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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject: Disaster Risk Reduction in EU external action
- Draft Council conclusions

1. On 22 September 2022, the Working Party on Development Cooperation and International Partnerships (CODEV-PI) discussed Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with the Working Parties on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) and on Civil Protection (PROCIV).
2. On that same day, Delegates also had an opportunity to exchange informally with a representative of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), which is the UN body in charge of coordinating international efforts in DRR and monitoring the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
3. WP CODEV-PI discussed draft Council conclusions prepared by the Czech Presidency on that basis and reached agreement at working party level on 20 October 2022.
4. The Committee of Permanent Representatives is invited to confirm this agreement and to recommend that the Council approve the text which appears in the Annex to this note.

Draft Council conclusions on Disaster Risk Reduction in EU external action

1. **The Council acknowledges** that disasters, related human, economic and environmental losses and the underlying vulnerabilities that drive risk and fragility, such as conflict, poverty and inequality, are increasing just as ecosystems and habitats are at risk of collapse. The impacts of global shocks such as environmental degradation and climate change, armed conflicts, notably the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and health threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate the interconnected and systemic character of today's risk as well as its potential to evolve into disasters with cascading effects across geographies and sectors, and hamper human development.
2. **The Council stresses** the importance of scientific data and assessments on climate change and resulting hazards, its implications and impacts, such as increasing climate and other hazards, as well as adaptation and mitigation, protection and other options put forward by the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The fulfilment of these global agendas requires improved access to earth observation, including space-based data and related infrastructure, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries. The Council also stresses the complementary value of local and traditional knowledge and practices.
3. Extreme weather and slow-onset events exacerbated by climate change are becoming more frequent and intense and, when combined with environmental degradation, vulnerability and exposure, increase the risk of human, material and natural losses, raising adaptation, humanitarian and development needs, and further exacerbating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) financing gap. Degraded ecosystems can lead to competition and conflicts over scarce resources, notably land and water. The Council recognises the need to scale up adaptation efforts in an urgent manner, particularly since even halting all greenhouse gas emissions would still not prevent climate impacts.

4. **The Council notes** the priority that the European Union has expressly given to the green transition and the protection of biodiversity under the European Green Deal, the objective of climate neutrality referred to in the European Climate Law, as well as the ambition, supported by the Recovery Package, of a greener and more resilient Europe that is better equipped to face current and future challenges, including in its external action. **The Council recalls** the Council conclusions of i) 3 June 2021 on forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, ii) 19 November 2021 on the EU’s external action on water, iii) 23 November 2021 on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises, and iii) 3 March 2022 on civil protection work in view of climate change.
5. **The Council recognises** the importance of effective disaster risk reduction (DRR), anticipatory action and risk-informed development in saving lives and preserving well-being and dignity, reducing humanitarian needs, adapting to climate change, and achieving sustainable development and building resilience, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), leaving no one behind.
6. **The Council stresses** the importance of averting, minimising and addressing the loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events (sudden-onset) and slow-onset events, and the role of sustainable development, DRR, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), climate action and anticipatory action in reducing the risk of loss and damage. IWRM systems and infrastructures, including those related to WASH, should be more resilient and climate neutral.
7. **The Council recognises** the links between fragility, conflict and disasters. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, disasters can intensify the underlying causes of fragility and conflict drivers and destabilise prospects for sustainable recovery and peace. Participatory and inclusive DRR processes and anticipatory action in line with the triple humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus can serve as a tool for peacebuilding where disasters and conflicts interact, while conflict prevention measures are essential for an environment that is conducive to DRR. The Council stresses the need to integrate a multidimensional evaluation of risk, resilience and conflict sensitivity into the context analysis, planning, and monitoring and evaluation of joint action in partner countries, taking into account the multidimensional assessment tools of the EU as well as best practices from DRR specific tools¹.

¹ Such as CADRI.

8. **The Council recognises** that inequalities and poverty result in differentiated disaster impacts and emphasises that effective DRR requires ensuring that no-one is left behind and integrating a human rights-based approach, maintaining a gender equality, child-rights, age and disability inclusive focus during all stages of DRR planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as full, equal and meaningful participation. To this end, disaggregated data should be used and its comparability assured.
9. **The Council reaffirms** that the EU External Action on DRR should be aligned with and contribute to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and its global targets, and the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals and implementation framework.
10. **The Council welcomes**
 - a. The ‘Bali Agenda for Resilience’ as the outcome of the Seventh Session of the Global Platform for DRR (23-28 May 2022)² and the ‘European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction Roadmap for a disaster-resilient European and Central Asian region by 2030’ as the outcome of the European Regional Platform for DRR (25-26 November 2021)³.
 - b. The conclusions of the 2022 Global Assessment Report on DRR⁴ and the call for action to i) measure what we value, ii) design systems to factor in how human minds make decisions about risk, and iii) reconfigure governance and financial systems to work across silos and design in consultation with affected people.
 - c. The EU Presidency of the Platform on Disaster Displacement as an opportunity to strengthen efforts to address the challenge of population displacement prompted by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, promote global advocacy and support multilateral partnerships and processes.
 - d. The UN 2023 Water Conference as an opportunity to discuss at the highest level and make a commitment to investing in water as a lever to contribute to resilience, prevent and reduce the risk of disasters, and mobilise all stakeholders and sectors to accelerate action for water-related targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda.

² <https://globalplatform.undrr.org/publication/co-chairs-summary-bali-agenda-resilience>

³ <https://www.undrr.org/publication/european-forum-disaster-risk-reduction-roadmap-2021-2030>

⁴ <https://www.undrr.org/gar2022-our-world-risk>

- e. The amendment of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) legislation setting Union disaster resilience goals based on current and forward-looking scenarios, recognising that the UCPM plays an increasing role in the prevention of and preparedness for disasters, and establishing a Knowledge Network to incorporate capacity development and science systematically.
 - f. The Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment⁵ and the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations⁶, which will facilitate collective work on addressing the humanitarian impacts of the climate, biodiversity and environmental crises.
11. **The Council looks forward** to the continuation of the Glasgow Dialogue among UNFCCC Parties, relevant organisations and stakeholders to discuss the arrangements for the funding of activities for averting, minimising and addressing the loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, and **reconfirms** the EU's and its Member States' continued commitment to the full operationalisation of the Santiago Network as quickly as possible, to catalyse the demand-driven technical assistance of relevant organisations, bodies, networks and experts for the implementation of relevant approaches in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of the climate change.
12. In this context, **the Council calls** on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to:
- a. **Acknowledge** the contributions of and complementarity among DRR, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and other relevant approaches to averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage.
 - b. **Ensure** that EU development, peace, climate and humanitarian actions are risk-informed, thus enhancing the capacity of partner countries to engage in preventive action, address underlying drivers, deal with future shocks and stresses, and prepare, prevent, adapt and respond adequately to disasters.

⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment/humanitarian-aid-donors-declaration-climate-and-environment_en

⁶ <https://www.climate-charter.org>

- c. **Ensure** that disaster preparedness and DRR are mainstreamed in humanitarian as well as development policy and action, and **promote** joint funding responsibility across development, humanitarian, climate and peace actors, taking into account the specificity of each context and available resources to ensure the use of the most effective and appropriate funding tools.
- d. **Shift** from reactive crisis response to more proactive, forward-looking and anticipatory action, financing and risk management and, while respecting humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law (IHL), **strengthen** coordination, coherence and complementarity between humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) actions and actors, building on the lessons learnt from the pilot phase of the triple HDP nexus implementation, and **further operationalise** the nexus in all relevant countries, as well as further document effective implementation of DRR approaches in the context of the triple nexus.
- e. **Support** the integration of anticipatory action into the humanitarian programme cycle as well as adaptation plans in response to climate change, and the strengthening of preparedness and rapid access to support schemes in development planning.
- f. **Ensure** a conflict-sensitive, locally led and owned, child-centred, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, human rights-based and transformative approach to DRR that addresses the root causes of gender inequality and other inequalities in all policies and practices.
- g. **Enhance** cooperation through a Team Europe approach in the areas of DRR and the fight against climate change, considering the Team Europe Initiative on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa as an example.

- h. **Promote** disaster, climate and environmental risk assessments throughout humanitarian and development planning and programming as a crucial tool for mapping and evaluating risks, hazards, and vulnerabilities, and for identifying the capacities available and needed to reduce existing risks and avoid the creation of new risks, as well as to strengthen disaster preparedness. Risk assessments should be context specific, science based and should include a gender analysis. They should be conducted from the perspective of the affected population, in particular persons in vulnerable situations, ensuring their meaningful engagement in the analysis, decision-making and implementation of the assessment itself, considering issues such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, indigenous origin or identity and other characteristics. Due attention should be paid to diversity, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as conflict dynamics.
- i. **Strengthen** governance for comprehensive disaster, climate and environmental risk management across all levels and sectors, raise awareness of disaster risks, promote training and exercise, developing effective coordination mechanisms and long-term partnerships between different public authorities and relevant stakeholders, including local actors, indigenous peoples, academia, research institutions and the private sector, as well as women, children and youth organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organisations. Locally led solutions should be promoted, in line with the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation as agreed at COP 26 of the UNFCCC.
- j. **Promote** the design and implementation of new and innovative and people-centred approaches, including climate and disaster risk finance and insurance, through initiatives such as the Global Shield against Climate Risks initiative, to increase macroeconomic stability in partner countries and ensure systematic, coherent and sustained protection of persons most at risk and living in poverty, in particular in fragile and developing countries, with special attention to LDCs and SIDS. In this regard, cross-border and regional cooperation is key to long-term resilience.

- k. **Promote** the coordination of efforts in technology transfer and capacity building directly in affected regions, making use of innovation and new scientific approaches, including data, so as to benefit persons in vulnerable situations directly, including by making these solutions available as global public goods. Support partner countries in the design and implementation of policies and incentives to promote environmentally sustainable, climate- and disaster-resilient investments and enhance the climate proofing of infrastructures, including through nature-based solutions.
- l. **Reduce** the environmental footprint of EU action in the context of its external action.
- m. **Support** the UN Secretary-General’s call to ensure that every person on earth is protected by early warning systems within five years, putting at the core the end-to-end people-centred early warning value chain – from risk assessments to infrastructure and community last-mile outreach. The Council also recognises the importance of the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative⁷ in achieving that goal.
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⁷ As well as other relevant initiatives and tools, such as the WMO Integrated Global Observing System (WIGOS), the WMO Information System (WIS) and the Global Data Processing and Forecasting System (GDPFS), the WMO Coordination Mechanism (WCM), the Global Multi-hazard Alert System (GMAS), the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON), the Systematic Observation Financial Facility (SOFF), the WMO Vision and Strategy for Hydrology and associated Plan of Action, the Water and Climate Coalition, the Alliance for Hydromet Development and other partnerships with the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the private sector and other entities.