ultimately, our joint efforts will bring a demonstrable improvement to the lives of the poor and vulnerable through safer housing, decent jobs, access to services, and increased livelihood options.

- **Adopt and promote more inclusive approaches to recovery to promote greater resilience for the community as a whole.**

Inclusive recovery does not mean accommodating special groups – it is about putting vulnerable people at the center of decision-making at all stages of the recovery process to strengthen resilience for everyone. Groups that are traditionally marginalized typically have a lot to contribute. For example, women have very strong risk management skills that can be mobilized if they are empowered to be leaders and participants. The traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities can offer sustainable solutions to build back better. In our recovery programmes, we will draw on the knowledge and skills of indigenous communities, women and people with disabilities and address the pre-existing structural issues which aggravate inequality, chronic poverty and vulnerability. Our programs will ensure that we build our infrastructure and facilities in a way that is accessible to persons with disabilities, but also others, e.g. the elderly, children, pregnant women, and people with temporary injuries.

- **Ensure a more resilient future for all by acting on the commitments we made in the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, and other key accords.**

In practice, this means taking explicit action to end extreme poverty, promote shared prosperity, curb inequalities, confront discrimination, and fast-track progress for the furthest behind. To move this agenda forward, we will continue to equip development and disaster risk management practitioners with innovative approaches, tools and methodologies for mainstreaming social inclusion in recovery and reconstruction while ensuring transparent and accountable recovery and reconstruction processes.

- **Change our behaviour and actions to be more inclusive in planning, implementing and monitoring recovery.**

We will advocate for and assist local and national governments to include vulnerable groups in the planning, implementation and monitoring of resilient recovery as well as ensure that the benefits of building back better are equitably shared. We will place community participation at the center of recovery to enhance greater understanding of people's needs in recovery as well as access to information, decision-making opportunities, and protection of lives, livelihoods and food security. We will strive to work with community-based organizations to increase participation in monitoring recovery through social audits that track the benefits of recovery programs to the most marginalized. We will support civil society to give greater voice to those who are traditionally excluded from recovery efforts as well as help hold accountable those who design and execute recovery programs. We will promote the participation of the private sector to increasingly view those left behind as an underserved market for goods and services in the rebuilding process, including public-private partnerships. We will work with academia to contribute through the generation of data, research and analysis on the dynamics of more inclusive recovery. And we will enable international partners to mainstream the objective of inclusive, equitable and sustainable recovery and commit to smarter use of assistance in their recovery portfolios. Inclusion is not an imposition; it is a better path to resilient recovery for all.

Geneva, 14 May 2019