THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AS A TOOL FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF) was launched in October 2000 to help the United Nations strengthen its understanding of conflicts, including their causes, dynamics, and possible solutions. CPPF supports UN policymaking and operations by providing UN decision makers with rapid access to leading scholars, experts, and practitioners outside the UN system through informal consultations, off-the-record briefings, and commissioned research.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a non-legally binding agreement designed to reduce existing levels of risk and prevent emerging risks. While references to conflict were deleted from the final text, Sendai addresses issues parallel to those that would need to be addressed in a prevention and sustaining peace agenda. The Framework, if properly implemented, would tackle three sets of factors that increase both disaster and conflict risks:

1. *Socio-economic factors*. The Framework aims to reduce vulnerabilities and prevent risks through action that tackles the underlying disaster and conflict risk drivers, such as the consequences of poverty, inequality, and marginalization. The Framework argues for a broader and more people-centered prevention approach to disaster risk reduction and calls for closer engagement with relevant stakeholders.

2. *Politico-institutional factors*. The Framework highlights the need for good governance in disaster risk reduction at the local, national, regional and global level. By working with national and local actors to help design DRR strategies that prevent the creation of risk and reduce existing ones, Sendai increases economic, social, health and environmental resilience, which is crucial to any prevention and sustaining peace strategy.

3. *Environmental factors*. The Framework calls for policy planning and preparation that not only considers the impact of climate change but also considers possible scenarios to help anticipate risks and mitigate them. Through a lens of prevention, preparedness, and resilience, the implementation of the Sendai Framework can lower existing climate-related risks.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction addresses a diversity of factors that put populations at risk of disaster and conflict. Sendai's focus on inclusive and participatory capacity building at the local, regional, national and global level that involves a diversity of stakeholders mirrors the debate centered on prevention taking place within the broader UN system. Many of the recommendations from the 2015 and 2016 reviews, including the need for system-cohesiveness and inclusion of a diversity of actors, the need for people-centered approaches to prevention, and the primacy of local and national actors in prevention align with the goals delineated within the Sendai Framework.

A prevention-driven United Nations will require creative and innovative solutions that force the system to break away from its bureaucratic and institutional silos. Considering DRR in general and the Sendai Framework specifically as a prevention tool incorporates into the prevention and sustaining peace discussions a sector of the UN that has historically operated independent and in isolation of the work of more prominent UN agencies. For the UN to work horizontally as "one UN" requires bridging these two agendas, as the drivers of conflict sit squarely with the risks of disaster. Multidimensional approaches to prevention that include a DRR lens would address the underlying causes of conflict and disaster-risk. The Sendai Framework sets out a roadmap on how this can be achieved.

INTRODUCTION

Secretary-General (SG) Antonio Guterres stated in his vision that "the United Nations (UN) must uphold a strategic commitment to a "culture of prevention"" and that the organization must work within a "peace continuum" that encompasses "prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development."[1] The SG's vision states that the reviews on peacekeeping[2] and peace architecture[3] are opportunities for the UN to "develop a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture." The SG's vision falls in line with the Security Council (SC) resolution 2282 (2016)[4] and General Assembly (GA) resolution 70/262 on "sustaining peace," which call for an "understanding of prevention as, not merely a tool for managing short-term crises, but rather an approach to sustaining peace in the long term."[5]

Other system processes that took place during 2015 and 2016 also highlight the importance of prevention as part of their own agendas. The 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) highlights the need to move from disaster management to disaster risk management and prioritizes action in disaster risk governance and risk reduction. Similarly, prevention is at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which connect the root causes of conflict through its multidimensional 17 goals. In preparation for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the SG's report called for a "cultural, operational and financial reprioritization towards prevention" and "sustained engagement that is focused on prevention and peacebuilding." The WHS stressed the need for, in line with the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda, "greater prevention and preparedness […] in our efforts to anticipate better and then act to prevent crises."

The SDGs connect the call for conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction by addressing the underlying causes of conflict, which mirror those of disaster risk: poverty and inequality, marginalization and exclusion, weak governance structures and institutions, and climate change, among others. Similarly, the WHS discussion linked conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction as they relate to prevention within the humanitarian system. Yet, while these two agendas highlight the linkages between conflict prevention and DRR, direct cross-references between them are missing.

The interactions between disasters and conflicts have been examined in the last decade by practitioners and academics, highlighting that these crises do not take place in a vacuum and are often related to more profound vulnerabilities that put populations at risk of both conflict and disaster.[6] Conflict, being development in reverse, increases the vulnerability of communities

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[1] Guterres, A. "Challenges and opportunities for the United Nations" Lisbon, April 2016.
[2] United Nations "Uniting our strengths for peace – politics, partnerships and people. Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations." New York, June 2015.
[3] United Nations "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture" New York, June 2015.
[4] United Nations, Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) [on sustaining peace], 27 April 2016.
[5] United Nations, General Assembly resolution 70/262 (2016) [on sustaining peace], 27 April 2016.
[6] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) "Disaster-Conflict Interface: Comparative experiences." Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), New York, 2011.

reducing their resilience to shocks. In turn, natural disasters become more devastative and more likely to further aggravate conflict. To break this conflict/underdevelopment trap, there is a need to systemically integrate disaster risk reduction into peacebuilding frameworks. Closely integrating these agendas will foster greater collaboration between these two communities.[7] Through a focus on resilience,[8] the links between conflict prevention, development, and disaster risk reduction are clearly defined conceptually. However, on the programmatic and operational side, this linkage has remained more challenging because of the UN's organizational structure, which has developed these two agendas separately. This is evident from the absence of any references within the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (AGE) to disaster risk. Nor are there references to conflict or conflict prevention within the Sendai Framework, as these terms were considered too 'political' during the negotiations.[9]

Recognizing that disaster risk and conflict are a result of similar underlying causes and multiple vulnerabilities, this paper will build on existing research on the conflict-disaster risk nexus. The following sections will examine the prevention-focused agenda being developed at the UN that builds on the recommendations of the HIPPO and AGE report as well as the disaster risk reduction agenda that builds on the Sendai Framework. Finally, this paper will identify key parallels between these two agendas, as well as some challenges for synergies. This study indicates that the Sendai Framework could be useful for prevention and contribute to the sustaining peace goals outlined in the UNSC resolution 2282 and UNGA resolution 70/626.

CONFLICT-DISASTER NEXUS

It is generally recognized that armed conflict is "development in reverse."[10] Countries at war divert an important part of their resources from productive activities to armed violence, resulting in a loss of revenues that would otherwise have been accrued through these productive activities, in addition to incurring losses as a direct result of the damage caused by armed violence.[11] Armed conflicts often destroy infrastructures (e.g. irrigation systems, dams, levees), which may intensify natural hazards or compromise warnings and evacuations.[12] The destruction of natural barriers such as forests further increases the risk of disaster and undermines sustainable development. Wartime destruction and disruption of the transportation infrastructure (roads, bridges, railroad systems, communication and electricity) weaken the ability to distribute clean water, food, medicine, and relief supplies, both to refugees and to

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[7] Walch, C. (2010) Climate change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Peace-building: Analysing the linkages and offering suggestions. CARE Liberia.

[8] Resilience is defined as: 'The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including thorough preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions," United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNSIDR), '2009 UNSDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction', Geneva, May 2009.

[9] Walch, C (2015) "Expertise and policy-making in disaster risk reduction". Nature Climate Change, 5(8):706-707.

[10] Collier, P. Elliot, L., Hegre H., Hoefler, H., Reynal-Querol, M. and Sambanis, N. (2003). Breaking the Conflict Trap. Civil War and Development Policy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., & Davis, I. (2004). *At risk, natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters* (2nd revised edition). London, USA: Routledge.

others who stay in place.[13] In addition, there is evidence that countries affected by conflict and natural disasters tend to rely on international relief leading them to under-invest in prevention.[14]

During armed conflict, the State may also have stronger incentives to actively marginalize and discriminate against certain groups or regions.[15] This may shape the consequences of a natural disaster for vulnerable populations. Armed conflict may also undermine the citizens' trust in the State, which may complicate pre-emptive disaster evacuation. In terms of disaster management, armed conflict can interfere with relief and recovery assistance. Participatory methods designed to empower and engage vulnerable groups may be difficult or impossible to implement during violent conflicts.[16] Insecurity limits the efficiency of disaster relief and the willingness of donors and organizations to work in these areas, as illustrated by the case of Somalia where most of the relief assistance is "remotely managed" from Nairobi. The application of existing knowledge in the mitigation of risks from extreme natural events is often difficult or impossible during violent conflict.[17]

Armed conflicts heighten vulnerabilities by triggering the displacement of large numbers of people and exposing them to disease and unfamiliar hazards in new rural or urban environments.[18] While migration is a coping mechanism both for violence and natural disasters, displaced populations lose their livelihoods, homes, lands and belongings and incur additional expenses to be able to survive.[19] Displaced populations become poorer and often more exposed to disasters, as they must settle in refugee camps, urban shanty-towns and other temporary shelters.[20] During conflict "people's options become more limited and the strategies pursued frequently involve extreme risk to people's security. In most cases, the strategies adopted are not voluntary or based on any real choice."[21] Individuals must make tough choices to minimize threats to their safety, often at the expense of livelihood assets or security; short-term security gains can come at the price of longer-term risks to their livelihoods.[22] "Without peace and stable, well-functioning political institutions it is hard to see how societies can address existing and future security challenges affected by climate change."[23]

In sum, armed conflicts have vastly negative effects on development, which disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) are a part of. At the same time, natural

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[13] Ghobarah, A., Huth, P., Russett, B., (2003), Civil wars kill and Main People – Long after the Shooting stops. *American Political Science Review* 97(2):189-202.

[14] Cohen, C., & Werker D. (2008). The Political Economy of Natural Disasters. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 52, 795-819.

[15] Pelling, M., Dill, K. (2010) Disaster politics: tipping points for change in the adaptation of sociopolitical regimes. *Progress in Human Geography* 34(1):21-37.

[16] Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., & Davis, I. (2004). *At risk, natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters* (2nd revised edition). London, USA: Routledge.

[17] Ibid.

18 Wisner, B. (2012) "Violent conflict, natural hazards and disaster" in Wisner, B., Gaillard, JC, Kelman, I. (2012) The Routledge Handbook of Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction, London, Routledge.

19 Maxwell and Fitzpatrick (2012) The Somalia famine: Context, causes and compilations. Global Food Security 1(1):5-12.

[20] Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., & Davis, I. (2004). *At risk, natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters* (2nd revised edition). London, USA: Routledge.

[21] Jaspars, S. and O'Callaghan, S. (2010) Livelihoods and protection in situations of protracted conflict. *Disasters* 34(2):165-182.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Buhaug, H. (2016) "Climate Change and Conflict: Taking Stock" *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 22(4): 331-338.

disasters may fuel on-going armed conflict by increasing people's grievances and the marginalization of already vulnerable groups. DRR can therefore be a form of prevention as it reduces the negative effects of disasters on people's lives and in turn their grievances, making them in the process less vulnerable to conflict. For these reasons, DRR and conflict prevention should be better integrated.

CONFLICT PREVENTION

The UN was created with a core mandate of prevention, as stated in the 1945 Charter that calls for "effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace."[24] Chapter VI of the Charter urges that "parties to any dispute [...] seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means,"[25] while Chapter VII tasks the SC with determining "the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken [...] to maintain or restore international peace and security."[26]

Despite the centrality of prevention, the UN appears to be operating in constant crisis-management mode, reacting to conflicts and escalations of violence rather than working to prevent these crises. The 2015 and 2016 reviews brought to the forth the need for the UN to become a prevention-focused organization in all aspects of its work. The UN's failures in prevention and the need to re-conceptualize what prevention means and how to operationalize it were at the center of the HIPPO and the AGE reports' recommendations, as well as the 2030 Agenda and the "sustaining peace" resolutions.

The SG's Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture report, "The Challenge to Sustaining Peace," recognizes that the gaps that exist in the organization's capacity for building peace are a result of systemic shortcomings. The report stresses the need to examine the UN's approach to peacebuilding by understanding that sustaining peace is a shared responsibility of the entire organization. Sustaining peace should include a diversity of actions including "diplomatic, political, human rights, economic, social and security areas" to address the root causes of conflict. Furthermore, the report highlights the importance of national ownership and the need for national stakeholders to undertake peacebuilding efforts to construct a "common vision of society." [27]

In response to the AGE report, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted dual resolutions on "sustaining peace." The resolutions define sustaining peace broadly as a

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[24] United Nations, Charter of the United Nations. 1945, 1 UNTS XVI. Chapter I, Art. 1. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/
25 United Nations, Charter of the United Nations. 1945, 1 UNTS XVI. Chapter VI, Art. 33. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/
26 United Nations, Charter of the United Nations. 1945, 1 UNTS XVI. Chapter VII, Art. 39. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/
[27] United Nations, Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture. 2015. Page 11. Available at: http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/07/300615_The-Challenge-of-Sustaining-Peace.pdf

"goal and process to build a common vision of a society" through a diversity of approaches including "preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development." The "sustaining peace" resolutions also emphasize the responsibility of the State and other national stakeholders in promoting this agenda and the need for the UN to make this a thread that flows through all aspects of its work.[28]

The 2016 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations' (HIPPO) recommendations focused on prevention, calling on the UN system to "pull together in a more integrated manner in the service of conflict prevention and peace." The report recognizes the lack of coordinated approaches to prevention and called for "a collective effort to prevent conflict" recognizing that there are "political, economic, social, cultural and environmental drivers of conflict." Stressing that prevention "is first and foremost a national responsibility."[29] SG Ban ki-Moon highlighted the need for the UN to "fulfil our [the UN's] commitment to prevention as the core function of the Organization."[30] SG Antonio Guterres placed prevention at the core of his vision for the UN, emphasizing the central role that States must play in prevention and the importance for the UN to cut across all pillars of its work. SG Guterres highlighted that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the "sustaining peace" resolution will help societies become resilient and better manage risks and shocks.[31]

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Until recently, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was considered a peripheral issue left to emergency managers and aid workers. The Sendai Framework's predecessor, the "Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Nations" was regarded as a technical guideline separate from the highly political issues discussed at the UN. Yet, the Sendai negotiation and the subsequent Framework brought attention to the issue of DRR by being the first international negotiation, preceding the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the World Humanitarian Summit.

In the lead up to the Sendai negotiations there were high expectations for an ambitious accord free from the constraints of legally binding agreements, many NGOs, UN agencies, the ICRC, and civil society organizations were unsatisfied by the rather lethargic final Framework. In summary, there were three main disappointments: lack of coherence with other global deals in

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[28] United Nations, Meeting Coverage "Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2282 (2016) on Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture" 27 April 2016. Available at: https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm
[29] United Nations, Uniting Our Strengths For Peace - Politics, Partnerships And People: Report Of The High-Level Independent Panel On United Nations Peace Operations. 2015. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446
[30] United Nations, General Assembly "The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operation" 2 September 2016. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/682
[31] United Nations, The Vision of the Secretary-General on Prevention, 3 May 2017. Available at: https://www.un.int/sites/www.un.int/files/Permanent%20Missions/delegate/attachment_the_vision_of_the_sg_on_prevention.pdf

2015, such as the SDGs and Paris, the vagueness of some of the targets, and the absence of armed conflict as a major driver of risk. While there is mounting evidence that armed conflict and vulnerability to natural disasters are highly correlated, most delegations saw this term as too political.[32] For many UN agencies and NGOs, this was a missed opportunity to link disaster risk reduction and conflict prevention.

Despite its shortcomings, Sendai remains a useful guideline that highlights prevention and government preparedness as the core of disaster risk reduction. It sets seven global targets for reducing disaster risk, paving the way for more concerted efforts to measure progress. In addition, countries have agreed to refer to "weak institutional arrangements" as risk drivers and the need to strengthen disaster risk governance to manage risk. This is important as a guiding principle as it recognizes the political nature of reducing risk, which requires greater transparency, accountability and the participation of stakeholders at all levels. During the global platform on DRR in Cancun in May 2017, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) highlighted its work in developing a detailed set of indicators and in supporting countries in collecting data to measure progress. Armed conflict and the potential of DRR for peacebuilding were not part of the debate in Cancun; however, the new Special Representative of the UNSG for Disaster Risk Reduction Robert Glasser wrote an op-ed where he highlighted the synergies between DRR and prevention.[33] According to Glasser, "disaster risk reduction promotes civility, civic mindedness and resilience, and therein lays a key element of its potential to boost understanding and contribute to sustainable peace."[34]

Disaster risk reduction has also been highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and during the World Humanitarian Summit. However, the WHS resulted in limited commitments on preventing crisis although it was one of the main expectations of the conference.[35] In sum, the international agreement most focused on prevention is the Sendai Framework. The following section will explore how this agreement can be a basis to prioritize prevention in the on-going debate on sustaining peace at the UN, recognizing that improving government's and populations' capacity to deal with current disaster risks can help improve their capacity to sustain peace and prevent conflict.

EXAMINING DRR AS A PREVENTION TOOL

The Sendai Framework, adopted by UN Member States in 2015, is a non-legally binding agreement designed to reduce existing levels of risk and prevent new emerging risks that are both man-made (industrial and technological disasters) and natural hazards. While references to conflict were deleted from the final text, the Framework tackles issues parallel to those that would need to be addressed in a prevention or sustaining peace agenda. It identifies many of the drivers of risk that can give rise to either conflict or a natural disaster when little or nothing

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[32] Walch, C (2015) "Expertise and policy-making in disaster risk reduction". Nature Climate Change, 5(8):706-707.
[33] Glasser, R (2016) "Tackling disaster reduces risk of conflict," UNISDR. Available at: https://www.unisdr.org/archive/51734
[34] Ibid.
[35] Bennett, Christina (2016), "World Humanitarian Summit: political breakthrough or fringe festival?" Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Available at: https://www.odi.org/comment/10401-world-humanitarian-summit-political-breakthrough-or-fringe-festival

is done to mitigate or eliminate them. For example, the Framework recognizes that "weak institutional arrangements" can be a risk driver. Weak institutions are found to be a most significant factor in driving the risk of armed conflict and instability.[36]

There are three sets of factors that increase both disaster and conflict risks. These are socio-economic factors, which include poverty, exclusion, and inequality (both on economic, ethnic, religious and cultural lines), and politico-institutional factors, such as corruption, weak, unfair or undemocratic institutions, and lack of transparency and accountability. The third set includes environmental factors, such as natural disasters, water scarcity, droughts, and climate change, which act as a 'threat multiplier' increasing the risk of armed conflict. The following section will explore how the Sendai Framework tackles these three sets of factors from a DRR lens and how it could therefore serve as a prevention tool.

- *Socio-economic factors addressed in Sendai*

The Sendai Framework highlights the multiple vulnerabilities that put people at risk and describes DRR as a tool to protect people and their "property, health, livelihoods, and productive assets, as well as cultural and environmental assets, while promoting and protecting human rights, including the right to development."[37] The Framework recognizes the diversity of causes that put people at risk of natural disasters, and calls for an "all-of-society engagement and partnership."

More concretely, Sendai aims to reduce vulnerabilities and prevent risks through action that tackles the underlying disaster risk drivers, such as the consequences of poverty and inequality, and the marginalization of certain groups. The Framework argues for a broader and more people-centered prevention approach to disaster risk reduction. It calls for engagement with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards. It also requires inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, focusing on those disproportionately affected by disasters. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted.

Sendai addresses some of the socio-economic factors that are associated with armed conflict, such as horizontal inequality and marginalization. It also highlights the protection of cultural and religious institutions, another important point to sustain peace in developing and developed countries. Empowering local authorities and civil society has also been found to prevent conflict and to sustain peace. In addition, the Framework promotes and supports the development of social safety nets as disaster risk reduction measures linked to and integrated with livelihood enhancement programs to ensure resilience to shocks at the household and community level. Social safety nets are among the most important conflict prevention and

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[36] Knutsen, Carl Henrik and Havard Mokleiv Nygard (2015). "Institutional characteristics and regime survival: Why are semi-democracies less durable than autocracies and democracies?" American Journal of Political Science 59.3, pp. 656–670
[37] United Nations, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, 2015. Available at: http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

peacebuilding activities that the World Bank is promoting in countries affected by armed conflict. In the Philippines, safety net programs financed by the Word Bank aim to reduce the risk from both disasters and armed conflict. Finally, the integration of women and their participation is critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programs; as peaceful societies tend to have higher participation of women in politics and administration.

- *Politico-institutional factors addressed in Sendai*

The Sendai Framework highlights the responsibility of the State and the importance of risk governance for successfully reducing disaster risk. The Framework highlights underlying institutional risks such as unplanned and rapid urbanization, poor land management and compounding factors such as demographic change, weak institutional arrangements, non-risk-informed policies, lack of regulation and incentives for private disaster risk reduction investment, complex supply chains, limited availability of technology, unsustainable uses of natural resources, declining ecosystems, pandemics and epidemics. Sendai highlights the necessity to continue strengthening good governance in disaster risk reduction at the national, regional and global level and improving preparedness and coordination for disaster response, rehabilitation and reconstruction. This requires enhancing the capacity and capability of States through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures.

The Sendai Framework aims at equipping State institutions to better prevent, respond and recover more efficiently from natural disasters. Sendai calls, for example, for the strengthening of national health systems and social safety-net mechanisms. Priority 2 of the Sendai Framework stresses the importance of disaster risk governance. Working with national and local actors, helping design DRR strategies that strive to prevent the creation of risk and work towards reducing current risks strives for economic, social, health and environmental resilience, all of which are crucial to any prevention and sustaining peace strategy. DRR governance requires working closely with local authorities, civil society organizations, communities and indigenous groups to develop their risk mitigation capacity. These types of processes, consultative and inclusive in nature, can help to bring communities together for a common goal that will benefit all groups. Using these types of approaches as a prevention strategy can help restore the social fabric without resulting in politicized and competitive processes over resources and power. In theory, a state that can prevent, respond and recover from natural disasters should also be more effective in preventing conflict.

The Sendai Framework, if properly implemented, reduces the negative impact of natural disasters on populations, therefore reducing people's grievances. Indirectly, a State that is responsive to people's needs before, during, and after disaster is likely to increase its legitimacy in the eyes of its population. Well-managed natural disasters can help strengthen the social contract between the State and the populace. The state of Odisha in India is a good example of how DRR can increase government legitimacy. Odisha invested in DRR following the 1999 cyclone that killed more than 10,000 people and led to the collapse of the state government. The new administration saw DRR as an opportunity to show its commitment to the welfare of

the population. Mainstreaming DRR at all levels of power in Odisha helped significantly reduce the number of fatalities during cyclone Phailin in 2013. While many factors explain the increase of trust towards local officials, DRR played a major role in increasing the legitimacy and popularity of state institutions. This is an illustrative example of how DRR can help increase the government's legitimacy. In the Philippines, the government responded proactively to typhoon Haiyan in the most marginalized and conflict-prone areas to buy the "hearts and minds" of the population, thereby reducing the risk of victims joining rebel groups. Very interestingly, a survey done by the Asia Foundation found that people affected by the typhoon had higher government approval rates compared to non-affected people. DRR in the Philippines can be understood as a sustaining peace strategy.[38]

- *Environmental factors addressed in Sendai*

Sendai identifies climate change as one of the drivers of disaster risk. Under priority 3, investing in DRR for resilience, Sendai promotes the mainstreaming of disaster risk assessments into land-use policy development and implementation, including urban planning, land degradation assessments and informal and non-permanent housing, and the use of guidelines and follow-up tools informed by anticipated demographic and environmental changes. The Framework calls for policy planning and preparation that not only considers the impact of climate change but also considers possible scenarios to help anticipate risks and mitigate them. DRR policies are designed to address weather-related hazards and can help mitigate future climate risks. Through a lens of prevention, preparedness, and resilience, the implementation of the Sendai Framework can reduce the aggravation of existing climate-related risks.

The Sendai Framework is an important instrument to reduce the environmental risks behind armed conflict. The literature on climate change and conflict shows that the government's role in managing natural disasters is an important factor reducing the impact of climate change on conflict. One of the main conclusions of the literature is that the link between natural disasters and conflict is most likely to be found in countries where States have failed to properly manage natural disasters and land tenure, neglecting their role in alleviating the needs of the most marginalized.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While the Sendai Framework focuses on preventing the underlying risks that put populations at risk of disasters, many of which are also the factors that make populations more vulnerable to conflict, there are three main challenges in using the framework for prevention.

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[38] Asia Foundation and Social Weather Stations (2014) Filipino public opinion on the impact of typhoon Yolanda: A year after. *Asia Foundation and Social Weather Stations* 27 November - 1 December 2014. https://www.sws.org.ph/pr20150814a%20-%20SWS%20Yolanda%202014.pdf

First, the Sendai Framework's State-centric approach to DRR assumes that there is a working and relatively fair State that can conduct and implement its recommendations. Therefore, weak and fragile States that are often the ones more in need of sound DRR policies are the least likely to have the capacity to implement them. As a result, the Framework's implementation will need to be conscious of the institutional capacities of the State, particularly in conflict-areas where a "do no harm" approach should be at the center of any DRR policies. The central role of the State in the implementation of the Sendai Framework may also be problematic in conflict regions where biases may result in uneven implementation, putting people at risk. For example, territories controlled by Al-Shabab in Somalia, the Taliban in Afghanistan or the MILF in the Philippines would present particularly challenging contexts for DRR policy implementation.

Second, the fact that references to "situation of foreign occupation and armed conflict" were deleted from the final version of the Sendai Framework is illustrative of Member States' uneasiness regarding these terms and the potential for politization. Member States may feel uncomfortable with the use of the Framework as a prevention agenda and might be perceived as another excuse for intervention.

Third, there is the issue of priorities. Embedding disaster risk management in fragile States and making it a part of the very culture of governance is key to the success of the 2030 Agenda and delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, acute emergencies will continue to take precedent over DRR, prevention and preparedness. More so, when States are working with limited resources, prioritizing the implementation of the Sendai Framework over more pressing emergencies like famines or droughts is unlikely. It is important to highlight that the Framework is a medium- and long-term prevention agenda that will reduce vulnerabilities in the long run and therefore should be at the front of State policies.

Having outlined these challenges, there is no doubt however that addressing disaster risk is a 'no regret policy' that has positive implications for prevention and sustaining peace. The challenge lies in using Sendai in a way that will not irritate its signatories who agreed upon DRR guidelines, not a conflict prevention framework. The prevention mindset that Sendai is putting forward is a first step in the right direction as it may guide prevention efforts within the UN system.

The Sendai Framework serves through a DRR lens as a structural and direct prevention mechanism that tackles a diversity of factors that put populations at risk of disaster and conflict. Sendai's focus on inclusive and participatory capacity building at the local, regional, national and global level that involves a diversity of actors and stakeholders mirrors the debate centered on prevention taking place within the broader UN system. Many of the recommendations that resulted from the 2015 and 2016 review processes, including the need for system-cohesiveness and inclusion of a diversity of actors, the need for people-centered approaches to prevention, and the primacy of local and national actors in prevention are parallel to the goals delineated within the Sendai Framework.

A prevention-driven United Nations will require creative and innovative solutions that force the system to break away from its bureaucratic and institutional silos. Considering DRR in general and the Sendai Framework specifically as a prevention tool incorporates into the prevention and sustaining peace discussions a sector of the UN that has historically operated independent and in isolation of the work of more prominent UN agencies, including the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Utilizing the comparative advantage that a DRR lens presents for prevention and benefitting from the plan of action outlined in the Sendai Framework is an opportunity to take the less obvious route for prevention.

For the UN to work horizontally as "one UN," it will require the bridging of these two complementary agendas, as the drivers of conflict sit squarely with the risks of disaster. Multidimensional approaches to prevention that include a DRR lens would help tackle the underlying causes of conflict and disaster-risk. The Sendai Framework sets out a roadmap on how this can be achieved.

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