Response to the Co-Chairs' Initial Draft SDG Proposal

Mark Pelling
ICSU/IRDR SDG Process Representative
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Disasters have three key impacts on global sustainable development.

First, catastrophic disaster events have a concentrated impact undoing development gains for affected regions and households, large events of this kind are increasing with environmental change, increasing population and asset density in places at risk – as we have seen in the Indian Ocean Tsunami and great Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami, floods in Thailand and Bangladesh, storms in the Philippines, Central America and US (New York and New Orleans).

Second, more widespread erosive and dampening effects on the life quality of the poor come from the everyday losses associated with low-level hazards.

Third, the potential of cascading events magnifying impact which itself may be amplified through speculation in global commodity markets and limits to global reinsurance invites the potential of regional or global calamity. We have seen indicators of this through food security crises across Asia and Africa stimulated by failed harvests in Australia and global gain speculation, and in share price volatility following storm events in London and New York, regional economic impacts have been felt following flooding in Thailand and earthquakes in Japan.

The SDG OWG7 was clear in highlighting the centrality of improved disaster risk reduction and response if any proposed SDGs are to be met. The OWG7 sense was one of moving towards a number of integrated targets across any proposed set of Sustainable Development Goals. We agree with this position but feel that the present proposed targets and associated indicator suggestions do not yet properly capture the critical points where disaster risk reduction and response/recovery might be included to help enhance individual goals and move towards sustainable development.

Understanding the need for clear and positive indicators that can be realistically supplied with information our detailed suggestions for each focus area are summarised below.

Focus area 1: poverty eradication
The proposed indicators go some way (indirectly) to supporting efforts to reduce exposure and susceptibility to disaster loss in a society. We support the provision of social safety nets to all. What these indicators neglect is the importance of an indicator that can capture disaster risk impacts on poverty that set back development, especially for the poorest and for women. Neglecting this indicator miss an opportunity for integrating the complete range of

disaster risk reduction and response techniques and processes into sustainable poverty eradication. With this in mind we propose:

Prevent economic losses from disasters rising above 1% of GDP

This is a very basic indicator, one that all countries could readily provide data on and that does not require a baseline or other additional information. The target will be more difficult to achieve – and so hopefully support risk reducing behaviour in (1) smaller national economies (small island states, small mountainous states, poor coastal states) and (2) countries with very high value infrastructure located in places exposed to disaster risk (rapidly urbanising economies with large coastal populations, principally in Asia). (3) The indicator will be essential in tracking potential for catastrophic regional or global economic effects as cascading disaster events – eg where massive loss in key trading centres infect the economic performance of a region or globally with systemic consequences for the global economy and poverty. These are three priorities for disaster risk reduction. The indicator will miss the high impacts of disasters in poor agricultural economies (eg in the Sahel), and will miss the social and ecological impacts of disasters that are as important as economic losses – these can be addressed under other focus areas to provide a joined up set of indicators.

Focus area 2: Food security and nutrition

We support the proposed indicators which will reduce the sensitivity to impacts of drought and flood stress in natural resource dependent communities. The indicators miss one key opportunity for enhancing rural livelihoods and food security – better access to appropriate weather information. This need stands out given the scope for an indicator to include provision of market information. There is a good deal of innovation around information access, from national meteorological departments, state market analysis centres and the private sector, often with tie-ins to local information systems and applying information technology (mobile phones, SMS texts, radio) to disseminate. It is recognised, especially in drought prone, poor countries that lack of availability of good quality and trusted forecasts has been an impediment to sustainability in the rural sector and that with climate change this is an increasing concern. Where innovative systems have been put in place farmers have shown dramatic increases in yield and reduced risk and poverty. An indicator to support this would be progressive and will provide momentum to an agenda already in progress. We propose an amendment:

Strengthening resilience of farming systems and food supplies to climate change *including through access to high quality weather information services*

Focus area 3. Health and population dynamics

The existing proposed indicators will be helpful in stimulating vulnerability reduction, but we propose an additional emphasis to capture the need for health infrastructure and workers to be protected during disaster and for rapid and equitable delivery of health services following disaster events. This is key in minimising losses in concentrated catastrophic disasters, too often simple health care is unavailable leading to complications and increasing mortality and disability or chronic conditions with additional depressing effects on poverty reduction. We propose the following indicators:

Ensure key health infrastructure is built to disaster resistant standards

Strengthen the ability of health systems to recover and deliver emergency care post-disaster

Focus area 4. Education
Perhaps the most affecting impact of disaster events occurs when education infrastructure – schools and dormitories – are not built to disaster resistant standards. Earthquake in China recently highlighted this. Alternatively, when schools are well designed and students trained in disaster safety children can be amongst the most secure populations, examples of this were beacons of hope following the great Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami. We propose the following indicators:

Ensure key education infrastructure is built to disaster resistant standards

Ensure teaching curricula include disaster training for all

Focus area 5. Gender equality and women's empowerment
The proposed indicators are central for sustainable development and are strongly supported. The indicators are sufficiently open to be integrated into disaster risk management programing, including priority areas like shelter and refugee camp management.

Focus area 6. Water and sanitation
In a 'whole water cycle' approach flood should be emphasised alongside scarcity and drought. 'Water related disasters' are included in discussion and as a specific indicator – we support this strongly, but recommend explicit mention of flooding given flooding is the largest cause of damage.

The challenge facing this indicator will be to determine how best to indicate risk and impact reduction. Metrics for risk reduction could focus on inputs (legislation, capacity etc) and impacts on outputs (absolute and relative physical, economic and health impacts). Impacts will be hardest to track with losses contingent upon hazard severity. Indicators should also consider measuring the effectiveness of risk response and recovery in reducing poverty. The norm in existing recovery programmes to aim for a return to pre-disaster status, and often even this is not met. Neither outcome is consistent with a progressive ambition sof the SDGs. We propose and amendment:

Reducing risks and impacts of water-related disasters, *especially floods and including effective response recovery and reconstruction*.

Focus area 7: Energy
Moving away from dependence on fossil fuels and mitigation of human induced climate change is a core priority for sustainable reduction of disaster risk. We strongly endorse all indicators that support this agenda. Improving energy efficiency in buildings will also reduce risk from heat and cold shocks, especially amongst the growing elderly population. Energy is a critical infrastructure that can play a pivotal role in amplifying disaster events – wind storms, floods, earthquakes can lead to failure in energy supply and distribution systems with impacts on livelihoods, wellbeing and security well beyond the direct effects of the natural hazard itself. This is especially the case in urban areas dependent on integrated energy systems for land drainage, water pumping and communications. To capture this we propose the following additional indicator:

Building disaster resilience into energy supply and distribution systems

Focus area 8. Economic growth
Economic growth and disaster resilience are intimately linked. The private sector is an important actor in risk management and this must be encouraged both within individual business and across supply chains, potentially to include support for labour (through safe housing for example) to maintain productivity even in the aftermath of disasters. This is important in containing economic losses and in helping to meet the proposed new indicator under Focus area 1. To emphasise this we propose the following additions:

Enhanced security of economic activity through business contingency and supply chain risk management approaches

To maximise sustainability, investments in infrastructure should meet disaster resilient standards.

Focus area 9. Industrialization
Industrialization as part of development can either build risk in or take risk out of ongoing processes. Building risk out of industrialisation processes will require support for land-use planning, emergency services and on-site staff training as well as design to disaster standards and effective regulation. To emphasise this responsibility we propose an amendment:

Investment in sound *disaster resilient* industrialization

Focus area 10. Infrastructure
Much like industrialization processes, infrastructure can either build risk in or take risk out of ongoing development processes. Building risk out of development requires support for land-use planning, integrated systems planning – especially in cities dependent on interconnected infrastructures, building to disaster standards and effective regulation. This is a basic requirement for development to be oriented in a way that can prevent the accumulation of risk and maximise national opportunities to prevent cascading disasters and catastrophic impacts across the economy of a city or nation, and potentially beyond. To emphasise this responsibility we propose an amendment:

Investment in sound *disaster resilient* infrastructure

Focus area 11. Employment and decent work for all
We support this focus area and its emphasis on rights for those in work and retired. This is a core underpinning of vulnerability reduction. In particular we support encouragement through the SDG process of organised and collective action by and for workers. This is associated with wider social organising and enhanced resilience especially amongst the urban poor.

Focus area 12. Promoting equality
Disaster losses are an expression of inequality, often accruing to the poorest, being most pronounced in poorer countries and exaggerating this poverty. Promoting equality suggests an agenda that would emphasise the need to raise the most vulnerable out of vulnerability to support poverty eradication, rather than those at a borderline threshold of security, or at least that additional attention be placed on the very vulnerable. Vulnerability is context and hazard specific but generic indicators exist and are deployed by humanitarian agencies and academic work to compare vulnerability. Inequality in disaster vulnerability and loss will be supported by areas already under consideration and in particular we support social protection systems and highlight the potential for microfinance here as a tool that can both indicate and help to

build deeper social binds for support in society There are limits t the contribution microfinance insurance tools can make when face with large covariant risk where all local partners are exposed, and there is a role here for wider financial underpinnings of microinsurance to run alongside microfinance schemes. Support for microfinance has implications going beyond those exposed to disaster risk and can raise living standards and prevent a drift into indebtedness amongst the poor in richer as well as poorer countries. We propose an amendment;

…progress in education, industrialization, infrastructure, *financial services including microfinance*, energy and means of implementation.

Focus area 13. Sustainable cities and human settlements
We support the inclusion of 'strengthening resilience to natural disasters' as a potential indicator. This should operate at multiple scales and be applied to households and families, the economy and social organisation as well as infrastructure and planning systems.

Focus area 14. Sustainable consumption and production
We support the indicators proposed for this theme area. The area itself as fundamental in any serious shift towards sustainable development.

Focus area 15. Climate
It is disappointing that disaster risk management has not been included as a key pathway for supporting adaptation to climate change. The IPCC in its SREX report is clear that the two agendas overlap considerably and that building resilience and adaptive capacity in developing countries would be enhanced by supporting disaster risk management. Disaster risk management goes beyond climate change associated events so is a larger policy area but can be usefully connected to climate change adaptation. We consider that removing disaster risk from this focus area is beneficial for climate which is an important global area for action. However this leaves unresolved the challenge of placing disaster risk management and reduction within the goals. We support a series of indicators as defined in this response. This has the advantage of not splitting disaster risk management into climatic and non-climatic events and requiring any degree of attribution for action to be taken. On this basis we do not propose a return to a hybrid are but we do recommend that within this theme is stated an indicator:

Building resilience and adaptive capacity in all countries with a view to reducing exposure of people and assets to hazards of hydrometeorological origin and those associated with sea-level rise.

Focus area 16. Maritime resources, oceans and seas
We support the indicators proposed for this theme area.

Focus area 17. Ecosystems and biodiversity
We support the indicators proposed for this theme area. If applied these will support sustainable rural economies and stabilise land degradation reducing creeping desertification, landslides and flash flooding.

Focus area 18. Means of implementation
We support this focus area and its agenda of closer international alignment and scope for regulation and accountability. The Hyogo Framework for Action which will be renegotiated

for 2015 is likely to cover risk reduction initiatives but we feel additional support and an SDG indicator would be helpful for disaster response, recovery and reconstruction. This agenda is internatioanlised with many non-state actors and requires common working principles and accountability if disaster reconstruction is to enhance sustainable development goals going forward and not simply rebuild risk into development, or worse, be a mechanisms for the extension of inequitable and unsustainable development. We propose:

Strengthening government capacity for relief, recovery and reconstruction and the establishment of international norms for humanitarian actors

Focus area 19. Peaceful and non-violent societies, capable institutions

Given that disaster risk has been lost from the climate area, we propose that it be placed as a headline item in this theme. The new theme would read:

Peaceful, non-violent and disaster free societies, capable institutions

This is preferred as it allows risk management for hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards – and combined events including those that include technological hazard, to be combined. This simplified the goal structure and ties well with the Hyogo framework for Action post 2015 which is likely to have this structure. If this core change is accepted then a range of indicator areas need to be considered. Certainly those indicators already stated that concern governance are supported and will be essential for any concerted effort to reduce disaster risk and improve reconstruction. To these we propose adding disaster risk management specific items:

Strengthening capacity for risk reduction to be built into development planning including effective enforcement of building and land-use planning regulation, support for inclusive processes and sustainable relocation away from places at risk including for indigenous groups and slum dwellers, ensuring that disaster response, recovery and reconstruction improves sustainable development outcomes and is sensitive to the needs of women, children, the aged and disabled.