



## Joint Communiqué – 8 June 2017

More than 800 participants from civil society, national and local governments, academia, the private sector and international organisations from around the world gathered in Brussels from 6-8 June 2017 for the Third Edition of the World Reconstruction Conference (WRC3). They addressed the role of post-crisis recovery and reconstruction for resilience building and disaster risk reduction and shared experience with a view to advance the implementation of the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The conference was jointly organised by the European Commission, the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).

The WRC3 took place against the backdrop of a continuing rise in the number of people affected by disasters around the world. From 2012 to 2014, close to 1000 disasters impacted more than 326 million people across the globe. The cost of physical damage caused by these events is also rising, from an estimated EUR 18 billion on average per year in the 1990s to about EUR 90 billion per year in the first decade of this century. Today, physical damages and economic losses together range from EUR 220 to 270 billion per year. 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.

The WRC3 hosted 29 sessions organised around four main themes – 1) Recovery interventions; 2) Recovery in conflict and fragile situations; 3) Recovery preparedness; and 4) Leveraging political consensus on Sendai Priority 4. It also included special sessions on Nepal and Somalia. Participants aimed 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.

Key messages taken away from WRC3 are:

➤ **Resilient recovery is an imperative for sustainable development:**

Resilient recovery addresses setbacks caused by disasters for building back better, while offering an opportunity to stimulate political will in investing in long-term resilience. Resilient recovery involves strengthening capacities to deal with future risks thereby supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, resilient recovery requires humanitarian and development actors to work together in reducing risks and vulnerabilities. At the same time, adapting to the adverse effects of climate change



will require massive efforts and investments in disaster-resilient and **resilient infrastructure**.

- **Situations of conflict and fragility require special attention in recovery processes:**  
Conflict and fragility aggravate the impact of natural disasters by increasing vulnerability and make recovery processes far more challenging. Responding to fragile and conflict situations goes far beyond dealing with the physical impact of the conflict; it requires addressing policies and institutions as well as the underlying causes of conflict and risks of future conflict. Policies must adapt to the context of a fractured society and institutional settings. **Conflict sensitivity must be built into all recovery activities** to avoid unintended negative consequences for an open or latent conflict.
- **Preparing for recovery pays off:**  
In view of the increasing frequency, intensity and cost of disasters, investments in recovery preparedness are required, in particular in the most vulnerable and least-developed communities and countries. Strong institutional arrangements, financial mechanisms and policies support quicker and more effective recovery.
- **Better prepared communities recover faster:**  
The strength of local communities in responding to and protecting against natural hazards and climate change is key. In the event of disaster, studies show that 90% of survivors are rescued by their own neighbors, and this level of engagement continues through recovery. Local communities should be considered equal partners to governments in resilient recovery. **Local ownership and leadership** are essential for creating lasting solutions to cope with risk and shocks.
- **Women's participation as actors in recovery is essential for building back better:**  
The marginalisation and vulnerability of women living in poverty is worsened in the wake of conflicts, disasters and complex emergencies. Understanding the underlying drivers of the differentiated impacts of crisis and conflicts on women is a prerequisite for identifying ways to leverage the potential of women's leadership for more sustainable and inclusive recovery, peacebuilding and community resilience.
- **Cultural heritage is a central element of resilient recovery and reconstruction:**  
Cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, have increasingly been affected by disasters and have become the direct targets of systematic and deliberate attacks in numerous conflicts. The Sendai Framework underlines the importance of addressing the resilience of this critical infrastructure. Reconstructing cultural heritage is essential for a resilient recovery as it represents both an asset to be protected and a resource to strengthen the ability of communities and their properties to resist, absorb and recover from the effects of natural or human-made hazards.
- **The potential for partnering with the private sector should especially be pursued, particularly in the area of Risk Financing.** There is a clear economic case for resilient reconstruction and recovery, similarly to disaster risk reduction. Building Back Better, and Disaster Risk Reduction are relevant to economic planning, and could better involve the private sector actors as well as the competent authorities. An all of society engagement is important, in particular with the private sector. Resilient recovery and risk reduction call for **risk proofed and resilient investments**.