

Post Sendai Initiatives and Way Forward

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The outcome documents of the AMCDRR, New Delhi held in November 2016 is a reaffirmation of political commitments in the region and it helps in devising future strategies for identification of risks, challenges and equal distribution of scarce resources ultimately contributing to achieve sustainable development goals.

March 18, 2015 was a historical day as it witnessed adoption of a 15-year plan by 188 UN Member Nations, including India. The plan termed as 'Sendai Framework' was adopted during the 3rd UN World Conference on disaster risk reduction, held in the Japanese city of Sendai in 2015. Interestingly, it is the first major UN agreement on the post-2015 development agenda consisting of four major priority areas and seven targets to be met by 2030. The expected outcome of the framework is to prevent creation of new disaster risks and also to substantially reduce disaster risks. The four priority areas of Sendai Framework include: 1) Understanding Risk; 2) Strengthening Risk Governance; 3) Investing in disaster resilience; and 4) Improving capacities for disaster response as well as for building back better after disasters.

The Sendai Framework has set targets for substantial reduction in losses including reduction in number of deaths from disasters, number of people affected by disasters, economic losses and infrastructure losses. At the same time, it calls for increase in capacities through national and local strategies, international cooperation and improved access to early warning.

The new Framework calls for concrete indicators of progress towards these targets to be measured against the disaster losses in the decade after the adoption of the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), its predecessor. The Sendai Framework is built on elements which ensure continuity with the work done by states and other stakeholders under the HFA and introduces a number of innovations. For India, the framework reaffirms our commitment to address disaster risk reduction and building of resilience to disasters with a renewed sense of urgency.

In furtherance to its commitment to the Sendai framework, Government has taken up several important initiatives post Sendai Declaration. Firstly, as committed during the Sendai conference, India has successfully hosted the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction (AMCDRR) in November, 2016 and adopted 'New Delhi Declaration' and 'Regional Action Plan for implementation of the Sendai Framework'. In line with the all-of-society approach for disaster risk reduction enshrined in the Sendai Framework, the AMCDRR also provided an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to come together and make specific commitments to the implementation of Sendai Framework in Asia and the Pacific. These outcomes of the AMCDRR will guide

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the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Asia and the Pacific. On one hand these outcomes will help contextualize Sendai Framework for Asia-Pacific, and on the other hand these will infuse a sense of urgency with regards to its implementation in the region. At the AMCDRR, Prime Minister outlined a ten-point agenda, to pursue the implementation of disaster risk reduction efforts in the region with renewed vigour. This ten-point agenda is included in Box A.

Secondly, Government of India has issued a set of priority actions to all the State Government based on the goals, targets and priorities of Sendai Framework 2015-2030. Government of India, during AMCDRR, 2016, has extended the grant of US \$ 1 million to UNISDR towards effective implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Asian region.

Thirdly, in line with Sendai priority 4, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is strengthened, both in terms of state-of-the-art training and equipment so as to further empower it as a professional disaster response force. Besides, Government of India has approved the creation of National Disaster Response Reserve (NDRR) through a revolving fund of Rs.250 crore to be operated by the National Disaster Response Force. This dedicated fund would enable the NDRF to maintain a ready inventory of emergency goods and services comprising tents, medicines, food items, etc, which are immediately required after any disaster.

Fourthly, the government expressed keenness to share India's expertise and help other countries in disaster response as it did during Japan Earthquake in 2011 and Nepal earthquake of 2015. The government of India is making consistent efforts to promote regional cooperation by hosting the SAARC Disaster Management Centre to reduce disaster risks in the region and promoting knowledge sharing among the SAARC countries. SAARC Disaster

Management Exercise (SAADMEX) 2015 held in Delhi provided ideal platform for sharing the government's ideas and experience and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen the institutional mechanism of regional cooperation on disaster response among the member countries. Similarly, the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), in Hyderabad, provides early warning not only to India but also to 28 countries in the Indian Ocean Rim.

Fifthly, in an effort to augment the capacity building in the field of Disaster management, in August 2015, NIDM has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Jawaharlal

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Nehru University (JNU) for financial assistance and academic cooperation for establishment of a Centre for Excellence in Disaster Research and Resilience Building at JNU for promoting higher education and research within a multi-disciplinary framework. In addition to this as a part of institutional strengthening, the Government of India has constituted the National Disaster Response Force Academy at National Civil Defence College, Nagpur for training to personnel involved in disaster management and response. The Government has also allocated Rs.205 crores for strengthening and up-gradation of National Fire Safety College to make it a state-of-the-art facility. For mainstreaming DRR into infrastructure development we are also deliberating on the modalities for imparting training to the infrastructure development agencies, especially those working in

Box: A

Prime Minister's 10-Point Agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction Outlined at the AMCDRR

1. Ensure that all development projects - airports, roads, canals, hospitals, schools, bridges - are built to appropriate disaster resilient standards and contribute to the resilience of communities they seek to serve. Build a coalition to support disaster resilient infrastructure.
2. Work towards risk coverage for all - starting from poor households to small and medium enterprises to multi-national corporations to nation states.
3. Encourage greater involvement and leadership of women in disaster risk management.
4. Invest in risk mapping globally for all hazards.
5. Leverage technology to enhance the efficiency of our disaster risk management efforts.
6. Develop a network of universities to work on disaster issues.
7. Utilize the opportunities provided by social media and mobile technologies.
8. Build on local capacity and initiative.
9. Ensure that the opportunity to learn from a disaster is not wasted. Establish a facility for technical support to post-disaster reconstruction of houses.
10. Bring about greater cohesion in international response to disasters.

Hill States, on basic practical aspects to prevent disasters.

Further, the Government has implemented the recommendations of 14th Finance commission and

Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2016

The Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction was held recently in New Delhi with the aim of providing a platform to member countries for sharing best practices in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction. About 4000 participants from the Asian Region participated in the Conference.

This was the first Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) after the advent of the Sendai Framework for DRR (SFDRR). The SFDRR (2015-2030) was adopted at the Third World Conference on DRR at Sendai in Japan in March, 2015. It identifies targets and priority action areas

towards reducing disaster risk by 'reducing the damage caused by natural hazards like earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones, through an ethic of prevention'

Established in 2005, the AMCDRR is a biennial conference jointly organized by different Asian countries and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

The next AMCDRR will be held in Mongolia in 2018

Two important documents - 'New Delhi Declaration' and the 'Asian Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework' were adopted at the 3-day Conference.

New Delhi Declaration

The 'New Delhi Declaration' is a political statement spelling out the commitment of participating governments towards preventing and reducing disaster risk, and strengthening the resilience of communities, nations in the Asian region. Recognising the need to accelerate the implementation of global frameworks, it commits to a people-centred and whole-of-society approach towards DRR. It also emphasises the need to enhance the capacity of communities and ensure participation of all stakeholder groups towards achieving resilience.

Asian Regional Plan

The 'Asian Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework' focuses on the 'How to' reduce disaster risk at national and local levels. It has arrived at a longer term road map of cooperation and collaboration, spanning the 15-year horizon of the Sendai Framework, as well as a two-year action plan to further disaster risk reduction with specific, actionable activities.

Among the actions highlighted in support of the implementation of the Sendai Framework was a focus on developing national and local strategies, policies and plans for Disaster Resilience and implementing them, including substantially increasing investment in disaster preparedness and to promote and strengthen education on disaster risk reduction. Risk assessment, the quality and availability of data and effective risk information systems for communities were referenced as a cornerstone for community participation and resilience even for those located in exposed areas.

The Conference also commemorated the first World Tsunami Awareness Day to spread awareness on tsunami. The observance of the day stressed on the importance of early warning systems and preparedness of communities in order to mitigate damage from the often devastating natural hazard.

Inaugurating the conference, the Prime Minister had called for regional and international cooperation in building disaster resilience. Reiterating the government of India's commitment to the Sendai Framework, the Prime Minister outlined a ten point agenda for disaster management.



approved an allocation of Rs 61,220 crore (comprising of Rs 47,029.50 crore as central share and Rs 14, 90, 50 crore as state share) in State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to all the states for 2015-16 to 2019-20 which is significantly higher than the allocation of Rs.33,580.93 crore recommended by 13th Finance commission for 2010-11 to 2014-15. Over and above the provision of the SDRF, funding is supplemented from the NDRF in the wake of disasters of severe nature as per the requirement. During the year 2015-16 total Rs 17,749.18 crore (which includes release of Rs 5,297.22 crore from NDRF) has been released to state Governments to manage the calamities of various nature.

Lastly, while re-emphasizing that State has a primary role in reducing the disaster risk, the Sendai framework also calls upon other stakeholders including the private sector to be involved in disaster preparedness and mitigation planning as well as relief and recovery phase. In the mission of Disaster Risk Reduction there is need of collaboration by all entities, public and private, to strengthen the mechanisms for disaster risk reduction by using and sharing of reliable and affordable modern technology for capacity building. The government of India believes that the sustainable infrastructure must take into account all factors, including secondary hazards that resulted from rapid urbanization. The outcome documents of the AMCDRR, New Delhi held in November 2016 is a reaffirmation of political commitments in the region and it help in devising future strategies for identification of risks, challenges and equal distribution of scarce resources ultimately contributing to achieve sustainable development goals. □

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016 Passed by Parliament

The Lok Sabha passed "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016" on 16th December 2016. The Bill will replace the existing PwD Act, 1995, which was enacted 21 years back. The Rajya Sabha had already passed the Bill on 14.12.2016. Under the Act, the types of disabilities have increased and at the same time provisions for additional benefits have been introduced.

There are strict provisions for penalties for offences committed against persons with disabilities and violation of provisions of the new law.

The new Act has several salient features which will enhance opportunity, equality and accessibility.

The New Act will bring our law in line with the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory. This will fulfill the obligations on the part of India in terms of UNCRD. Further, the new law will not only enhance the Rights and Entitlements of Divyangjan but also provide effective mechanism for ensuring their empowerment and true inclusion into the Society in a satisfactory manner. Passage of the Act is a landmark moment and will add tremendous strength to Accessible India movement.