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Although countries across the Asia-Pacific region differ widely, the confluence of poverty and inequality, dependence on natural resources, rapidly growing populations, and governance challenges make the region predominantly vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters. As a particularly climate-prone region, climate-induced disasters have grown exponentially in the Asia-Pacific region. Rising sea levels and saltwater intrusion threaten Pacific Islands and Asian river deltas and coastal areas. Increased temperatures are leading to glacier lake outbursts resulting in floods and landslides in the Himalayas, and coral bleaching in the Pacific.

Droughts and floods in the river basins (e.g. the Ganges and the Mekong) are increasing erosion, affecting water supplies, and impacting fisheries and agricultural productivity, and megacities are exposed to increasing flood risk and effects of urban heat. Furthermore, unsustainable development compounds the impacts of climate change and increases disaster risk.

The impacts of climate change are directly leading to loss of life and negatively affecting food and water supplies and livelihoods. Climate impacts are also predicted to lead to increased numbers of climate refugees in the region and globally. In 2020, the Asia-Pacific region faced a record number of climate-related disasters coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting tens of millions of vulnerable people across the region.

Nature is a powerful tool in the fight against interconnected threats to ecosystem health and human well-being and is key to building resilience in the face of intensified impacts of climate change and disasters. A green recovery focused on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can play a key role in advancing a climate-smart recovery that could strengthen social, economic, and ecological resilience.

For IUCN, investment in and mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions for climate and disaster resilience is essential to achieving sustainable development and reducing disaster impacts. We also believe that synergies across the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, Rio Conventions and collaboration are a pre-requirement for success.

IUCN is building a compelling evidence base, developing standards, compiling best practices, attracting funding, and advocating for NbS to ensure their long-term contribution to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Tools such as the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions™ help to improve not only the effectiveness of such interventions, but also their equitability, transparency, and sustainability; meaningful participation of vulnerable and historically marginalised groups; and positive contributions to biodiversity and ecosystem health.

IUCN will continue to assist countries in achieving their Sendai targets through:

- Continue expanding knowledge and awareness of how ecosystem degradation exacerbates vulnerability to disasters and the role of Nature-based Solutions in building resilience.
- Advocate for the equitable and participatory implementation of Nature-based Solutions for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.
- Support cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships across science, policy, and practice for sustainable development.
- Raise awareness of loss and damage and promote coordinated and enhanced action across climate change and disaster risk reduction, in support of those most affected by disasters in the context of climate change.
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement in mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into disaster-sensitive planning, implementation, decision-making and policy influence at all levels and across sectors.
- Encouraging the adoption and implementation of the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions™ for achieving priorities 2, 3 and 4 of the Sendai Framework, and the Asia-Pacific Action Plan 2021-2024 for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Moving forward, several key actions are needed:

- NbS should be integrated into the national frameworks such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of all countries in the region with specific and quantifiable targets.
- Support capacity building on NbS, and targeted research and collection of scientific data to provide evidence to quantify NbS benefits and support the integration of NbS within climate change and DRR policy frameworks.
- Finally, innovative financing mechanisms and investments are needed to strengthen and diversify the finance base for NbS as well as a better understanding of the benefits NbS can deliver.