

# JOINT POSITION PAPER OF THE PREPAREDNESS WORKING GROUP

In the face of escalating impacts of crises and disasters, growing needs and shrinking funds, we come together to emphasize the importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) through better preparedness and anticipatory action and ensuring effective and efficient responses to disasters. As vulnerabilities deepen and crises become more complex and interconnected, we stand united in our commitment to keeping DRR high on the agenda – despite financial constraints.

To be effective, DRR must evolve: it must be (1) people-centred and locally led; (2) grounded in systemic and social solutions; and (3) aimed at addressing the underlying drivers of vulnerability that shape risk.

These three interconnected shifts are essential for building resilience that is inclusive, sustainable and future-proofed. Together, we advocate for a DRR approach that empowers communities and addresses the structural and systemic causes of crises.

## Key Messages 2025

### **1 DRR MUST BE DESIGNED WITH AND FOR PEOPLE AT RISK – THEIR PERSPECTIVES, CAPACITIES AND LIVED EXPERIENCES MUST BE AT THE CENTRE.**

DRR must follow an inclusive (e.g., relating to gender, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities) and people-centred approach, placing the perspectives, capacities and lived experiences of people at risk at the centre of all interventions. Meaningful involvement of all population groups, including those at disproportionate risk, must be ensured at all stages of DRR.

A prerequisite for this is trust-based engagement and the availability of data that is disaggregated at a minimum by sex, age and disability. It is essential for both policy-makers and practitioners to understand participation barriers and related underlying risk factors.

To ensure universal access to information:

- communication channels need to be trusted and accessible (e.g., relevant technology and communication)
- it must be understandable to all (e.g., local languages, simple language, formats accessible for persons with disabilities)
- it must be relevant and actionable (e.g., tailored to local contexts, priorities and the capacities of various groups)
- it must comply with local customs.

To ensure the acceptance and relevance of DRR interventions, they must be co-designed in collaboration with communities at risk, considering local leadership and local knowledge. When local leaders – from community groups, local councils and grassroots organizations – are empowered and resourced, they can drive context-specific, inclusive and timely DRR.

Stronger local leadership ensures that DRR is not externally imposed but locally owned, rooted in lived realities and cultural contexts. For instance, early warning systems need to be tailored to local realities and empower the most marginalised people, through strong links between community, education and national institutions for timely and inclusive alerts and actions. DRR efforts must be grounded in the specific socio-cultural, geographic and economic contexts of communities, and need to be adapted to fragile and urban contexts.

## 2 DRR REQUIRES SYSTEMIC AND SOCIAL SOLUTIONS AND SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM FUNDING COMMITMENTS.

The most pressing DRR gaps do not lie in tools, but in governance, inclusion, data, financing and accountability. To be effective, DRR must be rooted in context: risks rarely occur in isolation, especially in fragile or urban settings where conflict, climate shocks, poverty and displacement often intersect. One-size-fits-all approaches fall short in the face of such complexity.

DRR must be fully integrated with climate action, development planning and social protection, guided by local realities and inclusive governance. Long-term commitment, shared risk data, multistakeholder coordination and predictable financing are essential.

This also enhances accountability and continuity, enabling communities to move from dependence on short-term aid towards sustained resilience. This directly supports the 2025 call to “fund resilience, not disasters”,<sup>[1]</sup> so that resources are invested where needed to reduce risk, and where best to prevent repeated cycles of crises.

Only through integrated, proactive strategies can we protect lives and dignity. Reducing risks sustainably means moving beyond reactive measures to address the systems that drive vulnerability – laying the groundwork for lasting protection in an increasingly complex risk landscape.

## 3 DRR SHOULD NOT JUST MANAGE RISKS, BUT ALSO TRANSFORM THE UNDERLYING DRIVERS OF VULNERABILITY THAT SHAPE RISK.

DRR must transform the underlying conditions that create risk exposure and vulnerability by addressing root causes such as inequality and exploitation. Transformative DRR empowers communities, strengthens adaptive capacities, and enables people to build resilient and future-proof societies.

Today’s risks are increasingly complex, overlapping and interconnected. Effective DRR cannot be achieved in silos, and humanitarian response efforts alone cannot keep pace with rising risks. A transformative approach to DRR connects the entire disaster-risk cycle – from risk identification and reduction to preparedness, anticipation, response and recovery.

Building true resilience requires linking DRR and development strategies. Predictable, adequate funding is needed for integrated, sustained DRR to ensure responsible and accountable support for people at risk. Investing in DRR is not only cost-effective; it also saves lives and livelihoods and upholds dignity.

Governments, donors and institutions must step up with bold, sustained commitments – beyond the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – that make DRR inclusive, coherent and responsive to the complexity of today’s risks.

[1] UNDRR – International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction: <https://iddrr.undrr.org/>