

**Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
Asia Pacific Civil Society Joint Statement**

on Progress in Implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
Manila October 2024

Asia Pacific civil society organisations (CSOs), following up on the commitment made at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in Brisbane in 2022, collectively reaffirm our commitment to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015-2030. Together, we represent the voices of diverse communities across urban and rural landscapes, emphasising inclusivity, resilience and effective action on DRR.

1. In accelerating efforts to achieve the goals and indicators of the Sendai Framework by 2030, civil society organisations in Asia and the Pacific call on governments and stakeholders, together with civil society, to redouble their efforts towards a transformative approach to disaster risk reduction based on our commitments outlined in the Sendai Framework:
 - a. Community empowerment and capacity building: Priority will be given to empowering local communities, especially marginalised groups affected by crisis and disasters such as women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous peoples, children and youth, vulnerable fisherfolks, farmers, urban poor and informal settlers to actively participate in DRR initiatives. This will promote local ownership, resilience and inclusive DRR. We also encourage the integration of accessible and locally relevant technologies, such as AI, ML, Drones, satellite-based monitoring and mobile applications, for strengthening disaster preparedness and early warning systems. These technologies should be tailored to address community needs, providing real-time data and risk assessments that empower local decision-making and strengthen multi hazard preparedness at all levels.
 - b. Gender-responsive and inclusive governance: Ensuring that the voices and leadership of women, children and youth, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups are included in decision-making processes in all sectors and at all levels.
 - c. Improved risk communication through transboundary and cross-border cooperation for DRR: Improving data collection and analysis for systemic risk reduction, particularly through disaggregated and downscaled data with a focus on vulnerable populations. In order to achieve more sophisticated risk communication, greater transboundary and cross-border

collaboration among Asia-Pacific nations is essential to address transboundary disaster risks such as floods, earthquakes and pandemics. This should involve sharing data, information, knowledge, technology and best practices, as well as fostering coordinated responses to build resilience across the region.

- d. Links to sustainable development and climate change: recognising that effective DRR is closely linked to sustainable development, integrating DRR into broader dialogues through effective mobilisation of resources, cooperation and innovation, and aligning strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to maximise impact and use of resources.
 - e. Strengthening Public Health Delivery Systems for Resilience: The critical role of public health delivery systems in disaster risk reduction, especially during complex health emergencies, should be emphasised. Ensuring that healthcare services remain accessible and functional for vulnerable populations during crises should become an integral core element of DRR strategies.
 - f. Livelihood Protection: Asia-Pacific CSOs emphasise the need to protect the livelihoods of communities, particularly of unorganised informal workers, farmers, petty traders and small-scale entrepreneurs, who are disproportionately affected by disasters. Post-disaster recovery should not only focus on rebuilding infrastructure but also on restoring economic activities to ensure long-term resilience and sustainable livelihoods. This shall further enhance the inclusiveness of our DRR efforts. The efforts are particularly with focus on small farmers and small businesses.
 - g. Localisation: Asia-Pacific CSOs would like to see more effective and inclusive engagement with the CSOs by National and Provincial Governments in the Asia Pacific region by involving them in collaborative partnerships for revitalising the National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRRs) and would urge the provincial governments to explore ways of initiating such DRR platform efforts at local levels led by CSOs, local self-government institutions and CBOs.
2. Policy support for risk management and mitigation to extreme heat: CSOs would like to promote and strengthen wide-spread practices on extreme heat risk management - heat action plans, and mitigation particularly for worker protections, small businesses and small landholder farmers and women farmers. CSOs strongly like to push the agenda for infrastructure improvements like public cooling centers and urban greening initiatives. Schools and hospitals with extreme heat emergency preparedness plans and protocol. In increasing financial resources for DRR,

Asia-Pacific civil society organisations (CSOs) urge governments, bilateral and multilateral donors and the private sector to actively work to increase financial allocations for DRR, including investing in expanding the role of CSOs and gender-responsive engagement in anticipatory action, recognising the following:

- a. Approaches and instruments: Diversifying sources of finance, with a focus on public-private partnerships and innovative financial instruments such as DRR-focused resilience bonds, and recognising and providing the necessary enabling policies and regulations to increase the space for public funding to CSOs, such as pooled funds, local CSO consortia, national intermediaries, etc., based on an appropriate accountability framework. Risk transfer through insurance has been proved instrument require wide-spread integration in development efforts and not stand-alone instruments.
- b. Actions promoted by CSOs: Engage in meaningful policy dialogue and advocacy to highlight the need for increased investment in DRR and push for the integration of the Anticipatory Action Trigger/ Protocol into national budgets and development plans. Work together to promote regional fundraising that responds to local needs and priorities, and consider CSOs as partners in ensuring that funds reach the most vulnerable communities. Lastly, volunteer ourselves for disaster preparedness and risk reduction and build resilience through voluntary action and service, both through part time and full time work.
3. Ensure that no one is left behind: Support a rights-based approach that emphasises the participation of all segments of society, including persons with disabilities, in line with international frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This is essential to ensure that DRR initiatives are inclusive, accessible and equitable. Civil society organisations are acutely aware of and deeply concerned about the shrinking of civic space in the Asia-Pacific region, which limits their ability to ensure that vulnerable populations are adequately informed and able to actively participate in DRR initiatives. This constraint affects their ability to respond effectively to disasters and to better recover from them. It is essential to address these challenges in order to uphold the principles of inclusiveness and rights-based engagement in all DRR efforts.
4. Contributing to the localisation and promotion of DRR in urban and rural contexts: building local capacity through education, training, volunteering and direct engagement with communities; promoting women's and youth leadership; ensuring that local knowledge and practices inform DRR plans; and facilitating dialogue between urban and rural stakeholders. CSOs in Asia and the Pacific are consolidating to become better organised, explore local

solutions to common challenges and bridge resource gaps through shared learning experiences. Acknowledge the participation of communities through volunteering in disaster response-related initiatives, further complement the joint-efforts for disaster response. However, CSOs caution that the nomenclature of 'localisation' itself has been used interchangeably with different connotations in both the DRR and humanitarian and development sectors, and therefore requires clarity to be effective.

5. State of early warning systems, anticipatory action and the way forward: Recognising the significant progress made in the region, but also the gaps in the implementation of global initiatives such as the UN Secretary-General's Early Warning for All and Anticipatory Action, further action is needed to address the role and contribution of civil society organisations. CSOs are concerned that uneven implementation and gaps in ensuring the accessibility of early warning systems across countries in the region will create dangerous gaps in early warning, putting vulnerable communities at risk. In addition, it is crucial to have early warning systems and anticipatory actions that ensure vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, have access to critical information promptly and effectively. In the Pacific, improving early warning systems, Anticipatory Actions (including better Cash Voucher Assistance) and their accessibility is a top priority due to our exposure to frequent natural disasters. This includes providing information in accessible formats, such as sign language, braille and audio messages, and ensuring physical access to shelters during disasters. Putting these measures in place will help ensure that early warning systems are inclusive and effective for all communities.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Asia-Pacific region stress the need for collaborative action, increased funding and a committed focus on inclusive and sustainable approaches to DRR that also address climate change.

Based on deliberations during the APMCDRR 2022 in Brisbane, Australia, and consultations throughout the preparatory process for the APMCDRR 2024 in Manila, Philippines, CSO leaders in Asia and the Pacific hereby establish the Asia-Pacific CSO Forum as a platform for is a collaborative platform for CSOs in the region with a particular focus on disaster risk reduction, climate change and humanitarian response in the context of development and conflict.

We are committed to upholding the principles of the Sendai Framework to ensure a resilient future where the impact of disasters is systematically reduced and everyone has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their circumstances.

Endorsement

