

## 6. Evaluation in a World of Risk and Uncertainty: How to Evaluate Resilience?

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This paper is based on the contributions by the Istanbul National Evaluation Capacities Conference (NEC) panelists: Karen Ortega, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat (on the Transparency Framework under the Paris Climate Agreement); Magda Stepanyan, Risk Society (on measuring progress under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction); Alan Fox, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Independent Evaluation Office (on the challenges and pathways to evaluating resilience); Krunoslav Katic, CONSEC-Consulting in Security (on social vulnerability assessment tools); Ala Druta, Moldova Climate Change Office (on the national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for climate change adaptation in the Republic of Moldova); and Olga Atrashchanka, UNDP Belarus (on the application of social, economic, environmental determinants for programme and project M&E).

In the past decades, our planet and societies have been experiencing unprecedented impacts related to climate change and climate-induced disasters, transforming our conventional understanding of resilience and risk management. These impacts are expected to become more intense and occur more frequently as a result of current and future climate change. Over the past decades, each succeeding year is setting a record as the warmest. Sea levels have been rising three times faster in the past two decades, putting more communities, cities and nations across the globe at risk. Glaciers have been in retreat almost everywhere in the world. More people are becoming climate migrants, having lost their homes and livelihoods. By 2030, nearly half of the world's population will be living under severe water stress. All continents are affected by increasing desertification and intensified droughts. Climate-related hazards such as floods, mudflows, landslides and hailstorms have been intensifying across the world. In the past 20 years, disasters cost more than \$2 trillion, killed over 1.3 million and affected more than 4.4 billion people, including a

disproportionately high number of women, children and other vulnerable groups.<sup>132</sup> Climate change has been threatening food security, health and ecosystems integrity.

Climate change and disasters have been setting the new context of increasing risks and uncertainty for the development agenda at the global, national and local levels. In this new context of volatility, communities and nations are facing increasing, multiple and interconnected risks that can reverse decades of development progress. Development planners, practitioners and evaluators need to be equipped with the new tools and skills in order to ensure effective investment into the sustainable and resilient development and to measure the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The “traditional” understanding of resilience in the context of disaster preparedness and recovery needs to be reconsidered in the face of the growing climate risks and uncertainty. The introduction of climate change adaptation and resilience to “slow-onset” disasters brings many more issues to the table. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) projects include aspects of weather forecasting, climate information management, risk-informed financial planning and development zoning, government policy and regulatory change for enhanced resilience and modifications to sectoral planning, as well as new early warning and emergency response systems. Furthermore, all development projects and programmes need to be risk-informed and mainstream climate and disaster risks in the design, implementation, sustainability and exit strategies. In this new context of volatility and increasing risk, the evaluators are facing multiple challenges related to the lack of definitions, tools, data, evaluation and attribution criteria, and competency to measure the change in vulnerability and resilience.

The NEC conference session, “Evaluation in a world of risk and uncertainty: How to evaluate resilience?”, set the stage for this discussion by presenting the monitoring, evaluation and progress tracking frameworks under the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Further, the session participants looked at specific country examples and discussed technical tools for monitoring and evaluating resilience-building activities.

## PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT AND ITS TRANSPARENCY FRAMEWORK

The Paris Agreement is the new, global treaty under the UNFCCC, which entered into force in November 2016 and under which *all countries* agreed to take action on climate change. At the heart of the agreement are the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that define national action on climate change (both mitigation and adaptation) and must increase in ambition over time. One hundred eighty-nine initial NDCs have been submitted to the UNFCCC by the member countries. The Paris Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the climate change by:

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132 United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, ‘Tackling future risks, economic losses and exposure’, 2013.