

Plenaries of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 (MTR SF)

Overview of the MTR SF Plenaries

The Plenaries of the **Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (MTR SF)** provide States and non-State stakeholders the opportunity to engage in a moderated exchange and discussion to:

- take stock of progress in implementing the framework since adoption,
- examine changes in context and new emerging issues since 2015, and those expected in the period to 2030,
- examine renovations to risk governance and risk management that can accelerate and amplify actions pursuing the achievement of the outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework, and risk-informed regenerative and sustainable development.

The Plenaries form a central part of the consultations of the MTR SF to be included in a report on the MTR SF, which will inform a **high-level meeting of the General Assembly in New York on 18 and 19 May 2023**. As mandated by the General Assembly (76/204), the meeting will adopt a concise and action-oriented **political declaration** to renew commitment and accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework. The outcome of the MTR SF can also inform the quadrennial review of the SDGs at the ECOSOC **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** in July of 2023; the **SDGs Summit** and the **UN Secretary General's Summit of the Future**, at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2023; and the **global stocktake of the Paris Agreement (GST)** at COP28 in November 2023.

The three MTR SF Plenaries will take place over two days in hybrid format¹ and inform the outcome of the Global Platform 2022. Presided over by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Host Government, MTR SF Plenary sessions are open to all registered participants of the Global Platform 2022, and are guided by the Concept Note of the MTR SF, the Guidance for Member States, and the Guidance for Stakeholders, which can be accessed [here](#).

To explore the themes of the three MTR SF Plenary sessions, visit [the Agenda](#).

¹ The MTR Plenaries will take place simultaneously in-person and online

Background to the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework

With climate breakdown and the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrating the consequences of a failure to better understand and manage risk, and with the achievement of the goals and outcomes of the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in jeopardy, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) decided² to hold a “*midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030*” (MTR SF).

A retrospective and prospective stocktaking and review exercise, the MTR SF will assess progress made, examine challenges experienced in preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk, explore context shifts and emerging issues, and so identify renovations to risk governance and risk management able to contend with 21st century challenges. It will explore aspects of the integration of risk reduction into development, humanitarian, and climate action, allowing the re-examination and redress of our relationship with risk.

Through consultations and review by States and other stakeholders, the **MTR SF** will “assess progress in integrating disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels, identify good practice, gaps and challenges and accelerate the path to achieving the goal of the Sendai Framework and its seven global targets by 2030”³.

States recognised that “the Sendai Framework....provides guidance relevant to a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and [...] to identify and address underlying drivers of disaster risk in a systemic manner”⁴.

The recommendations of States and non-State stakeholders seek to amplify and accelerate action in all sectors and at all scales through to 2030 and beyond, in pursuit of the outcomes and goals of inter alia the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and risk-informed sustainable and regenerative development.

As both a retrospective and prospective exercise, the MTR SF process aims to:

- Prompt deep reflections in the COVID reality on how we understand the systemic nature of risk, our relationship with it, and how we can reduce disaster risk and loss.
- Support integrated partnerships and actions that harness what we know and what we do, to shape how we choose, interact and decide.
- Build collective and relational intelligence to establish new ways of knowing risk and new forms of collaboration that mean risk governance and management mechanisms and approaches are no longer overwhelmed.
- Develop policy options, and new modalities of implementation through recommendations for Governments and other stakeholders to accelerate realisation of the goal and outcome of the Sendai Framework and risk-informed sustainable development.

Consultations and review will generate critical analysis to assist countries and stakeholders develop recommendations for prioritised, accelerated and integrated international, national and local cooperation and action in the period 2023 to 2030, and to initiate nascent thinking on possible international arrangements for risk-informed sustainable development beyond 2030.

² UNGA Resolution [A/RES/75/216](#) of 29 December 2020

³ idem

⁴ idem

The Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework Plenaries

The Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework Plenaries (MTR SF Plenaries) will be moderated in-person and online discussions.

Co-Chairs:

- **Mami Mizutori**
Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

and

- **The host Government**
(@ Ministerial-level; to be announced)

The MTR SF Plenaries will be held⁵ on:

- Thursday, 26 May from 14:00 – 16.30
- Thursday, 26 May from 16:30 – 19:00
- Friday, 27 May from 14:00 – 16:30

⁵ All times WIB+07

MTR SF Plenary Theme

MTR SF Plenary 3:

Rethinking sustainable development; investing with strategic foresight to build resilience.

Summary:

The operating environment in which the Sendai Framework and other frameworks are being implemented at global, regional, national and local levels, has altered immeasurably since 2015, not least with the COVID-19 pandemic and global warming through anthropogenic climate change. Both demonstrate the systemic nature of risk, and demand urgent and fundamental reflections on how the world seeks to understand, collaborate and manage risk within the context of sustainable and regenerative development in the 21st century; now, to 2030 and beyond.

This Plenary will therefore initiate a forward-looking discussion on how we address risk in a way that is timely, coherent and is drawn from diverse knowledge systems, and explores the shifts in values, perspectives and paradigms that underpin current efforts to rethink approaches to sustainable development.

While convening this discussion, the Plenary will explore options of enhancing or renovating existing arrangements and tools present in the multilateral system to identify, govern and address risk to build resilience in a rapidly destabilizing world.

The Plenary will specifically talk about institutional and collaborative arrangements within sustainable development, that can be 'fit for purpose' and thus more 'effective' for developing capacities to foster relationships, collective endeavour and coherence that span institutional silos and levels. This includes: adaptive governance and dispersed coordination practices; inclusive novel partnerships composed of different sectors and actors working vertically and horizontally in an integrated manner, while continuing to strengthen the role of all stakeholders in decision making through an *all of State institutions*⁶ and *all-of-society*⁷ approach.

This Plenary will further discuss identifying key attributes of a multilateral system that can effectively address risk and build resilience, particularly in the context of imminent and emerging risks. It can also discuss options to actualize these attributes through a range of measures.

The discussions will focus on enhancing the effectiveness, accountability and inclusivity of the multilateral system, including by addressing fragmentation, gridlock and lack of agility, and greater engagement of local communities. It will also consider suggestions on how to end the rigid silos that impede the address of critical issues, and which contribute to risk governance and risk management approaches that promote divergence rather than convergence and coherence.

⁶ Guiding Principles of the Sendai Framework – Paragraph 19(e)

⁷ Guiding Principles of the Sendai Framework – Paragraph 19(d)

Context

As with the rapidly changing riskscape and our understanding of it, the architecture and mechanisms of risk governance and risk management at the international and national levels available to address these risks are also evolving. These bring both challenges and opportunities.

Contemporary policy measures and initiatives are moving in the direction of being more receptive to a more complex understanding of risk that more accurately depicts the interdependent relationship between the economy, environment, and society. Such risk reduction measures and initiatives, however, are often still hampered by aspects of ‘sectorisation’, ‘departmentalisation’ and artificial separation by mandate, which can result in, for example, structural inefficiencies, or a lack of public trust when multiple perspectives and the contextual agency of local communities are not adequately incorporated. Such measures and initiatives often also fall short of accounting for the scope of risks and hazards highlighted in the Sendai Framework, do not consider scenarios for catastrophic risks, nor invest adequately in flexibility to enable pre-adaptative capacity. Within this context, reform and realignment are imperative.

The current disposition of the multilateral system has been successful in ‘agenda setting’ by developing i) global frameworks (e.g., the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, etc.) that, in part, address critical hazards and risks, and ii) also developing a framework dedicated to, *inter alia*, the governance of these hazards and risks (Sendai Framework). Taken together, these frameworks provide the basis for an *all-of-society* framework for risk governance at the global and regional levels.

However, as demonstrated so starkly by COVID-19 and other intersecting and cascading risks and hazards (both current and emerging), the global risk governance architecture – and the risk management mechanisms that emanate from it – are inadequate⁸. This situation is compounded by the fact that an increasing number of stakeholders now view the multilateral system and its institutions as not being ‘fit for purpose’ to govern and adapt effectively to today’s realities. These institutions are often seen as inadequate to effectively address risk in their own domains, thus making addressing the systemic nature of risk even harder. Deficient governance can lead to initiatives with insufficient commitment – political and economic; further increasing knowledge gaps.

The Plenary may therefore explore renovations that, for example:

- facilitate novel collaboration among multilateral entities that allow earlier and better identification of anomalies and signals of risk creation and propagation to be identified,
- that subsequently trigger timely transdisciplinary, inter-institutional action to explore and implement pre-adaptive approaches to prevent and reduce risk, and
- ultimately support reliable ‘monitoring’ and ‘follow up’ on the implementation of policies intended to address these risks and build resilience.

⁸ a reality that is largely mirrored at the regional and national levels

Broadening the Conversation

In 2019, the *Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)*⁹ identified the centrality of “building greater resilience against shocks...at the societal level” whether minimising “the spread of infectious diseases due to human mobility and climate change”, or “financial volatility that can impact individual incomes and the health of economies”, and argued that implementation of the Sendai Framework can support the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and others.

The report identified six essential entry points and four levers to be applied, where the interconnections among social, ecological, economic and political systems exist for renovating our relationship with risk, and accelerating the transformative power of sustainable development.

In exploring these entry points¹⁰, the GSDR examined levers that can be applied to correct the balance between achieving human well-being and its social and environmental costs; the first of these levers being governance¹¹. While recognising that governance approaches need to be “diverse, tailored, innovative and adaptive”, the GSDR emphasises the importance of “using science to support decision-making and develop early-warning systems that can pick up and authenticate weak signals”, of creating institutions and modalities of collaboration “that deal with uncertainties and risks”, and identifies “opportunities for moving in pragmatic, open and pluralist directions in global governance”.

Building on *inter alia* the UN Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR)¹² and the GSDR, the Secretary General’s *Our Common Agenda* report¹³, aims to ensure that the UN system is equipped to act more systematically for the long-term. This includes a proposal on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in foresight and planning through the establishment of a *Futures Laboratory*, and regularly presenting a *Strategic Foresight and Global Risk Report* once every five years¹⁴. It discusses how the current reliance on GDP to determine access to concessional finance and support, could be redressed by *inter alia* giving greater weight to indices of vulnerability to external shocks and systemic risk criteria¹⁵.

Synchronized with the GAR, the GSDR, and consistent with the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report 2022¹⁶, the proposals contained in the *Our Common Agenda* report have the potential:

- for streamlining vast institutional complexity and fragmentation,
- by convening processes and mechanisms that enable broad agreement for pressing challenges across intersecting, competing, and overlapping interests, and

⁹ Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, (United Nations, New York, 2019).
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/gcdr2019>

¹⁰ human well-being and capabilities; sustainable and just economies; food systems and nutrition patterns; energy decarbonization and universal access; urban and peri-urban development; and global environmental commons

¹¹ The three other levers being: economy and finance; individual and collective action; and science and technology

¹² <https://www.undrr.org/building-risk-knowledge> <https://gar.undrr.org/> <https://www.undrr.org/gar2021-drought>

¹³ United Nations (2021), *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General*. ISBN: 978-92-1101446-4
<https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>

¹⁴ The report also discusses an *Emergency Platform* to respond to complex global crises. The platform would not be a new permanent or standing body or institution but rather a set of pre-agreed understandings about how to work together in the face of a crisis with global reach.

¹⁵ The Secretary-General also calls for a Summit of the Future to be held in 2023.

¹⁶ IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2022)

- to enable flexible operational and institutional arrangements that are more proactive and include self-organised community structures that operate prospectively, and thus build greater pre-adaptive capacities in fast changing environments.

Proposals that can ultimately strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the United Nations within the global multilateral system, specifically in relation to addressing risk and building resilience.

Guiding Questions:

1. How has the Sendai Framework, together with other landmark UN agreements such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the Aichi Targets and the Convention on Biological Diversity, contributed to the shift towards risk-informed sustainable development and associated transformations, including of the multilateral system?
2. What does effective multilateral risk governance and risk management look like?
3. How can the UN system be fit-for-purpose to better support this?
4. How can this be systematically informed by multiple, diverse knowledge systems – including conventional science, and indigenous, local and traditional knowledge systems?
5. How can the multilateral sustainable development coordination and support architecture better understand, incorporate, and thus effectively address risk, inspire activity in support of the global commons, and deliver public goods?
6. In pursuing risk-informed sustainable development, how can the proposed *Strategic Foresight and Global Risks Report*, the *GAR* and the *GSDR* be better aligned?
 - a. How can these reports be better informed by, *inter alia*, the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO), IPCC Assessment Reports, and the Global Environmental Outlook?