

Post-2015 and SDGs



Nourishing people, Nurturing the planet

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Highlights

- Resilience must be embedded in the institutional, social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in efforts at all levels to fight hunger and malnutrition.
- The resilience agenda provides a common overarching framework for systematically linking and integrating risk reduction and crises management. It brings together development, policy, investment and humanitarian actors.
- Resilience addresses multi-hazard risks and underlying causes of vulnerability in an integrated way. The implementation of specific resilience measures must be anchored to sector-specific, short- and longer-term interventions.
- Cross-sectoral coordination to reduce disaster and climate risks for the resilience of livelihoods of the most vulnerable smallholders is fundamental. It will help to build bridges between existing silos.
- The promotion of resilience of livelihoods calls for synergies among technical good practices for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, food chain crises prevention, social protection, financial risk transfer and tenure of natural resources for the most vulnerable.

Resilience

Overview

The recurrence of disasters and crises undermines nations' efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and to achieve sustainable development. About 2.5 billion smallholder farmers, fishers, tree-dependent communities, livestock-owners, and small entrepreneurs who depend on the production, marketing and consumption of crops, fish, forests, livestock, and other natural resources are threatened by disasters and crises. Over the past 12 years, disasters have caused an estimated USD 1.3 trillion in damages, causing the loss of life of 1.1 million people and affecting another 2.7 billion. In 2012 alone, disasters caused economic losses estimated at USD 138 billion, continuing the recent upward trend and marking the first time that annual economic losses have exceeded USD 100 billion in three consecutive years.

Disasters and crises threaten the production of, and access to, food at local, national and, at times, regional and global levels. Shocks can strike sudden - like a flash flood or a violent coup d'état - or unfold slowly, like drought-flood cycles. Crises can occur as a single emergency, one can trigger another, or multiple events can converge and impact simultaneously with cascading and magnified effects. As an example, three years of repeated floods (2010 to 2012) have inflicted serious damage on Pakistan's economy, halving its potential growth. Pakistan lost a total of USD 16 billion to the floods in these three years, with estimated damages in agriculture amounting to USD 2 billion in flood damages on over 1 million acres of standing crops. Trends also suggest that the impact is felt in the country's ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The poor in rural and urban areas are disproportionately affected, with poverty and malnutrition serving as both drivers and consequences of inadequate livelihoods. The inability of families, communities and institutions to prevent, anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover and adapt from crises and disasters in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner is at the crux of the resilience agenda. This includes protecting and improving food systems against threats that affect food and nutrition security, agriculture and food safety. Weaknesses in resilience can have devastating consequences, triggering a downward spiral - household livelihoods and national development gains that have taken years to build are compromised or at times shattered.

Key challenges

Disaster risk and resilience received insufficient emphasis in the original MDG agenda, despite the close relationship between disaster impacts and sustainable development. Disaster risk reduction (linked to climate change adaptation) will require a more central consideration in a new post-2015 framework, if the objectives of sustainable development are to be achieved. Resilience is a pre-condition for sustainable development in general and more specifically for fighting poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

At the moment, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 provides a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities and risks to hazards, involving the identification of ways to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. In nearly 12 years, progress has been more qualitative than quantitative, but varies from one country to another. Overall, the main global achievement is the change of mind-sets from crisis management to risk reduction with an emphasis on prevention and preparedness.

The process to develop a successor arrangement to the HFA (informally referred to as HFA2) is already underway. The new instrument should i) build on the HFA ii) be coherent with the post-2015 development agenda and the 2015 climate change agreement iii) move from concept to local action - supported by strong national, regional and international planning frameworks, and iv) put a stronger emphasis on reaching the most vulnerable. The HFA2 can provide a clear framework to improve the linkages between humanitarian and development interventions to risk management, anchoring disaster risk reduction to key sectors such as agriculture, and addressing vulnerabilities beyond natural hazards such as transboundary plant pests and diseases, and food safety events.

What needs to be done?

The next sustainable development framework should focus on inclusive and integrated cross-sectoral risk management approaches, and should target the most vulnerable communities and nations. To effectively address reducing risks of disasters and crises, the post-2015 agenda would need to:

- Promote coherence between risk-related interventions at global, regional, national and local levels;
- Bridge gaps between emergency humanitarian aid and long-term risk informed development and investment actions (including through multi-year programming and longer term funding horizons);
- Address the dual and inter-related challenges of climate change and disaster risk reduction in an integrated way, across all policies and sectors and strongly anchor them within sectoral perspectives (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry etc.);
- Address vulnerabilities to threats and crises, addressing underlying causes of vulnerabilities, in conjunction with poverty, and marginalization/inequalities;
- Consider that beyond individual categories of disasters/shocks, understanding resilience requires a holistic analysis of the interactions between multiple and often cascading shocks and their economic, financial, social, political and environmental dimensions (in particular for natural disasters that occur in a context of protracted crises, violent conflict or post-crisis transition).