

**International Conference: A Decade of the Sendai Framework
for Disaster Risk Reduction – Envisioning the Road Ahead**

**Paris, 26 September 2024
Room II**

Concept Note

Background & Context

The impact of natural hazards is increasing. The estimated annual economic loss from disasters for the world economy has substantially risen, from US\$70 billion in the 1990s to US\$170 billion in the 2010s (UNDRR, 2022). Moreover, if current trends persist, the number of disasters in the world could surge to 560 each year by 2030, marking a 40% increase during the lifespan of the Sendai Framework (UNDRR, 2022). Whereas, in the last 8 years, mortality rates from disasters have decreased in some countries, thanks to improvements in early warning systems in some countries, the number of affected people is on the rise. The average annual exposure to sudden-onset natural hazards (river floods, coastal floods, cyclones, earthquakes, and tsunamis) reached 184 million people in 2023 – an 8.6% increase since 2014.

Following the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement, particularly in reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience to disasters. Without integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures into development efforts, there is a higher likelihood of setbacks and challenges in achieving the SDGs.

Even before the UN declared the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), a precursor to UNDRR, UNESCO stood out among United Nations organizations for its systematic engagement in disaster risk reduction. This involvement included organizing seismological missions and contributing to the establishment of tsunami-alert systems.

UNESCO's initiatives are closely aligned with key international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reflecting our global priorities on Africa and gender, as well as priority areas such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and youth, through multiple hazards, multiple stakeholders, and multidisciplinary approaches. UNESCO has worked closely with entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to enhance support for the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Following the Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 where the Heads of State and Government, Ministers and High Representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the full implementation of the Sendai Framework, including its guiding principles and four priorities for action and approaching the significant 10-year milestone of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) provides a pivotal opportunity to continue assessing achievements, reaffirm dedication to disaster risk reduction (DRR), and catalyse efforts toward a more resilient and sustainable future.

Science plays a crucial role in the Sendai Framework, but the recent advancements in technology, including artificial intelligence, have significantly impacted our society. Innovative solutions have been piloted in the domain of DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA). UNESCO has leveraged these innovative solutions to drive DRR efforts in Africa and SIDS. To ensure the effectiveness of these solutions, it is imperative

to engage all members of society in this transformative journey toward advancing sustainable development and enhancing disaster response and mitigation efforts. During the first session, these innovative approaches will be closely examined, analysing best practices, identifying existing gaps, and determining additional needs to facilitate their adoption and dissemination.

The UN system and stakeholders are mobilizing to achieve the Secretary-General's ambition of ensuring Early Warning Systems for All (EW4All) by 2027. While prioritizing the delivery of Early Warning Systems (EWS) for those at risk to evacuate and save lives, resilient built environments will play a critical role in reducing casualties and economic losses for quick recovery. Leveraging UNESCO's expertise in DRR, our efforts have centred on enhancing the safety of built environments through the adoption of risk-informed policymaking, capacity building within the local construction sector, and raising awareness about potential risks. Additionally, we have taken the lead in convening a Global Task Force focused on the built environment, closely aligned with the seven global targets outlined in the SFDRR. In the second session, we will delve into the challenges and solutions related to the built environment, highlighting effective strategies for resilience-building.

UNESCO's approach to DRR also involves integrating cultural elements, nature-based solutions and indigenous knowledge into strategies and practices aimed at reducing the risk of disasters. This recognizes the invaluable insights and practices developed by indigenous communities over generations to adapt to and mitigate natural hazards. Amidst the rising threats of disasters to culture in all forms, UNESCO strives to promote the strengthened protection of culture, but also the mainstreaming of traditional knowledge systems, living heritage and cultural practices into DRR initiatives to leverage culture and heritage for community resilience, social cohesion, and sustainable and inclusive development. This holistic approach will be examined in the third session to explore the interconnectedness between cultural heritage, environmental conservation and DRR to lead to find effective and culturally sensitive solutions for disaster resilience.

Disasters can significantly impact economies to exert short term and long-term development effects on affected areas and countries. While it is evident that investing in prevention measures could mitigate human and economic losses, there is often reluctance to make such investments. In the fourth session, we will delve into the economics of DRR to understand the financial implications of disasters in contrast to the costs associated with preparedness measures.

Format

The event will be a hybrid modality held at UNESCO's Headquarters in Room II.

Organizers

UNESCO and the rest to be confirmed

Working Language

English and French interpretation

Contact persons.

For queries on the programme agenda and logistics

Mr Soichiro Yasukawa: s.yasukawa@unesco.org

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PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Time	Subject	Speaker
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Registration	
9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Welcoming speech	TBC
9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Plenary Reflecting on the impact of the Sendai Framework over the past decade, highlighting success stories, lessons learned, and challenges	UNDRR, UNESCO, Japan, EU
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK	
11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Session 1 Showcasing innovative approaches, technologies, and best practices in disaster risk reduction, with a focus on building resilience and promoting sustainable development	UNESCO Permanent Delegation International Organization Academic Institution Private Sector/Development Agency UNESCO Secretariat
12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	LUNCH	
1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Session 2 Addressing vulnerability in the built environment: challenges and solutions	UNESCO Permanent Delegation International Organization Academic Institution Private Sector/Development Agency UNESCO Secretariat
2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Session 3 Emphasizing the interlinkages between culture, nature-based solutions as well as local and indigenous knowledge systems to build a more resilient future	UNESCO Permanent Delegation International Organization Academic Institution Private Sector/Development Agency UNESCO Secretariat
4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK	

4:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.	Session 4 Economics of DRR	UNESCO Permanent Delegation International Organization Academic Institution Private Sector/Development Agency UNESCO Secretariat
5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Closing Renewing commitments to the Sendai Framework's goals and principles, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration and collective action in addressing disaster risk reduction	Lidia Brito, Assistant Director- General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO