

New Zealand APMCDRR 2022 Country Statement

Aotearoa New Zealand thanks the Government of Australia and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for convening this conference. We welcome the opportunity to explore how our region can better mitigate disaster risks.

Since the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted in 2015, New Zealand, has faced significant, complex and concurrent emergency events that have tested our disaster management arrangements across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery.

New Zealanders face ongoing risk from a broad range of hazards. Given our risk landscape, and the uncertainty of the wider domestic and global environment, it is important for us to take deliberate steps to improve our resilience. We can do much to reduce our risks, through both a risk management approach, and by building broader societal resilience. We can also ensure we have effective processes in place for responding to and recovering from emergencies and other types of disruption when they do happen.

New Zealand strongly endorses the Sendai Framework and notes that it has been a key influence in the development of our National Disaster Resilience Strategy.

The National Disaster Resilience Strategy outlines the vision and long-term goals for civil defence emergency management in New Zealand, and the objectives to be pursued to meet those goals. It sets out what we expect in respect of a resilient New Zealand, and what we want to achieve over the next 10 years. This Strategy is for all New Zealanders, and all those who live, work or visit here. It is intended to provide a common agenda for resilience that individual organisations, agencies, and groups can align with for collective impact.

The National Disaster Resilience Strategy demonstrates how New Zealand intends to meet the priorities of the Sendai Framework. The principles and priorities of the Sendai Framework have been incorporated into the Strategy; and many of the national and local recommended actions have been instrumental in developing the Strategy objectives.

The National Disaster Resilience Strategy sets three priorities to improve our nation's resilience to disasters:

- **Managing risks:** what we can do to minimise the risks we face and limit the impacts to be managed if hazards occur;
- **Effective response to and recovery from emergencies:** building our capability and capacity to manage emergencies when they do happen; and
- **Enabling, empowering, and supporting community resilience:** building a culture of resilience in New Zealand so that everyone can participate in and contribute to communities' – and the nation's – resilience.

We are currently working to modernise the framework of legislation and guidance that underpins New Zealand's emergency management system. This effort is part of a wider programme of work that will deliver extensive change to New Zealand's emergency management system.

The ability of critical infrastructure systems to function during adverse conditions and quickly recover to acceptable levels of service after an event is fundamental to the wellbeing of communities. We are seeking to better define 'Critical Infrastructure' in legislation so that it encompasses services that are essential for everyday life and is aligned with international best practice.

We will also modernise the expectations for Critical Infrastructure providers to prepare for and respond to disasters; and strengthen arrangements to enhance the resilience of New Zealand's critical infrastructure through close collaboration and enhanced monitoring with Critical Infrastructure providers.

Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are essential in building disaster resilience. Time and time again during emergencies we have seen Māori carry out vital work in ensuring the welfare of their people, and those in the communities surrounding them.

We are seeking to ensure that genuine partnership with Māori is incorporated at all levels of New Zealand's emergency management system, including at the governance, planning and operational levels.

Hazard events and emergencies disproportionately impact some populations. In New Zealand, these populations include Māori, Pacific peoples, rural communities, the culturally and linguistically diverse, seniors, women and children, gender diverse groups and those experiencing socio-economic deprivation, disability, ill health, or isolation.

We are working to update our legislative framework to ensure that community groups representing people who are disproportionately impacted by emergencies can meaningfully participate in the development, implementation, and monitoring of local Civil Defence Emergency Management plans so that the needs of vulnerable people and communities are included at the outset, rather than being an afterthought.

Through inclusive and community-led participation in emergency management, our focus is on enabling and empowering individuals, households, organisations, and businesses to build their resilience, paying particular attention to those people and groups who may be disproportionately affected by disaster.

The New Zealand National Emergency Management Agency's getready.govt.nz website helps individuals, families, communities, schools and businesses get ready for, respond to and recover from emergency events. The website content is currently available in seven languages including New Zealand Sign Language and Te Reo Māori (the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand). These translations have been undertaken as part of a wider project that has seen the website brought into line with the latest national and international accessibility standards, and ten languages incrementally added. It will soon also be available in Easy Read, audio and large print.

We have taken action to reduce the risk from and improve how we respond to some of the most significant threats New Zealand faces.

All of New Zealand's coastline is at risk of tsunami which means most of us live, work, or play in areas under threat. Since the Sendai Framework was adopted in 2015, New Zealand has made significant improvements in our understanding of and approach to the risk posed by tsunami.

We have recently launched New Zealand's first national tsunami evacuation zone map. The new online map makes it easy for people to find out if they're in a tsunami evacuation zone and where to go to stay safe, and directs them to in-depth local evacuation information.

In addition to the national tsunami evacuation map, we have also established a National Geohazards Monitoring Centre, deployed a network of Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami (DART) buoys to provide early warning of tsunami threats to New Zealand and also to our

neighbours in the South Pacific, rolled out an emergency cell broadcasting system, and opened the National Emergency Management Agency's 24-7 Monitoring, Alerting and Reporting Centre.

Just in the last few months New Zealand has seen massive floods, storms, fires in wetlands, and droughts across the country, and we know similar extreme events are happening more frequently here 'across the ditch'. These events demonstrate the case for urgent action on climate change – action to protect lives, incomes, homes, businesses and infrastructure.

In June this year we launched Aotearoa New Zealand's first national adaptation plan. It brings together in one place the Government's current efforts to build our climate resilience. And it sets out a proposed work programme, indicating our priorities for the next six years. The actions in this plan are intended to drive a significant, long-term shift in our policy and institutional frameworks. They will ensure climate-resilient development in the right places and support communities in considering a range of adaptation options. And they will result in better information about what our future climate will look like, enabling better decisions about our response.

New Zealand is committed to supporting adaptation and building resilience both domestically and internationally. Nowhere does this matter more than our own region, the Pacific, where the impacts of climate change are being felt on a daily basis and the losses and damages caused by these impacts are mounting. Across the Blue Pacific Continent, vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is acute. At the most recent Pacific Island Forum meeting, Leaders declared that the Pacific is facing a Climate Emergency that threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems.

I was pleased for NEMA to join the inaugural Disaster Risk Reduction Ministers' Meeting in Nadi last week where we talked about the value of greater regional cooperation for humanitarian assistance.

We have increased support to build greater resilience to climate change, through the new commitment of NZ \$1.3 billion in climate finance, announced just before the 2021 United Nations climate change conference (COP26). This funding will support Pacific and other lower income countries to slow the change and cushion its impacts.

The *Aotearoa New Zealand International Climate Finance Strategy – Tuia te Waka a Kiwa* sets out how that record funding will be deployed to best effect. The Strategy has four key goals:

- Accelerated climate change mitigation
- Enhanced resilience and adaptation to the impacts of climate change
- Improved institutional capability and evidence-based decision making
- Leveraged investment to achieve greater climate impact

The high-level principles for investing in climate action in other countries reflect a focus on partnership; achieving a collective impact to make a difference globally; bringing a long-term perspective; and linking with like-minded partners, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

In particular, the International Climate Finance Strategy will ensure the assistance we provide helps countries and communities to build climate resilience on their own terms. We recognise the importance of local solutions. Many communities have been adapting to changes in their environment for decades. Aotearoa New Zealand will support indigenous-led approaches and work with communities to recognise their history, culture and expertise as central to effectively responding to climate change.

The strategy also drives towards working at scale, including by leveraging opportunities in the private sector and linking up with other donors to work in innovative ways – such as the standout example in the insurance sector, where new products give small farmers and businesses in the Pacific a chance to prepare themselves financially for cyclones and other disasters. These new ‘weather indexed’ micro-insurance products have been introduced in Fiji (and other Pacific communities soon) under the Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme run by the UN Capital Development Fund, with both our countries’ support.

With the severity and frequency of disasters continuing to increase globally, it is more important now than ever that countries work together towards the shared goals and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes the efforts of all countries to reduce disaster risk nationally and globally. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder: tātou, tātou — all of us together.