

Call to Action to Build Back Better by Investing in Recovery Readiness

Asia and the Pacific is the most disaster-prone region globally, with over two million lives lost to disasters since 1970¹. While fatalities have decreased, the number of people affected continues to rise due to the region's geography, large population, and socio-economic factors. Climate-related losses could reach \$953 billion in a 1.5°C warming scenario and up to \$1 trillion at 2°C². Geophysical hazards, including earthquakes and tsunamis, caused 62% of disaster-related deaths and 38% of damages between 2001 and 2020³.

Building Back Better⁴ is an essential component of DRR and is explicitly recognized in the Sendai Framework as a priority for action. The need to "Build Back Better" is crucial for creating a resilient, sustainable, and equitable future. However, as emerged from the SFDRR Midterm Review countries are not systematically building back better and continue to face significant barriers to progress, including insufficient national capacities, limited engagement of diverse stakeholders, and a lack of financing.

It is imperative to advance beyond recovery, creating systems that are more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive. This necessitates proactive investment in **Recovery Readiness**.

Recovery readiness is key to addressing vulnerabilities, adapting to change, and ensuring long-term growth. By improving readiness, countries can reduce recovery timelines, build resilience, and foster inclusive recovery. This proactive approach supports sustained socio-economic development, reduces inequalities, and prepares nations to effectively recover and thrive after disasters, addressing challenges identified in the Sendai Framework Midterm Review.

Recent global and regional discussions, such as the International Recovery Forum 2024, World Reconstruction Conference 2022, and Preparing for Recovery workshops (June 24-25, 2024, in Manila for countries from Asia and August 15, 2024, for Pacific countries), have emphasized the urgent need to invest in readiness for resilient recovery.

Recognizing the critical urgency to strengthen recovery readiness in the region, we call on member states and all stakeholders within the Asia-Pacific community to prioritize the following key areas for action:

1. **Assess readiness for resilient recovery** and establish institutional frameworks to Build Back Better, including developing regulatory frameworks, pre-arranged agreements, and ensuring protocols are in place to support recovery efforts.
2. **Identify, establish and strengthen the leadership** of designated agencies responsible for resilient recovery. Additionally, **develop and enhance nationally led**

¹ ESCAP, 2023. Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023: Targeting Transformative Disaster Risk Resilience - Seizing the Moment. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Available at: <https://repository.unescap.org/handle/20.500.12870/6258> [Accessed 24 June 2024]

² *ibid*

³ Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Université Catholique de Louvain, EM-DAT

⁴ The use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies, and the environment (United Nations General Assembly, 2016)

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coordination mechanisms with a whole-of-society approach, ensuring risk-informed pre-disaster recovery planning across all government levels and fostering collaboration among all stakeholders.

3. **Establish recovery financing strategies** at all levels before disasters to ensure preparedness, timely resource availability, and support for Build Back Better. Recognize limited fiscal space and adopt fit-for-purpose approaches.
4. **Enhance and sustain the capacities** of local communities, government agencies at all levels, the private sector, and relevant stakeholders through training, technical assistance, and skills development to effectively plan and implement resilient recovery efforts.
5. **Establish partnerships** with the private sector and civil society for their engagement in resilient recovery, with national governments leading the development of regulatory and institutional frameworks to enable and facilitate private sector and civil society contributions.
6. **Develop and strengthen systems** for baseline data collection to inform disaster recovery planning. Enable governments at all levels to use risk information and technology to create evidence-based, inclusive, and gender-responsive post-disaster recovery plans.
7. **Capture and institutionalize lessons** from past disasters, and **curate and share knowledge**, including traditional knowledge, to support recovery. **Promote good practices** and foster collaboration between governments, the private sector, and civil society to enhance recovery readiness across the region.

To ensure the effective implementation of this call to action by 2030, the following way forward is proposed:

- Regional Consultations with stakeholders
Organise regional consultations with key stakeholders to establish a plan of action leading to 2030 to be released at the 2025 Global Platform.
- Develop Recovery Readiness Framework and conduct capacity building programmes
Under the guidance of the International Recovery Platform (IRP), establish a framework to enable member states to assess their readiness for resilient recovery. Provide support to countries in enhancing national and local recovery capacities through targeted capacity-building programs that address identified readiness gaps.
- Consider supporting regional Peer Learning mechanisms and exchanges
Promote peer learning and collaboration facilitated by the IRP and regional partners. These platforms will serve as hubs for sharing innovations, exchange best practice, challenges in advancing recovery readiness across the region
- Conduct Progress Reviews

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The IRP and the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) will provide opportunities to discuss progress, opportunities and challenges.