

3 Monitoring and accountability

Ensuring that the right arrangements are in place for monitoring progress made by countries on the future framework for disaster risk reduction is key to the success of that framework. This includes the need to provide a basket of indicators, providing clarity on the 'nuts and bolts' of monitoring, focusing on data management, improving systems to track and gauge disaster risk and ensuring an alignment between the monitoring systems of the future framework for DRR and the post-2015 framework on sustainable development.

Lead author: Aditya Bahadur

Propositions for a global monitoring framework for DRR²⁵

The focus on agreeing common targets and indicators for DRR and establishing national and global monitoring systems to track progress.

1

TARGETS SHOULD BE COMBINED WITH A METHODOLOGY THAT ASSESSES LEVELS OF DISASTER RISK

Only then can we adequately track progress. Given the short timeframe between now and 2030, assessing trends in observed disaster losses might give a false impression of success if countries or regions are lucky in avoiding severe disaster events in that period.

2

TARGETS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN BOTH THE SDGs AND THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK FOR DRR, USING IDENTICAL LANGUAGE

A single set of goals, targets and indicators spanning the SDGs and the post-2015 framework for DRR would clarify priorities, increase logic and coherence and minimise the work required to develop monitoring and reporting capacity. Such indicators could monitor inputs and outputs, such as the presence of plans or legislation, or the number of people covered by effective early warning systems or of school and health facilities built to hazard-resistant construction codes, linked to the hazard risk in the area.

3

NUMERICAL TARGETS AT A GLOBAL SCALE ACT AS AN EYE-CATCHING REFERENCE POINT AND ALSO HELP DIRECT ACTIONS

Differences between countries in terms of their potential to reduce risks, as a result of previous actions and exposure to certain types of hazard, mean that ‘one size fits all’ targets – such as halving disaster deaths – are not appropriate. Instead, countries should be encouraged to establish their own targets and to select from a basket of indicators, and then register these as part of the reporting process. This is likely to promote greater ownership and relevance.

SPACE SHOULD BE MADE FOR THE CREATION OF NATIONAL-LEVEL TARGETS

4

A DATA REVOLUTION IS NEEDED, INVOLVING THE SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION OF DATA ON DISASTER RISK AND LOSSES ACROSS COUNTRIES

This revolution can happen only if DRR targets and indicators are included in the SDGs and are treated as part of a wider movement to improve the quality and availability of sustainable development data. Without such data, no country can truly know if it is becoming more or less resilient to the impacts of hazards. Disaster risk data can be used to monitor progress over time, while disaster loss data can improve our understanding of the risk and how best to provide mitigation measures, as well as helping to create hazard maps and models.

5

A MONITORING METHODOLOGY FOR TRACKING NATIONAL PROGRESS ON DRR MUST FOCUS ON THE USE OF DETAILED DISASTER RISK INFORMATION

This should include high-resolution data on national building inventories, population data (including by socioeconomic group), mapped hazard data and DRR plans. This makes it possible to measure levels of disaster risk using the real experience of disaster losses to validate findings. Although there has been some progress, there will be a need for investment in setting up a technical support programme to address the challenges outlined here.

6

UPGRADES TO POVERTY DATA SHOULD INVOLVE MODULES ON SHOCKS

Where countries begin more comprehensive and regular monitoring of poverty dynamics, potentially by extending household surveys, these or other data collection methods should incorporate modules or questions on the impact of disaster events on poverty and other dimensions of human development, such as health or school attendance.

7

THE SDGs AND THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK FOR DRR SHOULD INCLUDE DRR TARGETS WITH THE SAME START AND END POINTS AND SYNCHRONOUS REPORTING PERIODS

Any mismatch of timeframes or irregularity of reporting periods will increase the workload for countries, stretching their capacity to monitor progress across a range of targets.

8

TRACKING PROGRESS ON DISASTER LOSSES AND RISKS REQUIRES NORMALISATION OF DATA FOR KEY VARIABLES, TO ALLOW FOR COMPARISONS BETWEEN TIME PERIODS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BASELINE TO ASSESS PROGRESS

As records of losses from only a few decades typically underestimate the impact of the most extreme disasters, the baseline should be set principally according to the assessed level of risk (or of losses) in that country, based on the use of proxies indicative of casualties and economic losses. The methodology to define the baseline must be consistent with the way in which progress is measured.

9

THE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR DELIVERING A GLOBAL MONITORING SYSTEM NEEDS TO INVOLVE MULTIPLE GROUPS AT DIFFERENT SCALES, EACH SERVING A DISTINCT FUNCTION

While the responsibility for monitoring progress on DRR lies with national governments, a facilitating body at international level, such as the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), is needed to collect data and help strengthen national and local monitoring capacity. Such a body would need to involve national statistical offices and other relevant governmental bodies in order to be able to collect the required data, including census data. This could be supported by regional technical agencies, with data also drawn from the scientific community to establish risk profiles, from technology companies and from other groups recording disaster losses, such as insurance companies. The institutional architecture should span the post-2015 framework for DRR and the SDGs so as not to create duplication.

10

WHILE GOVERNMENTS WILL CONTINUE TO SELF-REPORT ON PROGRESS, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCURACY WILL ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF INDEPENDENT GROUPS AT ALL LEVELS CAN CONTRIBUTE FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TO DRR

The original framework for monitoring progress on the post-2015 framework for DRR – the HFA Monitor – has suffered from being a self-reporting platform, with global and regional institutions unable to check claims or accurately compare reports between countries. An independent international technical group has an important role to play in helping to guide standards, assess data quality and transparency and support other potential processes of accountability, including country-to-country peer review.

How monitoring and accountability are included in the HFA

Para 30: ‘All States should endeavour to undertake the following tasks at the national and local levels, with a strong sense of ownership and in collaboration with civil society and other stakeholders, within the bounds of their financial, human and material capacities, and taking into account their domestic legal requirements and existing international instruments related to disaster risk reduction. States should also contribute actively in the context of regional and international cooperation, in line with paragraphs 33 and 34.’

Para 30 (d): ‘Develop procedures for reviewing national progress against this Framework for Action, which should include systems for cost benefit analysis and ongoing monitoring and assessment of vulnerability and risk, in particular with regards to regions exposed to hydrometeorological and seismic hazards, as appropriate.’

Para 31 (a): ‘Regional organizations with a role related to disaster risk reduction are called upon to undertake the following tasks within their mandates, priorities and resources: Promote regional programmes, including programmes for technical cooperation, capacity development, the development of methodologies and standards for hazard and vulnerability monitoring and assessment, the sharing of information and effective mobilization of resources, in view of supporting national and regional efforts to achieve the objectives of this Framework for Action.’

How monitoring and accountability are included in statements and consultations on the successor to the HFA

Mid-Term Review

‘There must be a senior, over-arching authority at government level where responsibility, and with it accountability, rests for setting policies, driving processes, and ensuring budget allocations for all the different aspects of disaster risk reduction. The effectiveness of National Platforms in informing and supporting this executive level of decision making can be assessed accordingly. The Mid-Term Review also records a call for the inclusion of accountability mechanisms to measure progress or lack thereof. Setting targets can help in accelerating HFA implementation through 2015. Targets can be nationally or regionally set, and self-monitored. There is a clear recognition that guidance alone is not sufficient and that standards to ensure quality in the delivery of the guidance are necessary. Standards can be developed for the implementation of disaster risk reduction at regional and national levels. There is a need for the international community to support governments in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in a more coherent and integrated fashion. The development of a joint action plan may help generate and crystallize such coherence’ (p. 11).

‘There are few examples of campaigns where enhanced awareness has translated into public action and greater accountability. These include examples from Central America and the Caribbean, where the media played an important role in increasing public awareness, including the use of radio soap-operas’ (p. 25).

‘It is important to recognize that following major disasters, the public becomes naturally more aware of the need to address social vulnerability and usually puts greater pressure on governments to undertake measures. This has led in many cases to improved

governance and accountability by local and national authorities, Colombia and India being two cases in point’ (p. 26).

‘A significant element of concern observed throughout the Review was that in several countries it is not clear who “owns” disaster risk reduction, and therefore it is hard to grasp who is in charge of what at the national level. This in turn leads to serious questions of institutional overlap, coordination, and ultimately accountability’ (p. 43).

‘The Mid-Term Review highlighted the need for governments to identify and develop synergies at national levels to ensure coordinated and coherent action on disaster risk reduction across different sectors of government. As noted above, this would help to clarify who is in charge of driving processes, setting policies, seeking budget allocations, etc. This is also related to the issue of accountability: if nobody is in charge then nobody is effectively responsible for making things happen’ (p. 58).

‘The Advisory Group emphasized the importance ... of generating a local demand for DRR, which in turn may bring about a higher level of accountability for action’ (p. 59).

‘Once a problem is understood and plans developed to address it, accountability mechanisms become a measure of progress in implementing the plans. Reporting and monitoring mechanisms therefore can be viewed as measures to increase government and public awareness of, and support for, implementation of the HFA. Regular reporting, such as that encouraged for the HFA Progress Monitor Report, helps keep disaster risk reduction high on national agendas. In this connection, it was suggested that reporting should be done annually, rather than biannually, as is the case at present. The HFA monitoring system was appreciated because, though based on self-reporting, it offers an opportunity for governments to exercise internal quality control. Workshop discussions held throughout the Mid-Term Review noted that the current reporting system, albeit complex and detailed, generates a consultative process amongst all DRR stakeholders in a given country, which is in and by itself positive. The current HFA monitoring system, however, does not include questions to governments about internal accountability mechanisms. Given the widespread interest during the Mid-Term Review on accountability mechanisms, the time is ripe to include such questions in the HFA Monitor so as to track such mechanisms at national levels as well as – most importantly – encourage governments to establish them in the context of multi-stakeholder strategies for disaster risk reduction’ (p. 60).

DRR law at the national level could help set frameworks for promoting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms (pp. 60–61).

‘The Mid-Term Review found that there is a need to define mechanisms and levels of application for effective accountability in HFA implementation at the international (including regional), national, and local levels. As noted in this section, effective accountability is about transparent and responsible action. Accountability measures that are jointly defined and monitored stand a greater chance of bringing about the action required to raise the level of priority for disaster risk reduction in the national agenda’ (p. 61).

‘The Advisory Group recommended supporting governments in defining and developing appropriate **accountability measures for disaster risk reduction**. An international system for global accountability for disaster risk reduction was also discussed by the Advisory Group, and it was noted that an explicit inclusion

of disaster risk reduction in the Millennium Development Goals would help in making governments accountable to report on action taken in this connection’ (p. 61).

Elements Paper

‘The enhancement of clarity in responsibility, accountability and monitoring of implementation may benefit from moving from a framework based on concepts and activities, as the current HFA, to one structured around specific and strategic public policies, which can be complemented by stakeholders’ commitments’ (p. 6).

Chair’s Summary

‘Accountability systems and effective rules concerning stakeholders’ responsibilities and opportunities for engagement are necessary. Ultimately, risk governance can only be rooted in a strong acceptance of personal responsibility and commitment to behavioural change’ (p. 3).

Synthesis Report

‘Establishment of clearer accountability lines, roles and responsibilities were identified as key related issues to be addressed in the HFA2’ (p. 19).

‘Many countries emphasized that regulation and law at the national level can essentially set out an accountability framework for DRR’ (p. 20).

RECOMMENDED READING

For an argument for common global goals, targets and indicators in relation to reducing disaster risks and losses across the SDGs and the post-2015 framework for DRR, see:
Mitchell, T., Guha-Sapir, D., Hall, J., Lovell, E., Muir-Wood, R., Norris, A., Scott, L. and Wallemacq, P. (2014) *Setting, measuring and monitoring targets for reducing disaster risk: Recommendations for post-2015 international policy frameworks*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

For a proposed new indicator system for monitoring progress on the post-2015 framework for DRR, see:
UNISDR (2013) *Towards the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Indicators of success: a new system of indicators to measure progress in disaster risk management*.

For highlights of a meeting between 21 disaster risk and development specialists on the past and future of disaster risk management, see:
Lavell, A. and Maskrey, A. (2013) *The Future of Disaster Risk Management: An On-going Discussion*. UNISDR.