



Summary of Session

Session title: Plenary Session – Multisectoral Risk Governance & Cooperation

Date: 7 November 2024

Time: 13:30 – 14:45 CET

1. Executive summary

Achieving effective risk governance is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the rise of new threats, have made it abundantly clear that all actors need to establish structures that can harness and counter both slow- and sudden-onset incidents and their cascading effects.

A range of policy initiatives are thus underway to build multi-sectoral structures for risk governance involving a whole-of-society approach. Several member states are in the process of reviewing and developing national structures. Likewise, regional institutions are reshaping transnational structures for risk governance, connecting different sectors to enable swift responses to complex threats. Although member states agree that multi-sectoral structures are the future of effective disaster risk reduction, the road to achieving efficiency in such structures is far from clear.

The Session brought together representatives of the government (Sweden and Portugal), local community partners (Red Cross Montenegro), and international organizations (UNICEF and UNDP as moderators). Discussions focused on three main strands: 1) Addressing the need for effective priority-setting in a multi-sectoral setup; 2) Unlocking the potential of the whole-of-society approach; 3) Ensuring and enhancing accountability and trust for effective risk governance.

2. Solutions

- Sweden emphasized the importance of trust and accountability for effective risk governance. Two principles are key: predictability and co-creation. In Sweden this has been relevant in bridging two critical agendas: climate change and civil preparedness.
- Portugal illustrated, through its National Platform for DRR, the essential need for the engagement of all stakeholders. Inclusion means all lives. Prevention efforts and the work done to strengthen governance at all levels saw a reduction by half of annual forest fires over the past decade.
- Red Cross Montenegro underlined the role of local actors and community empowerment. Talking to local and vulnerable communities - empowering them and strengthening their capacities is critical.
- UNICEF captured the need for engagement of young people, from a vulnerability perspective as well as central actors of change. Youth inclusion in NAPs, NDCs, National DRR Strategies, and other key frameworks is needed. Looking at social protection systems made more shock responsive, social services, child protection services, and crisis management authorities need to work hand in hand.

3. Results

Practical measures are taken on the ground to translate effective governance to reality:

- All schools across Portugal took part in an earthquake preparedness exercise, dedicating 90 minutes of all schools across the country to enhance disaster preparedness.
- In 2024, Sweden released a handbook dedicated to enhancing awareness and preparedness of its population for main risks – Sweden is accompanying the priorities set across sectors, strengthening trust and accountability required for effective risk reduction and preparedness.
- In Montenegro, actions taken through simple localized actions resulted in effective and long-lasting collaboration in reaching common goals (Flood Resilience Alliance project, 2018-24).

- Experiences in Tajikistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina around strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems can trigger further efforts across the region to enhance multisectoral collaboration and attention for stakeholder engagement for effective risk governance.

4. Looking ahead

Key dimensions were captured throughout the session interventions and discussions:

- Ensure effective collaboration across sectors, bringing together different issues of national priority (ex. Climate-security nexus).
- Importance of predictability, and pragmatism to ensure robust accountability and trust.
- Engagement both at community and local authority levels – ex. empowering volunteerism.
- Stakeholders need to be included and part of the solution, starting with young persons, the private sector, academia, as well as people living with disabilities.

Reflections shared by Norway may trigger thoughts for the future: can we hope to see political leadership win elections with DRR as a main topic? Is there a need for stronger legal frameworks for DRR at national and/or international?