



## **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2023**

**#ResilienceForAll #BreakTheCycle #DDRRDay**

### **FIGHTING INEQUALITY FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE**

#### **Introduction to the Campaign:**

In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly designated 13 October as the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) to promote a global culture of disaster risk reduction. The International Day is an opportunity to acknowledge global progress in preventing and reducing disaster risk and losses.

The 2023 edition takes place shortly after the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, where the UN General Assembly in May 2023 adopted a political declaration to accelerate action to strengthen disaster resilience.

The Day's theme aligns with the Sendai Framework, the international agreement to prevent and reduce losses in lives, livelihoods, economies and basic infrastructure. It has seven global targets and 38 indicators for measuring progress. The Sendai Framework complements the Paris Agreement on climate change, with both frameworks interlinked to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2023, the International Day will look at the reciprocal relationship between disasters and inequality. Inequality and disaster vulnerability are two sides of the same coin: unequal access to services, such as finance and insurance, leaves the most at risk exposed to the danger of disasters; while disaster impacts exacerbate inequalities and push the most at risk further into poverty.

#### **Background on the Brutal Inequality of Disasters:**

The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, has outlined the scale of the challenge, "Our world is plagued by a perfect storm on a number of fronts. Start with the short-term, a global economic crisis. The outlook is bleak. We see deepening inequalities and a rapidly unfolding cost-of-living crisis – affecting women and girls the most. Supply chain disruptions and an energy crunch. Soaring prices. Rising interest rates along with inflation. And debt levels pounding vulnerable countries."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres' remarks at the 2023 World Economic Forum, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21661.doc.htm>



This comes in the context of growing disaster risk, which is further exacerbating inequality and deepening vulnerability. On our current trajectory, by 2030, the world will face some 1.5 significant disasters per day.<sup>2</sup> The majority of countries that face high disaster risk are also among those with the highest share of the population living under the national poverty line. For example, The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction found that among the top 20 most vulnerable countries, 90% are middle- and lower-income countries with an average national poverty rate of 34%. This compares to less than 0.5% for the countries on the opposite end of the risk scale.<sup>3</sup>

Research from recent decades shows that it is generally the poor who suffer most from disasters. From 1970 through 2019, the UN found that 91% of all deaths from weather, climate, and water hazards occurred in developing countries. The World Bank found statistics in the same range, with 82% of disaster-related deaths occurring in low and lower-middle-income countries.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, current research shows that about 75% of extreme weather events are currently connected to climate change, fueled by carbon emissions.<sup>5</sup> The countries experiencing the greatest losses from disasters are those who contributed the least to the problem. In effect, inequality facilitates the transfer of disaster risk from those who benefit from risk-taking to those who bear the cost.

Within countries and communities, inequality is equally powerful in determining who suffers from a disaster. Impoverished people are more likely to live in hazard-exposed areas and less able to invest in risk-reducing measures. They often have low-quality and insecure housing. Lack of services such as health care, public transport, communications, and basic infrastructure exacerbates the situation. Certain populations, such as women, children and persons with disabilities are affected differently by disaster impacts. For example, in Nepal, women were about 20% less likely to receive official warnings about an impending flood than men.<sup>6</sup> In the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, persons with disabilities were twice as likely to die.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2022). Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022: Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future, page 18, <https://www.undrr.org/gar2022-our-world-risk>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2022). Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022: Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future, page 22, <https://www.undrr.org/gar2022-our-world-risk>

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disasterriskmanagement/overview>

<sup>5</sup> Climate Adaptation Platform, 2022, <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/human-caused-climate-change-linked-extreme-weather-events>

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, <https://www.undrr.org/gender>

<sup>7</sup> Japan Disability Forum, 2012,

[https://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/resource/JDF/un\\_expert\\_group\\_meeting\\_120420\\_fujii\\_en.html](https://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/resource/JDF/un_expert_group_meeting_120420_fujii_en.html)



Higher mortality rates among at risk groups are directly linked to a range of poverty factors.

While wealthier people's exposure tends to be buffered by insurance, a greater asset base and coping capacity, poorer people must often rely on their own funds, which can drive them into further poverty and impair their ability to bounce back from disasters. Poverty is therefore both a cause and consequence of disaster risk. A World Bank study found that while the poor may lose less in terms of physical assets, by virtue of owning less, their loss of well-being and earning power is affected significantly more than other classes. This loss of income, lack of coping mechanisms and inability to participate in the local economy can exacerbate existing inequalities significantly over the long term.<sup>8</sup>

Under the Sustainable Development Goals, we have the tools, the targets and the systems in place to eradicate poverty, but need far greater investment to help countries reduce vulnerability and tackle inequality. This is essential if disaster risk reduction is to be effective and deliver a resilient future for all. Disaster risk reduction is everyone's responsibility and we must include communities that are most at risk.

### **Call to Action**

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, calls for "More dedicated action needs to be focused on tackling underlying disaster risk drivers, such as the consequences of poverty and inequality" and states that: "Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted."<sup>9</sup>

To mobilize action, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) is using the 2023 IDDRR, to raise awareness of the brutal inequality of disasters and call for fighting inequality for a resilient future

- IDDRR tagline: fighting inequality for a resilient future

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank, 2012, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/493181607687673440/overlooked-examining-the-impact-of-disasters-and-climate-shocks-on-poverty-in-the-europe-and-central-asia-region>

<sup>9</sup> The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 19d), <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>



- Social media hashtags:
  - #ResilienceForAll
  - #BreakTheCycle
  - #DRRDay

## Key Messages

- Poverty, inequality and discrimination are causes and consequences of growing disaster risk.
- Inequality creates the conditions that lead people to become exposed and vulnerable to disasters, and disasters also disproportionately impact the poorest and most at risk, thus furthering inequality. Reducing vulnerability to disasters requires addressing these dimensions
- By 2030, with current climate projections, the world will face some 560 disasters per year. An additional estimated 37.6 million people will be living in conditions of extreme poverty due to the impacts of climate change and disasters by 2030. A "worst case" scenario of climate change and disasters will push an additional 100.7 million into poverty by 2030.
- We must break the cycle of disaster > growing inequality > repeat.
- We can curb the destructive power of hazards—in other words, stop them from turning into disasters—through careful and coordinated planning that is designed to reduce people's exposure and vulnerability to harm.
- Member States must prioritise their commitments to achieving the Sendai Framework and SDGs, especially the reduction of poverty and inequality, while urgently addressing disaster risk and vulnerability with a focus on the most vulnerable communities.
- Greater investments are needed in the collection and use of disaggregated data, both to better understand disproportionate disaster impacts and exposure, and to inform resilience-building plans.
- Global decision makers must make our financial system fit for purpose in delivering finance for the most climate-vulnerable countries. We need to deliver economic resilience for the most at risk from disasters.
- We must accelerate the implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative to ensure everyone on earth is covered by early warnings in the next four years, prioritizing the most at-risk communities.
- Countries must engage, build capacity and empower groups in all DRR decision making processes. Countries must ensure that the most at risk, including women, older persons and persons with disabilities are meaningfully included.