Applying Science and Technology to Disaster Risk Reduction

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Professors Dilanthi Amaratunga and Richard Haigh took part at the Multi-Stakeholder Segment, Working Session: **"**Applying Science and Technology to Disaster Risk Reduction Decision-Making" as members of the Science and Technology Major group at the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan.

As impacts of natural and human-induced disasters continue to increase, action is necessary across sectors from the local to the global scale. Achieving disaster risk reduction and increased resilience require increased collaboration across governments and key actors to generate, share and make a more effective use of scientific data and information, identify knowledge and capacity gaps, and co-produce solutions that can effectively support decisions and actions towards disaster risk reduction and resilience building. A post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction includes requests from Member States for science and technology knowledge transfer and capacity development.

This session set the agenda for the future of science and research for disaster risk reduction and explore new partnerships for promoting evidence-based disaster risk reduction for sustainable development. The session also discussed the proposal of the scientific community to re-initiate an international scientific advisory mechanism for disaster risk.

This session also:

- Highlighted particular successes in applying science and technology for disaster risk reduction decision-making and confirmed requirements from Member States
- Announced commitments of the Scientific and Technological Community to support the implementation of the post-2015 framework for DRR
- Identified next steps (road map) for the Scientific and Technical community to implement the proposed commitments
- Launched the ISDR Science and Technology Advisory Group March 2015 report: *Science is used for disaster risk reduction*

The Scientific and Technological Community Major Group (STMG)

The UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio (1992) agreed to understand civil society in the context of sustainable development negotiations at the UN as the nine Major Groups. The outline and rationale was explained in detail in Chapter 23 of Agenda 21 and STMG is one of the nine major groups. Major Groups can engage in discussions with States, Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN entities in informal and formal spaces.

The Scientific and Technological Community Major Group (STMG) has been steadily engaged in this process highlighting the possible contributions that science could make to the post 2015 framework for DRR, especially by promoting the availability, accessibility and use of scientific information and strengthening the interface between science, policymakers and practitioners through a partnership approach that would mobilise and better coordinate existing initiatives and networks.

The aim of this partnership is to implement evidence-based decision-making on disaster risk reduction through actionable research co-designed and co-produced with stakeholders, assessment and synthesis of scientific evidence that can support the work of policy-makers and practitioners, development of methodologies, standards, metrics to monitor progress on DRR and resilience building, and improving our understanding of underlying risk factors.

The Science and Technology Major Group made a series of inputs (http://www.wcdrr.org/preparatory/prepcom2/statementslist) via statements in the technical workshops and co-chairs dialogue on issues ranging from the contribution that science can make in the implementation of the Framework, the links between the post-2015 agenda and DRR and the integration of DRR with financing.

While member states recognized the importance of science for disaster risk reduction, there was agreement that many countries struggle to connect science with decision-makers at the national and local levels.

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