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General Assembly Plenary
Background Guide 2026

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NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations Spain Conference (NMUN•Spain)! We are pleased to introduce to you our committee, the General Assembly Plenary (GA). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Eric Lowe and Assistant Director Ria Kumar Lamba. Eric is from Riverside, California and holds degrees in both History and Social Science & Globalization. He is a lecturer of American History at California State University, San Bernardino. Ria is a Business Intelligence & Data Analytics student at La Salle Campus Barcelona (Universitat Ramon Llull), with wide-ranging experience across different roles in international MUN conferences and national Debate League tournaments. The preparation of these materials was supported by Deputy Secretary-General Caitlin Hopper.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Progress and Implementation of the New Urban Agenda
2. Accelerating the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET on 1 November 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the Position Paper Guide and the NMUN•Spain Position Papers website.

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide, which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.

- The NMUN Rules of Procedure, which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory NMUN Conduct Expectations on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact the Deputy Secretary-General at dsg.spain@nmunstaff.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Eric Lowe, Director
Ria Kumar Lamba, Assistant Director

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Committee Overview

Introduction

The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established the General Assembly as one of the six main organs of the United Nations (UN) and the main deliberative and policy-making body in the United Nations system.[1] With its universal membership, the General Assembly makes policy recommendations to actors at all levels, including governments, regional organizations, and other United Nations bodies.[2] Outcomes reached by the General Assembly may define new norms that can promote peace, human rights, and development.[3] As the normative center of the UN, the General Assembly is a "unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter."[4] Its work is spread across six Main Committees, each of which discusses topics within a thematic area, adopting resolutions that are then considered by the broader General Assembly Plenary.[5]

Mandate, Function, and Powers

Chapter VI of the *Charter of the United Nations* established the mandate, composition, and capabilities of the General Assembly.[6] The General Assembly acts as a forum for dialogue and cooperation, providing general policy recommendations rather than carrying out operative tasks.[7] Its policy recommendations are non-binding and their implementation is conducted by Member States, the United Nations Secretariat, and other United Nations bodies, each of which independently align their work with General Assembly resolutions.[8] The General Assembly's resolutions are formal documents expressing the agreement and will of the international community, and a majority of its resolutions are adopted by consensus, meaning no vote is taken and no Member States have objections to the content.[9] Unlike resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding on Member States.[10] While the following list is not exhaustive, the mandate of the General Assembly can be summarized as:

- The General Assembly **will generally**: make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council, other United Nations bodies and organs, United Nations specialized agencies, and other international actors; initiate studies and advance efforts to promote international cooperation; consider or request reports from other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies; promote the development and codification of international law; establish United Nations observance days, create expert groups or commissions, formulate mechanisms for treaty negotiation, or refer an issue to the International Court of Justice.[11]

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[1] United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Main Bodies*. N.d.
[2] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. pp. 1, 52.
[3] United Nations, General Assembly. *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*. 2005.
[4] United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Workings of the General Assembly*. N.d.
[5] United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *UN General Assembly Documentation*. 2024.
[6] Ibid; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.
[7] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 36.
[8] Ibid. p. 52.
[9] Ibid. pp. 37, 52.
[10] United Nations Department of Global Communications. *How Decisions are Made at the UN*. N.d.
[11] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 36.

- The General Assembly **will not generally**: direct other United Nations bodies to develop or implement specific projects or programs; dictate the specific actions required for the implementation of policies it recommends, allowing Member States and other bodies to determine and implement operational details; create new bodies except in those rare instances where ubiquitous international demand requires the consolidation of existing bodies or where a concept and mandate have been fully developed, typically through years of negotiations; make recommendations on situations under consideration by the United Nations Security Council.[12]

Governance, Funding, and Structure

The General Assembly is comprised of all 193 United Nations Member States.[13] Each Member State receives a single, equal vote; observers may not vote on substantive items and most decisions require a simple majority.[14] The General Assembly may grant Observer status to intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and non-Member States or entities, which allows them to participate in sessions but does not grant them voting rights.[15] The General Assembly has six Main Committees that are topically organized around the General Assembly's main fields of responsibility: the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee); the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee); the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (Third Committee); the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee); the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee); and the Legal Committee (Sixth Committee).[16] The Main Committees discuss agenda items assigned to them, adopt draft resolutions, and submit a report on their work to the Plenary.[17] The Plenary may also decide to address an issue without prior reference to a committee. As a main organ of the UN, the General Assembly does not report to any other organ; however, it receives reports from its Main Committees, the Secretary-General, and its other subsidiary bodies on a regular basis.[18] The United Nations Secretariat also assists General Assembly committees by delivering substantive and logistical support.[19] All General Assembly meetings and events are funded through the United Nations regular budget.[20]

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[12] United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *Are UN resolutions binding?* 2024; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. N.d.; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Welcome to the Human Rights Council*. 2024; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.
[13] United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *UN Membership*. 2026.
[14] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 13.
[15] Ibid. p. 30.
[16] United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*. N.d.
[17] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 68.
[18] United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*. N.d.
[19] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.
[20] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. p. 412.

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United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women/

1. Progress and Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

"*Cities are where the climate battle will largely be won or lost.*"[21]

Introduction

According to the *2025 World Urbanization Prospects* report, 45% of the world's population now lives in cities.[22] The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) defines a city as a region with more than 50,000 inhabitants and a density of 1,500 persons per square kilometer.[23] Despite housing almost half of the humans on earth, cities only make up approximately 3% of global landmass, creating a disproportionate impact with regard to resource consumption, economic concentration, and greenhouse gas emissions.[24] Urban areas account for 70% of global waste production and greenhouse emissions, but also produce 70% of global gross domestic product value.[25] As a result of their heavy impact, cities are poised as key drivers of development around the world.[26]

With the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), the urban communities of the world were called upon to lead in efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[27] The subsequent 2016 United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development produced the *Quito Declaration Plan for the New Urban Agenda* (New Urban Agenda), which was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly.[28] The agenda was developed as a guiding framework for governments in achieving the SDGs in an urban context, with a primary focus on the targets of SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities).[29] Approaching the midterm review of the NUA in 2026, significant challenges remain for the implementation of the framework, including issues such as adequate housing and urban climate adaptation.[30] Cities remain at the center of a global housing crisis, defined by the convergence of housing affordability, displacement, informality, sustainability, and liveability.[31] Meanwhile, carbon dioxide emissions from buildings have risen more than 5% since 2015, moving in the opposite direction of the targets of the 2015 *Paris Agreement*.[32]

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[21] Antonio Guterres. UNFCCC. *Guterres: "Cities Are Where the Climate Battle Will Largely Be Won or Lost"*. 2019.
[22] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Urbanization Prospects 2025 Summary of Results: 10 Key Messages*. 2025. p. 1.
[23] The European Commission et al. *Applying the Degree of Urbanisation: A methodological manual to define cities, towns and rural areas for international comparisons*. 2021. p. 36.
[24] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. Sustainable Development Goals. *Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. N.d.
[25] UN-Habitat. *What is a City?*. 2020. p. 2.
[26] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. p. x.
[27] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. Sustainable Development Goals. *Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. N.d.
[28] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016.
[29] Ibid. p. 3; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 21-22.
[30] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. pp. 6-7, 11.
[31] UN-Habitat. *World Cities Report 2026: The Global Housing Crisis - Pathways to Action*. 2026. p. xv.
[32] Ibid. p. 146.

Despite these challenges, cities can still serve as catalysts for the promotion of sustainable development, and the General Assembly endeavors to provide policy guidance and support to Member States.[33] When cities provide adequate housing that meets the social, economic, cultural, and physical needs of their residents, the positive outcomes can result in poverty reduction, better educational opportunities, and the promotion of health and well-being.[34] In the face of climate change and increased risk of climate disaster, cities that adopt climate resilient policies and adaptations can protect people from the negative impacts of these realities and even work to avert them.[35] Building upon the lessons learned from the first 10 years under the NUA, the General Assembly aims to approach the next 10 years with evidence-based strategies and a greater focus on housing, finance, and fostering effective partnerships.[36]

International and Regional Framework

The NUA is the most recent in a series of policy frameworks regarding human settlements and urbanization, most of which have been developed through UN-Habitat conferences.[37] The earliest of these frameworks was the 1976 *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements*, the outcome document of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which notably provided a definition for the term “adequate shelter” and established UN-Habitat.[38] 20 years later, Istanbul hosted the second UN-Habitat conference, which focused on the interconnected issues of adequate housing and the sustainability of human settlements.[39] With the rise of urban populations, the *Istanbul Declaration* (1996) and its action agenda were more heavily geared towards cities and towns, with specific action items for managing rapid urbanization and its impact on sustainability.[40] The goals of the declaration, particularly those having to do with climate and social concerns, were heavily influenced by the outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.[41]

The NUA is the outcome of the 2016 United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, and its principles and targets are informed by other recent global frameworks from within the United Nations system.[42] The framework is centered around three core principles that guide its implementation plan, which include leaving no one behind, building inclusive urban economies, and

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[33] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. p. 2.
[34] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. p. 5.
[35] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026. p. 17.
[36] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. pp. 11-12.
[37] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. p. 3.
[38] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations Conference on Human Settlements - Habitat I Vancouver, Canada, 31 May-11 June 1976*. N.d.
[39] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations Conference on Human Settlements: Habitat II*. N.d.
[40] United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*. 1996. pp. 54-88.
[41] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations Conference on Human Settlements: Habitat II*. N.d.; United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*. 1996. p. 13.
[42] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. p. 3.

promoting environmental sustainability.[43] The implementation plan builds upon the urban focus of the *Istanbul Declaration* by recognizing the important role of local and municipal governments as the primary actors in the adoption of inclusive and sustainable urban planning strategies, with the financial and policymaking support of national governments.[44] As with its predecessor, the NUA draws inspiration from recently adopted frameworks from across the United Nations system, including the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, and *Paris Agreement*, all adopted in 2015.[45] The NUA incorporates the respective financial, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and climate targets of these frameworks into the urban lens, providing guidance on how cities can drive progress towards achieving them.[46]

Achieving the targets of the SDGs, specifically Goal 11, is the cornerstone of the NUA and its plan for implementation.[47] The agenda incorporates all targets of Goal 11 within its commitments, ranging from promoting inclusive economies and affordable housing to reducing the environmental impact of cities.[48] Target 11.9 on "implementing policies for inclusion, resource efficiency, and DRR" highlights the synergistic, systemwide approach of merging climate, sustainability, and resiliency, and the NUA adopts this approach within its own targets.[49] Beyond SDG 11, several other SDGs are promoted as well, most prominently SDGs 1 (no poverty), 5 (gender equality), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 13 (climate action).[50] As noted at the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, the struggle to achieve global sustainability will be won or lost in cities, so the promotion of the SDGs in the urban context may prove invaluable in achieving the goals by 2030.[51]

In order to tailor the aims of the NUA and the SDGs to the needs and capacities of their own municipalities, regional intergovernmental organizations have drafted localized urban development agendas and strategies.[52] For instance, the European Union (EU) launched its Urban Agenda for the EU within the *Pact of Amsterdam* (2016), which includes not only the broader objectives of the NUA but also specific regional focal points such as the inclusion of urban migrants and refugees.[53] The EU strategy framework also seeks to harness regional cooperation to promote information sharing, data collection, and evidence-based policymaking across the entire EU, which may be more effectively implemented at the regional level than globally.[54] While the African Union (AU) has not produced its own urban development framework, the sustainability and economic prosperity of cities are featured within its *Agenda 2063* (2013).[55] The 50-year AU development framework aims for African cities to develop as cultural and economic centers that afford all residents adequate and affordable housing, as well as clean

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[43] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. pp. 1-2.
[44] Ibid. p. 8.
[45] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. pp. 134-135.
[46] Ibid. p. 135.
[47] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. p. 4.
[48] Ibid. pp 2-9; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 21-22.
[49] Ibid.
[50] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. p. 142.
[51] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *UN forum spotlights cities, where struggle for sustainability 'will be won or lost'*. N.d.
[52] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. p. xxii.
[53] European Union. *The Urban Agenda for the EU*. N.d.
[54] Ibid.
[55] African Union. *Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want*. 2013. pp. 2-4.

water, green energy, and public transport.[56] Within the United Nations system, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States produced the *Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway* (SAMOA Pathway) (2014), a framework tailored to the needs of SIDS Member States in the Pacific and Caribbean.[57] Despite pre-dating the SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway identifies several key development issues impacting SIDS nations, primarily the need to mitigate climate change and improve disaster risk reduction capacity.[58]

Role of the International System

Within the United Nations System, the General Assembly and UN-Habitat serve as the core policy development mechanisms surrounding urban development and the implementation of the NUA.[59] The General Assembly established UN-Habitat within resolution 56/206 on "Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role, and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements," providing its mandate, governance structure, and membership.[60] Additionally, the General Assembly has regularly drafted resolutions relating to the implementation of UN-Habitat conference frameworks, providing the policy directives that guide the work of UN-Habitat and its partners.[61] The General Assembly also invites various United Nations actors to collaborate on the NUA and calls for reports on the agenda's implementation, including a quadrennial report of the Secretary-General.[62] The 2026 Quadrennial report serves as the midterm review of the implementation of the NUA with an evaluation of progress over the last 10 years, which highlights the need for a greater focus on achieving adequate housing economic opportunity for all.[63] The General Assembly conducted a High-Level Meeting on 16-17 July 2026 to evaluate progress on the NUA and develop new, evidence-based policy guidance that will be adopted as a Political Declaration in its upcoming session.[64] The *Zero Draft* of the declaration, drafted ahead of the meeting, identified not only the need to address the global housing and climate crises, but also the importance of data, technology, and innovation in the push to achieve the NUA by 2036.[65]

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[56] African Union. *Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want*. 2013. pp. 2-3.
[57] United Nations, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A.) Pathway*. 2014.
[58] Ibid. pp. 17-26.
[59] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/79/214)*. 2024. pp. 1-5.
[60] United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role, and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*. 2002. pp. 2-5.
[61] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/79/214)*. 2024. pp. 1-5.
[62] Ibid. pp. 8-9; UN-Habitat. *2026 High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the New Urban Agenda*. N.d.
[63] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. pp. 2-7.
[64] UN-Habitat. *2026 High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the New Urban Agenda*. N.d.
[65] United Nations, General Assembly. *Zero Draft: Political Declaration to renew commitment and accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda*. 2026. pp. 3-10.

UN-Habitat serves as the dedicated organ of the United Nations for urban development.[66] UN-Habitat provides regular reporting on settlement issues, as well as offering research and technical assistance to over 90 Member States.[67] Its most recent *Annual Report 2025* (2026) highlights the urgency of the global housing crisis, placing adequate housing as a top priority under the NUA.[68] In addition to annual reports, UN-Habitat also regularly produces multi-year strategies to guide the agency and its partner's efforts in promoting urban development.[69] The current *Strategic Plan 2026-2029* (2026) mirrors the annual report's focus on adequate housing, and seeks to promote multi-level governance mechanisms that will provide affordable housing and effectively manage resources through integrated planning and financing.[70] UN-Habitat also organizes the World Urban Forum (WUF), a biannual information sharing platform that was established in 2001 to bring together the world's governments to address the challenges of rapid urbanization.[71] The most recent WUF13 (2026) featured opportunities for delegates to discuss various thematic topics, including informal settlement transition and housing finance, over a 6-day conference.[72]

Various actors within the United Nations system support the implementation of the policies outlined within the NUA, providing technical, advisory, and logistical assistance to Member States and their municipalities.[73] The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) currently works with 80 Member State governments to promote development, including working towards goals like urban transition.[74] Since access to adequate housing is determined to be a basic human right, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) mandates a Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing to identify solutions, roadblocks, and vulnerabilities with regard to housing.[75] The Special Rapporteur submits thematic reports and resolutions on housing to the Human Rights Council, as well as performing country visits and offering commentary on policy and legislation.[76] The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is currently working with more than 20 Member States on the development and integration of National Adaptation Plans, which include both rural and urban measures aimed at building more climate resilient settlements.[77] UNDP, UNHCR, and UNEP all report to the General Assembly, submitting relevant data, resolutions, and reports that are then incorporated into the agenda items discussed during each General Assembly session.[78] Regional commissions that report to the Economic and Social Council are also involved in promoting the NUA, as they contribute knowledge sharing and best-practices through UN-Habitat's Urban Agenda Platform.[79] This work includes the creation of regional reports that coincide with the quadrennial report cycle, in which each region evaluates successes and failures towards the implementation of the NUA's three transformative commitments.[80]

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[66] UN-Habitat. *About us*. N.d.
[67] Ibid.
[68] UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. pp. 3-9.
[69] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026.
[70] Ibid. p. 6.
[71] World Urban Forum. *World Urban Forum*. N.d.
[72] World Urban Forum. *The thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum - Housing the world: Safe and resilient cities and communities*. 2026. pp. 68-97.
[73] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. pp. 134-154.
[74] United Nations Development Programme. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026. p. 9.
[75] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing*. N.d.
[76] Ibid.
[77] United Nations Environment Programme. *National Adaptation Plans*. N.d.
[78] United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations System Chart*. N.d.
[79] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. p. 149.
[80] UN-Habitat. *New Urban Agenda: Regional Report Guidelines*. 2025. p. 3.

Non-governmental organizations and civil society play a vital role in facilitating the implementation of the NUA at all levels of society.[81] At the international level, NGOs can serve as facilitators and forums for the sharing of information and best practices, bridging gaps within existing United Nations networks, as well as providing valuable contributions to the General Assembly's policymaking process.[82] For instance, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) works across three continents to foster partnerships between policymakers and governments, as well as promoting community and youth engagement into the realm of urban development.[83] ULI harnesses the power of locally-engaged individuals to analyze and influence trends in urban housing costs, production, and availability.[84] On an even more local scale, entities like the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) work with local communities to address gaps in housing availability and accessibility.[85] HKHS provides services like retrofitting older buildings with modern accessibility features, which aid vulnerable groups such as the elderly or disabled and ensure that no one is left behind.[86]

Promoting Adequate Urban Housing

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) established housing as a basic human right, but adequate housing can also be a driver of sustainability and economic prosperity, thus representing a key component of achieving the SDGs.[87] Currently, more than 1.5 billion people are either homeless or living in informal housing, constituting an urgent call to action to address the global housing crisis.[88] While UDHR simply defines "housing" as a part of an adequate standard of living, UN-Habitat defines the seven components of adequate housing as "security of tenure, access to basic services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, cultural adequacy, and convenient location."[89] The benefits of achieving these components tie into the targets of both the NUA and the SDGs, specifically with regard to poverty, health, reducing inequality, and decent work.[90] Affordable housing can relieve economic stress for low-income households, while housing located near vital services such as healthcare, schools, and employment centers can ensure access to these services.[91]

While there may be various approaches to ensuring adequate housing in urban communities, all require effective planning and strategic policies to implement.[92] Lessons learned from the first 10 years under the NUA highlight the importance of integrated policy, finance, and technical assistance between municipal, national, and international governments, as well as the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders.[93] The development of informal housing, commonly referred to as slums, results from the dual causes of rapid population growth and a lack of land management policy.[94] Addressing slums after they have been created is challenging, as the ability of the government to assemble land for redevelopment is hindered by

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[81] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. p. xvii.
[82] Ibid. pp. 87-91.
[83] Urban Land Institute. *2025 Annual Report*. 2026. pp. 4-6.
[84] Ibid. p. 19.
[85] Hong Kong Housing Society. *About Us*. N.d.
[86] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. pp. 18.
[87] United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948; UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. p. 7.
[88] UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. p. 11.
[89] Ibid. p. 7.
[90] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. pp. 3-4.
[91] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026. p. 15.
[92] Ibid. pp. 15-16.
[93] UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. p. 34.
[94] Cities Alliance. *Slums and Slum Upgrading*. N.d.

fragmented ownership and legal issues, constituting a roadblock to urban renewal and the improvement of housing conditions in cities.[95] Rather than implementing reactionary policy after population growth, local and national governments with effective land management policies in place can anticipate urban population growth and ensure that adequate housing is developed as cities expand.[96]

UN-Habitat and its partners aim to enhance the capacity of national governments to address the global housing crisis by providing policy guidance and technical assistance that inform and direct the creation of National Urban Policies (NUPs).[97] NUPs are defined as "a coherent set of decisions through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors towards a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term."[98] These integrated policies leverage the coordination of national, sub-national, and municipal governments to implement sustainable urban development through regulatory action, legislative authority, and financial mechanisms.[99] The development of a NUP begins with an assessment of a Member State's specific needs and current capacities, followed by guidance from relevant stakeholders on the best approaches for policy reform and enactment.[100] When put in place by national and municipal governments, these policies can both mitigate current housing inadequacies and ensure that as urban populations grow to an estimated 68% by 2050, adequate housing will grow with them.[101] UN-Habitat has seen success with this strategy in regions where informal and inadequate housing is most prevalent, specifically within Asia and Africa, and provided assistance in 64 countries in 2025.[102] Beyond housing, NUPs also have the power to strengthen urban resilience in the face of economic shocks and natural or climate disasters.[103]

Cities and Climate Action

As a result of their disproportionate population density, resource demands, and pollution creation, cities represent a significant challenge in achieving Goals 7, 12 (responsible production and consumption), and 15 (life on land).[104] While UN-Habitat has found success in promoting sustainable energy production and resource consumption in rural contexts, the most recent quadrennial report of the Secretary-General indicates that there have been fewer successes in urban environments, especially within developing economies.[105] Fine particulate matter pollution has steadily increased over the last decade in regions of

[95] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. pp. 61-72.
[96] UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. p. 41; UN-Habitat. *New Urban Agenda*. 2016. p. 8.
[97] UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. pp. 58-91; UN-Habitat. *National Urban Policy*. N.d.
[98] UN-Habitat et al. *Global State of National Urban Policy 2024: Building Resilience and Promoting Adequate, Inclusive and Sustainable Housing*. 2024. p. 13.
[99] Ibid. p. 17.
[100] UN-Habitat. *National Urban Policy*. N.d.
[101] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, says UN*. N.d.; UN-Habitat et al. *Global State of National Urban Policy 2024: Building Resilience and Promoting Adequate, Inclusive and Sustainable Housing*. 2024. pp. 83-104.
[102] UN-Habitat. *National Urban Policy*. N.d.; UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. p. 11.
[103] UN-Habitat et al. *Global State of National Urban Policy 2024: Building Resilience and Promoting Adequate, Inclusive and Sustainable Housing*. 2024. p. 59.
[104] Ibid. p. 125; UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. pp. 92-96.
[105] UN-Habitat. *Annual Report 2025*. 2026. pp. 26-29; United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. pp. 5-7.

both Asia and Africa, and solid waste production has increased between 30 to 50% in the last 20 years.[106] Rapid and often uncontrolled urban sprawl has led to a 2.5% decrease in global population density within cities between 2000 and 2020, at the cost of local biodiversity and ecosystems.[107] Lastly, cities produce 70% of all greenhouse gas emissions, placing them at the forefront of the push to achieve the goals of the *Paris Agreement* by 2050.[108]

Given cities have a disproportionate impact on pollution, emissions, and biodiversity loss, they also have the ability to achieve similarly disproportionate positive gains through targeted climate action and policy.[109] As with the housing crisis, effective urban policy is required in order to harness the power of cities to make progress towards climate goals.[110] For instance, policies such as stronger energy codes that require minimum standards for energy efficiency in buildings could reduce the energy consumption of all new buildings by 50%, but it requires legislation, enforcement, and construction capacity in order to succeed.[111] Similarly, climate-conscious urban planning that maintains sustainable densities, provides adequate green spaces, and incorporates nature-based solutions can help mitigate issues ranging from urban heat accumulation to biodiversity loss.[112] As with the housing crisis, NUPs also present a viable pathway for Member States to achieve productive climate action through cities, and in 2026 more than 160 Member States have adopted or are developing NUPs.[113] Despite this, financing remains a key roadblock in the implementation of the environmental aspects of the NUA.[114] Climate-related investments, including multilateral development banks, official development assistance, climate funds, and the private sector, rarely support low-income countries that are at the greatest risk of climate disaster, and what funding is received is applied to a mixture of climate adaptation and mitigation causes, highlighting the need for a more integrated approach to urban development policy.[115]

Conclusion

Looking forward to the remaining 10 years of the NUA, UN-Habitat and the United Nations have proposed a people-centered approach to urban development that places both the immediate issue of housing and the long-term imperative of climate action at the forefront of their efforts.[116] Significant gaps remain in areas such as finance, effective planning, and the integrated implementation of strategies that address

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[106] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. pp. 6-7.
[107] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026. p. 10.
[108] Ibid.
[109] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. p. 5; UN-Habitat. *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*. 2020. p. 42.
[110] UN-Habitat. *World Cities Report 2026: The Global Housing Crisis - Pathways to Action*. 2026. pp. 150-155.
[111] Ibid. p. 152.
[112] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026. p. 17.
[113] United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. p. 8.
[114] Ibid. p. 9.
[115] Ibid.
[116] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026; United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026.

multiple dimensions of sustainable urban development.[117] The recent increase in the adoption of NUPs represents a positive trend towards more efficient incorporation of urban planning in national policy, which includes a comprehensive approach that takes into account housing, climate, and development finance.[118] Following the 2026 Midterm review of the implementation of the NUA, the General Assembly is poised to outline the next steps moving forward within the forthcoming Political Declaration, which will likely serve as the guiding document for all policy action taken during the NUA's final 10 years.[119] If created with attention to the NUA's core principles of economic inclusivity, climate consciousness, and the commitment to leave no one behind, these policies and plans can harness the unmatched potential of cities to become drivers of sustainable development.[120]

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research on how to address this topic, they should consider: What are the primary issues that prevent the adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach to urban development? Why are national and regional governments more capable of leveraging funding and investments for development than local or municipal governments, and how can the integration of policies across those levels improve access to development resources? What are the roadblocks in the way of developing effective NUPs, and how can the United Nations help Member States overcome them? What role does the General Assembly hold in the process of urban development, and how can its mandate be used to promote the NUA?

[117] UN-Habitat. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2026; United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/80/696)*. 2026. pp. 5-11.
[118] UN-Habitat. *National Urban Policy*. N.d.
[119] UN-Habitat. *2026 High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the New Urban Agenda*. N.d.
[120] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016.

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2. Accelerating the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Introduction

Disasters annually cause thousands of deaths, displace millions, and erase decades of hard-won development gains, yet they remain in a category of crisis that the international community has consistently underestimated in scale and diversity.[121] Within the scope of disaster risk reduction (DRR), a disaster encompasses not only natural hazard events such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts, but also technological and industrial accidents, chemical and nuclear incidents, and biological and health emergencies.[122] The interaction of all these hazard types has been described in the Secretary-General's 2023 report as a "polycrisis," which produces cascading shocks that overwhelm governance systems designed to manage independent events.[123] Between 2015 and 2023 disasters caused over 1.35 million deaths and affected more than 4.2 billion people, with economic damages exceeding $3.8 trillion.[124] Disaster mortality rates per 100,000 people fell from an average of 2.11 between 2005-2014 to an average of 0.75 between 2015-2024, reflecting measurable returns in investments in early warning and preparedness.[125] Yet economic losses and people affected continue to rise, exposing a structural gap between the scale of risk and the resources committed to reducing it.[126]

The 2015 *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (Sendai Framework) responds to this gap as the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, establishing a non-legally binding yet politically important international blueprint through which Member States commit to DRR and building resilience at local, national, regional, and global levels.[127] DRR refers to the systematic effort to analyze and manage the factors that cause disasters, through decreased exposure to hazards, lowered vulnerability of people and property, rational land use and environment managements, and better preparedness for adverse events.[128] The Sendai Framework succeeded the 2005 *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015* (HFA), deepening the commitment to proactive risk reduction by shifting emphasis from disaster management toward prevention and establishing its expanded multi-hazard scope.[129] It also

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[121] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report Special Report 2023: Mapping Resilience for the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2025): Resilience Pays: Financing and Investing for our Future*. 2025. p. 4.
[122] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *What is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?* N.d.; United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. p. 4.
[123] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. p. 3.
[124] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2025): Resilience Pays: Financing and Investing for our Future*. 2025. p. 80.
[125] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Snapshot of Sendai Framework Monitoring*. 2025. pp. 2-3.
[126] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2025): Resilience Pays: Financing and Investing for our Future*. 2025. p. 80.
[127] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. p. 5.
[128] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *What is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?* N.d.
[129] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. 2005. pp. 1-3; United Nations, Department of

introduced “Build Back Better,” the principle that post-disaster reconstruction should leave infrastructure and services more resilient than before the disaster occurred.[130] The Sendai Framework is structured around four priorities for action: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in DRR for resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response.[131] Further, its seven global targets span from reducing mortality, affected populations, economic losses, and infrastructure damage, to amplifying national strategies, international cooperation, and universal early warning access.[132] Progress on these is tracked via 38 indicators through the Sendai Framework Monitor, a platform managed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).[133]

Despite early progress, the scale of ongoing losses to disasters reflect the deep structural inadequacies in current investment towards disaster prevention.[134] As of 2023, only Sendai Framework Target A (disaster mortality) and Sendai Framework Target E (national and local strategies) showed measurable improvement among the seven global targets.[135] This stagnation is driven by climate change acting as a risk multiplier, intensifying floods, droughts, hurricanes, and heatwaves beyond scenarios many DRR strategies were designed around.[136] Additionally, rapid urbanization in poorly planned places concentrates vulnerable populations in hazard-prone regions with inadequate infrastructure, thereby producing new disasters more quickly.[137] Low-income countries, small island developing states (SIDS), least-developed countries (LDCs), women, children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities all suffer disproportionately from disasters, exposing a key equity issue to which the international community has responded unevenly.[138] As the 2030 deadline for the Sendai Framework approaches, the General Assembly has identified two priorities requiring urgent Member State action: addressing the systemic risk that climate change introduces into disaster governance, and substantially expanding the financing and institutional capacity where developing countries need to translate political commitments into measurable outcomes.[139]

International and Regional Framework

The international community’s approach to DRR has transformed over the past three decades, shifting from a reactive disaster response toward proactive risk reduction through a succession of global

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Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 5, 11-12.
[130] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 6, 21.
[131] Ibid. pp. 12-21.
[132] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *What is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?* N.d.
[133] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Snapshot of Sendai Framework Monitoring*. 2025.
[134] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *GAR Special Report 2023: Mapping Resilience for the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023.
[135] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (A/78/267). 2023. p. 2.
[136] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *GAR Special Report 2023: Mapping Resilience for the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023.
[137] Ibid.
[138] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 2-3.
[139] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2025): Resilience Pays: Financing and Investing for Our Future*. 2025. p. 4.

frameworks, which culminated in the adoption of the Sendai Framework.[140] The *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World* (1994) and HFA together establish a foundational principle that disaster prevention is more cost-effective than relief.[141] Both frameworks emphasize that national governments have the duty to protect their citizens from disasters.[142] The HFA further underscored institutional capacity, knowledge sharing, and integration of DRR into national planning as a governance priority rather than a technical afterthought.[143] By the end of the HFA period in 2015, Member States recognized the insufficient progress made in reducing physical and economic damages, agreeing that the successor framework ought to prioritize preventing the creation of new risk and reducing existing risk.[144] Existing risk refers to the hazard exposure of people and assets already concentrated in vulnerable areas, such as settlements built in flood plains or seismic zones.[145] New risk refers to exposure created going forward through decisions like unregulated urban expansions or industrial siting that disregards hazard data.[146] This conceptual shift shaped the commitments and targets of the subsequent Sendai Framework.[147]

The Sendai Framework was designed to operate in harmony with the wider post-2015 international architecture, most notably the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), the *Paris Agreement* (2015) on climate change, the *New Urban Agenda* (NUA) (2016), and the updated international financing framework established by the *Sevilla Commitment* (2025).[148] The 2030 Agenda includes DRR within multiple of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with several SDG targets explicitly addressing disaster risk, and 38 Sendai indicators overlapping with SDG indicators to enable joint monitoring.[149] Further, the NUA complements the Sendai Framework by committing to resilience principles and recognizing that poorly planned urbanization generates new disaster exposure.[150] It further reinforces Sendai commitments by embedding disaster resilience into urban planning and governance standards for rapidly growing cities.[151] The 2025 *Sevilla Commitment* reiterated Member States' pledge to mobilize financing and closing the DRR investment gaps in vulnerable countries.[152]

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[140] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 1-4.
[141] United Nations, World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World*. 1994. pp. 1-2; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. 2005. pp. 3-6.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. 2005. pp. 1-2; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. p. 6.
[145] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. p. 9.
[146] Ibid. p. 10.
[147] Ibid. p. 6; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. 2005. pp. 1-2.
[148] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 7-8; United Nations, General Assembly. *Sevilla Commitment: Outcome Document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development*. 2025. p. 5.
[149] United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 18-24.
[150] United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. pp. 14-16.
[151] Ibid. pp. 23, 27-28.
[152] United Nations, General Assembly. *Sevilla Commitment: Outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/79/323)*. 2025. pp. 4-6.

This architecture's most recent structural momentum for accelerating action came from the 2023 Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework.[153] As a result, the General Assembly adopted the *Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2023).[154] This declaration expressed deep concern over inadequate progress and called for integrating DRR into national development plans, describing the current risk landscape as characterized by compounding, systemic, and cascading risks.[155] The Secretary-General's report on the Midterm Review brought the idea of polycrisis to the attention of the General Assembly.[156] It defines the term as the interconnection of overlapping structural shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the triple planetary crisis, rising geopolitical tensions, and economic volatility.[157] These cascading shocks spread across sectors and borders, exceeding the capacity of existing DRR governance systems.[158]

Role of the International System

The General Assembly serves as the primary intergovernmental body responsible for setting global DRR policy through annual resolutions.[159] The General Assembly has maintained DRR on its agenda since the early 1960s, reflecting a longstanding recognition that international coordination is essential to reduce the human and economic costs of disasters.[160] The General Assembly adopts a dedicated DRR resolution annually by consensus.[161] General Assembly resolution 75/216 on "Disaster Risk Reduction" affirmed Sendai commitments and called upon Member States to accelerate implementation.[162] General Assembly resolution 79/205 on "Disaster Risk Reduction" appealed for increased international cooperation and technology transfer for LDCs and SIDS, and recognized advancements toward Sendai Framework Target G (early warning systems).[163] The Political Declaration identified climate change as a central driver of new disaster risk and called for aligning national DRR strategies with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the *Paris Agreement*.[164] However, the report discovered that most countries manage the two policy areas through separate ministries and budget streams, a structural barrier to coordinated action.[165]

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[153] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Report of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2023. pp. 20-24.
[154] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023.
[155] Ibid. pp. 1-3.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. p. 3.
[159] United Nations, General Assembly. *Disaster risk reduction (A/RES/80/137)*. 2025. pp. 2-4.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid. p. 2; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/RES/75/216)*. 2020. pp. 1-3; United Nations, General Assembly. *Disaster risk reduction (A/RES/79/205)*. 2024. pp. 3-5.
[162] United Nations, General Assembly. *Disaster risk reduction (A/RES/75/216)*. 2020. pp. 1-3.
[163] United Nations, General Assembly. *Disaster risk reduction (A/RES/79/205)*. 2024. pp. 3-5
[164] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 3-5.
[165] International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report, 17-19 May 2023: High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2023.

Beyond these annual resolutions, the General Assembly is actively developing a legally binding instrument to complement voluntary Sendai commitments.[166] General Assembly resolution 79/128 on "Protection of persons in the event of disasters" mandated the elaboration of a Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED), based on draft articles developed by the International Law Commission (ILC).[167] PPED would establish binding legal obligations for states in four areas: duty to prevent and prepare, obligation to cooperate internationally, the protection of affected persons on a non-discriminatory basis, and guaranteed access to humanitarian assistance.[168] These obligations address precisely the accountability gap that voluntary Sendai targets have been unable to fill, and with negotiations set to conclude by 2027, PPED represents a potentially significant step toward enforceable international DRR obligations.[169]

Implementation of these commitments is coordinated by UNDRR, the primary monitoring body for the Sendai Framework across the United Nations system, which convenes fora and promotes policy alignment among Member States and international partners.[170] Direct operational implementation, however, falls on entities such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and civil society partners, with UNDRR providing coordination and technical support.[171] UNDRR traces its origins to General Assembly resolution 56/195 on "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" which established it to coordinate disaster reduction efforts and monitor progress under HFA, later extended to cover the Sendai Framework.[172] This makes UNDRR the only United Nations entity with an explicitly cross-system DRR coordination role.[173] It also translates General Assembly priorities into operational tools, folding annual resolution mandates into Global Assessment Report (GAR) cycles and Sendai Framework Monitor indicators that report progress back to Member States.[174] As the lead entity, UNDRR prepares a biennial GAR on DRR, whereby 171 countries reported progress as of October 2025.[175]

Other United Nations entities deliver complementary operational support for the Sendai Framework implementation, most notably through Early Warnings for All (EW4All), UNDP, and the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).[176] Launched by the Secretary-General in 2022, EW4All aims to have all individuals covered by early warning systems by 2027 through four pillars:

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[166] United Nations, General Assembly. *Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (A/RES/79/128)*. 2024.
[167] Ibid. pp. 1-3; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters*. N.d.
[168] United Nations, General Assembly. *Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (A/RES/79/128)*. 2024. pp. 1-3; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters*. N.d.
[169] Ibid.
[170] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *What is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?* N.d.
[171] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *United Nations Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience*. 2023.
[172] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Monitoring the Sendai Framework*. N.d. p. 1; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/RES/56/195)*. 2002. p. 1.
[173] Ibid.
[174] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Monitoring the Sendai Framework*. N.d.
[175] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2025): Resilience Pays: Financing and Investing for our Future*. 2025. p. 4; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Snapshot of Sendai Framework Monitoring*. 2025. p. 1.
[176] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Early Warnings for All*. N.d.; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Early Warnings for All*. N.d.

disaster risk knowledge, observation and forecasting, warning dissemination, and preparedness and response.[177] Each pillar is co-led by a separate international organization, including UNDRR, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Telecommunication Union, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.[178] The number of counties with multi-hazard early warning systems grew from 52 in 2015 to 108 in 2024.[179] Yet, SIDS and Sub-Saharan African nations remain disproportionately underserved, and countries lacking these systems experience disaster mortality rates six times higher than those with them.[180] UNDP supported 131 countries in developing national DRR strategies and 120 in developing local strategies between 2019-2024.[181] This aligns with Sendai Framework Target E which requires local-level plans as territorially specific hazards demand localized responses that national frameworks alone cannot address.[182] Bangladesh pairs national policy with local coordination mechanisms under the Disaster Management Act (2012), a model which UNDRR cites for other countries with similar risk profiles despite its limited financial resources.[183] The GFDRR provides grants and technical support to developing countries to mainstream DRR into development planning, directly supporting Sendai Framework Target C (reducing economic losses).[184]

Regional bodies play a distinctive governance role in translating Sendai commitments into region-specific action, operating alongside the global institutional framework to deliver tailored operational support that global mechanisms alone cannot address.[185] The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center) serves as the operational arm of ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), coordinating disaster monitoring, joint preparedness exercises, and emergency response logistics across the Southeast Asian Member States.[186] The AHA Center is widely recognized as a model for sub-regional institutional coordination.[187] For instance, in 2024 it coordinated its second-largest emergency response in the past decade when Tropical Cyclone Yagi struck five ASEAN Member States (Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam) and it deployed In-Country Liaison Teams and disaster relief stockpiles.[188] The African Union Commission supports continental DRR implementation through its Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, providing technical guidance to Member States to integrate DRR into national development

[177] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Early Warnings for All*. N.d.
[178] World Meteorological Organization. *WMO and the Early Warnings for All Initiative*. N.d.
[179] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Meteorological Organization. *Global Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems 2022*. 2022. pp. 2-4; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Meteorological Organization. *Global Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems 2024*. 2024. pp. 18-21.
[180] Ibid.
[181] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *United Nations Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience*. 2023. pp. 26-27.
[182] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. p. 12.
[183] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Bridging national strategy and local action: Bangladesh's success in vertical DRR integration*. 2025.
[184] United Nations Development Programme. *Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2022. pp. 2-3; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. *About GFDRR*. N.d.
[185] Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response*. 2005. pp. 1-3; African Union. *Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa*. 2017. pp. 2-4.
[186] Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response*. 2005. pp. 1-3; Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management. *About AHA Centre*. N.d.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid; ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management. *AHA Centre Annual Report 2024*. 2025. p. 4.

plans and coordinating UNDRR in strategic support across the continent.[189] Moreover, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency provides a sub-regional institution tailored for SIDS, supporting Caribbean Member States in developing national and disaster management frameworks, coordinating response operations, and building technical expertise that individual states cannot sustain independently.[190]

Regional Platforms convened by UNDRR between 2024-2025 consistently identified financing and institutional capacity as the main barriers for the Sendai Framework's effective implementation.[191] Across Africa, the Arab States, Asia-Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia, outcome documents produced by regional platforms reflect the same structural pattern.[192] Specifically, where governance mechanisms are strong, progress is measurable, and where institutions remain underfunded, the implementation gap widens.[193] The Second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on DRR and the Sixth Arab Regional Platform for DRR both highlighted financial constraints as a decisive barrier, with the Asia-Pacific conference specifically calling for expanded access to financial resources for developing countries.[194] The Ninth African Regional Platform illustrated this gap most explicitly, and its *Windhoek Declaration* (2024) acknowledged that only 55% of African countries had national DRR strategies and called upon Member States to increase annual DRR budget allocations.[195]

Climate Change, Systemic Risk, and Climate-DRR Governance Gap

Climate change is exacerbating the frequency and severity of hazard events while simultaneously diminishing the development gains that bolster community resilience, thus producing compounding crises that exceed the design capacity of governance systems built primarily for individual hazard events and discrete incidents.[196] The GAR 2023 documented that climate-related disasters are reversing development gains in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, where 2 billion people now face water shortages, an 80% increased risk of crop failure, and compounding food security challenges.[197] Disaster exposure and development deficits converge most severely in these regions, illustrating why climate risk cannot be addressed independently of broader development strategies.[198] The polycrisis framework further demonstrates that the four priority areas of the Sendai Framework were not designed to manage

[189] African Union Commission. *Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa*. 2017. pp. 4-6; African Union Commission. *Disaster Risk Reduction Experts Highlight Interagency Collaboration for Inclusive Resilience*. 2026.
[190] Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency. *Regional Response Mechanism (RRM)*. 2016. pp. 1-3; Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency. *About CDEMA*. N.d.
[191] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Regional Platforms*. N.d.
[192] Ibid; Platform on Disaster Displacement. *Disaster Displacement at the Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction*. 2024.
[193] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Regional Platforms*. N.d.; Platform on Disaster Displacement. *Disaster Displacement at the Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction*. 2024.
[194] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *2024 Annual Report*. 2025. pp. 1-2; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Sixth Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*. N.d.
[195] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Africa Regional Platform*. N.d.; International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report 21-24 October 2024: Ninth Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*. 2024. pp. 2-4.
[196] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *GAR Special Report 2023: Mapping Resilience for the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023. pp. 6-8.
[197] Ibid. pp. 10-12.
[198] Ibid. pp. 10-12.

these cascading and cross sectoral failures simultaneously.[199] Sendai Priority 1, which calls for understanding disaster risk, has seen noteworthy technical advances in scientific risk modeling since 2015.[200] Nonetheless, the International Science Council documented a persistent implementation gap whereby risk information frequently fails to reach main decision-makers, and Indigenous and traditional knowledge continues to be marginalized in formal risk assessment processes irrespective of its proven value.[201] A structural disconnect persists between climate and DRR planning at national level.[202] NDC development under the *Paris Agreement* and DRR strategy development under the Sendai Framework are typically managed by different ministries, budget streams, and planning cycles, creating incoherence precisely where alignment is most needed.[203] This misalignment simultaneously slows down progress on SDG target 13.1, which calls for strengthened resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards in all countries.[204] Addressing this requires not only increased Official Development Assistance (ODA), but financing mechanisms that force cross-ministerial coordination: multilateral development bank conditionality and Green Climate Fund integration increasingly require climate and DRR financing to flow through joint planning processes, compelling ministries to coordinate budget rather than operate in parallel.[205]

The international community has developed a range of policy and institutional responses to the climate-DRR nexus, with regional platforms demonstrating both successful models and persistent gaps in translating global frameworks into effective local action.[206] UNDRR's GARs have consistently emphasized risk-informed development as the primary response to systematic disaster risk, requiring that all development investments incorporate DRR considerations during the planning stage.[207] This principle was endorsed in the Political Declaration, but is not yet reflected in the majority of national development plans.[208] The Second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on DRR highlighted the progress of integrated

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[199] International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report, 17-19 May 2023: High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2023. pp. 2-3; United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 2-3.
[200] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. p. 3; International Science Council. *Report for the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. 2023. pp. 4-7.
[201] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. p. 3; International Science Council. *Report for the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. 2023. pp. 4-7.
[202] International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report, 17-19 May 2023: High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2023. pp. 4-5.
[203] Ibid.
[204] United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 14.
[205] Overseas Development Institute. *Ten years of Sendai: five big changes in disaster risk reduction and what comes next*. 2025. pp. 12-14; United Nations, General Assembly. *Sevilla Commitment: Outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/79/323)*. 2025. pp. 5-7.
[206] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *GAR Special Report 2023: Mapping Resilience for the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023. pp. 2-4.
[207] Ibid. pp. 5-6; United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 3-4.
[208] Ibid.

climate-DRR national action plans in the region.[209] The Philippines reported reduced disaster mortality and faster recovery times after integrating climate adaptation into its national DRR plan, coordinating 44 government departments under a single framework.[210] Conversely, the 2024 Ninth Africa Regional Platform identified the lack of localized disaster risk data availability and persistent reliance on external assistance as structural barriers to adaptive DRR governance.[211] Without domestically generated risk information, national strategies cannot adequately reflect the region's evolving hazard profile, creating dependence on external assistance.[212]

Financing, Investment, and Institutional Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction

Chronic underinvestment in DRR compared to post-disaster relief costs, combined with persistent gaps in institutional capacity at national and subnational level, has prevented meeting the goals established by the Sendai Framework targets and disproportionately undermines the capacity of developing countries, LDCs, and SIDS to build resilience.[213] In 2024, ODA for DRR reached $2.5 billion, representing a fraction of annual global expenditure on reactive disaster relief.[214] Meanwhile, overall development assistance experienced its steepest annual contraction on record, dropping 6.1% in 2024 and 23.1% in 2025.[215] This imbalance reflects what the Political Declaration characterized as a systematic failure to allocate resources to mitigation, as responding to ongoing crises continuously displaces investment in addressing underlying hazards.[216] GAR 2025 confirmed that DRR investments can deliver benefit-cost ratios of up to 10:1 or higher, a return that has not yet translated into reformed budget allocations at scale.[217] Sendai Framework Target C, which stipulated reducing economic losses relative to gross domestic product (GDP), is not on track.[218] Economic losses from disasters have been escalating despite growing numbers of countries adopting DRR strategies, demonstrating that strategy adoption without adequate financing

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[209] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *2024 Annual Report*. 2025. pp. 1-2; United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. p. 4.
[210] National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. *National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-2028*. 2011. pp. 12-15; Philippine Climate Change Commission. *National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028*. 2011.
[211] International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report, 21-24 October 2024: Ninth Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*. 2024. pp. 3-5.
[212] Ibid.
[213] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 2-4.
[214] Overseas Development Institute. *Ten years of Sendai: five big changes in disaster risk reduction and what comes next*. 2025. pp. 4-6; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *A historic decline in foreign aid: Preliminary 2025 ODA data*. 2026.
[215] Ibid. 2026.
[216] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 3, 6.
[217] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2025: Resilience Pays: Financing and Investing for our Future*. 2025. p. 200.
[218] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. N.d.; International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report, 17-19 May 2023: High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2023. pp. 3-4.

does not translate into reduced losses.[219] Consequently, this failure undermines SDG target 11.5, which sets the parallel goal of reducing direct economic losses from disasters as a share of global GDP.[220] The municipalities that bear primary responsibility for implementing DRR measures are rarely allocated sufficient budget transfers to carry out that responsibility.[221]

Building effective institutional capacity at national and subnational levels demands legal frameworks, governance structures, private sector engagement, and disaggregated data, all of which are areas where the implementation gap remains the most pressing.[222] The Sendai Framework explicitly calls for structural and non-structural private investment in DRR.[223] Multi-stakeholder DRR public-private partnership frameworks documented in Southeast Asia provide a concrete model where infrastructure investment, reinsurance, and catastrophe bond mechanisms have been integrated into national risk transfer strategies via coordinated government-private sector engagement.[224] Nevertheless, parametric risk-transfer instruments carry inherent basis risk.[225] Following Hurricane Maria in 2017, the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility paid Dominica $19.3 million, covering only a fraction of the $1.3 billion in damages, an economic loss equivalent to 226% of the country's GDP.[226] Sendai Framework Target E requires local strategies because territorially specific hazards demand localized responses, adoption stands at 85% in Asia-Pacific but only 55% in Africa.[227] However, operationalizing these commitments has remained a persistent challenge for two reasons: donor countries rarely condition development assistance on DRR mainstreaming, and most national budget cycles treat DRR as a separate line item rather than cross-cutting investment priority.[228]

Capacity-building represents the primary operational challenge in accelerating the Sendai Framework implementation, as the existence of national DRR strategies does not automatically translate into

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[219] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction. N.d.; International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Summary report, 17-19 May 2023: High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2023. pp. 3-4.
[220] United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 14.
[221] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. p. 4.
[222] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 13-19; United Nations, General Assembly. *Disaster risk reduction (A/RES/79/128)*. 2024. pp. 1-2.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Overseas Development Institute. *Ten years of Sendai: five big changes in disaster risk reduction and what comes next.* 2025. pp. 8-10; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. N.d. pp. 6-8.
[225] Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica. *Post-Disaster Needs Assessment: Hurricane Maria, September 18, 2017*. 2017. p. xiii.
[226] Ibid.
[227] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *2025 Global Status of National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies*. 2025. pp. 4-7.
[228] United Nations, General Assembly. *Sevilla Commitment: Outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/79/323)*. 2025. pp. 4-5; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 24-25.

interministerial coordination, trained personnel, and data system required for effective execution.[229] Sendai Priority 2 calls for strengthening DRR governance, emphasizing that legal and institutional frameworks at national and local levels are prerequisites for mobilizing and sustaining investment.[230] UNDP's National DRR Strategy Programme has demonstrated that countries with dedicated governmental DRR focal points and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms are significantly more likely to report progress across multiple Sendai targets.[231] The creation of the PPED offers the potential to address the accountability deficit that voluntary Sendai targets have thus far been unable to close.[232] By establishing binding obligations for international cooperation, non-discriminatory protection and access to humanitarian assistance, the PPED would create enforceable governance standards applicable to all states parties, a qualitative shift from the current framework of political commitments.[233] Member States must determine what accountability mechanics and institutional structures are needed to make the PPED operable alongside, rather than in tension with, existing humanitarian response systems.[234]

Conclusion

The urgency of accelerating the Sendai Framework implementation is arguably still among the most significant international issues, as the Political Declaration revealed the inadequate and uneven progress against a backdrop of worsening climate risk, insufficient investment, and persistent governance gaps.[235] Evidence gathered from regional platforms, Secretary-General reports, and GAR showcase how disaster risk can be meaningfully reduced where effective governance mechanisms are in place.[236] However, LDCs, SIDS, and local governments in high-risk regions continue to face structural barriers that voluntary commitments alone haven't resolved yet.[237] The *Sevilla Commitment* updated the financing framework, the ongoing elaboration of the PPED, and outcomes obtained from the 2024-2025 regional platforms reflect the same recognition that voluntary commitments alone have been insufficient to close Sendai's structural gaps.[238]

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[229] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *2025 Global Status of National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies*. 2025. pp. 4-7; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015. pp. 13-19.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.
[232] United Nations, General Assembly. *Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (A/RES/79/128)*. 2024. pp. 1-3; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters*. N.d.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] United Nations, General Assembly. *Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/77/289)*. 2023. pp. 2, 4-6.
[236] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. pp. 4-6; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. N.d.
[237] United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/78/267)*. 2023. pp. 4-6; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. N.d.
[238] United Nations, General Assembly. *Sevilla Commitment: Outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/79/323)*. 2025. pp. 4-6; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Briefing on the Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED)*. 2025.

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research on how to address this topic, they should consider: How might Member States reform national budget processes to mainstream DRR investment as a standard component of all public expenditure, rather than a separate and chronically underfunded line item? What accountability mechanisms would most effectively ensure that Member States align their NDCs with national DRR strategies, and which existing institutional structures (national, regional, or intergovernmental) are best positioned to facilitate that coherence? What lessons can be drawn from AADMER and the AHA Centre as model regional DRR instruments, and how can they be adapted to address the specific governance and financing constraints facing regional organizations in Africa, the Arab States, the Pacific?

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