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Contribute

Interested in getting involved and sharing your stories to SDMC(IU). Contact SDMC Team at pm-ro2@saarc-sdmc.org



Director's Message



Dear Reader,

The ongoing pandemic situation has changed our lives, our expectations, work prospects, livelihoods and has led to a new normal which is infested with not only heightened risk, but also of prolonged uncertainty. While the world is recuperating from the pandemic's fury, we are witnessing unfolding of another global crisis – Climate Change. It may be revealing itself much more slowly, but its effects are no less severe and unlike the pandemic, these risks are not temporary but the impacts which include – ravaged crops and livestock with harrowing rain, intense flooding, strong winds, and thirst-inducing drought will be with us for generations to come. The recent editions of the IPCC Assessment Reports have already been declared as 'code RED' for humanity. For the South Asian region these reports have clear takeaways which tell us that without aggressive global mitigation the economic damages will be steep, and that there is prudent need to redesign our cities, our energy systems and water resources to be consistent with climate-resilient development pathways. It is pertinent to understand that we are all together in the same boat, this planet, so we must also learn and work together to achieve the same shared objective of global adaptation through strategic collaborations & cooperation.

Taking cognizance of the same, SDMC (IU) organized a webinar on 'Climate Risk Management in a Changing Environment' on 15 March 2022. An outcome document with takeaways and way forward will be released shortly, so do please watch this space. This biannual newsletter covers details of activities carried out by SDMC (IU) in past months. Also, we have tried to compile insights provided by the IPCC Reports for South Asian Region which is available in the last section of this issue. I hope the content here will surely do value addition to the existing knowledge base.

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SDMC (IU) Participates in South Asia Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals

The “Fifth South Asian SDG Forum” held in Sri Lanka, on the 15th and 16th of November, 2021. The forum focused on inclusive, resilient and sustainable strategies towards COVID-19 recovery efforts and identify priorities to accelerate the Goals of the 2030 Agenda, with emphasis on climate- and environment-responsive approaches to building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of the 2021 SASF was aligned with the theme of the 2022 HLPF and the APFSD, “Building back better from COVID-19” while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Forum provided an opportunity to discuss how the South and South-West Asia subregion can cooperate to assess progress on the thematic SDGs for review by the HLPF in 2022, i.e., Goals 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 14 (Life below water), 15 (Life on land) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals).



10.11.2021

Fifth South Asia Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals
Building back better from COVID-19 while accelerating the implementation of the SDGs in South and South-West Asia

15-16 November 2021

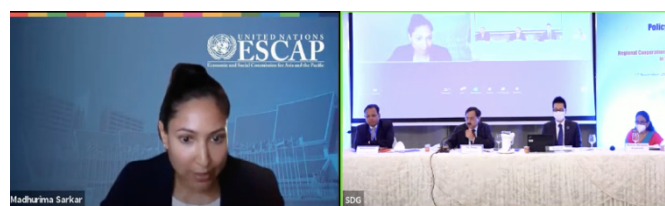
SDMC (IU) Participates in Policy dialogue on regional cooperation for sustainable development in South Asia

Mr. P. K. Taneja, Director – SAARC Disaster Management Centre (IU), participated in the Policy

dialogue on regional cooperation for sustainable development in South Asia, held in Sri Lanka, on the 17th of November, 2021. While moderating session on ‘Regional Cooperation for addressing Disaster Risks and Building Climate Resilience’, Director-SDMC stressed on the fact that in order to build resilience to disaster risks, the siloed and sectoral approach is insufficient and the interplay between the social-economic-environment aspects of the SDGs needs to be considered. There is a need to understand the impact of risks, such as through impact-based forecasting, and community level warning systems are important to cope with growing uncertainties.



Director-SDMC also stated that disaster resilient infrastructure requires the development of both hard and soft infrastructure (e.g., managing of internal displacements, social security, etc.) and the leveraging of existing regional cooperation mechanisms, such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, International Solar Alliance, One World One Sun One Grid Initiative, is important.



SDMC (IU) participates in Asia Pacific Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction Forum

Mr. P. K. Taneja, Director – SAARC Disaster Management Centre (IU), participated in the Asia Pacific Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction (APP-DRR) Forum, hosted virtually, on the 8th and 9th of December, 2021. The APP-DRR serves as the main consultation forum for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference for DRR (APMCDRR). Collectively, the APP-DRR and APMCDRR form the regional platform for disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region. During his virtual address, Director – SDMC stated that we need to strengthen our efforts to understand risk in its true nature and character, through processes and methods incorporating a balance of science, engineering, technology and social dimensions. The Director also mentioned that reduction of systemic risk needs a transformation of the disaster risk governance machineries of the day and political willingness and leadership is crucial and a key enabler - For example, the digital platform created by SDMC (IU) to serve as an inventory of important information on management of COVID-19 by the SAARC Member States as an outcome of the dialogue amongst the Heads of the SAARC Countries at the very beginning of Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. The address concluded with the note that while we strategize to build back better, we need to prioritize community-based, multi-hazard early warnings which can actually contribute to Targets A to D of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

SDMC (IU) Organizes Webinar on Climate Risk Management in Changing Environment

Taking account of ongoing climate emergency, SDMC (IU) organized a webinar on ‘Climate Risk Management in a Changing Environment’ on 15 March 2022 in collaboration with UNDRR ONEA-GETI and UNESCAP. The webinar aimed to engage Senior Officers from Ministries/ Dept. dealing with Sustainable Development, Economic Affairs; National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMOs) from the SAARC Member States. The underlying objective for organizing the webinar was to understand the physical basis of climate change and develop a fair understanding of climate risk assessment and illustrate the plausible impacts of climate change on different sectors of importance. The webinar was attended by ___ participants from all SAARC nations except Pakistan.

The poster for the webinar features the logos of ESCAP (Moving Forward Together), UNDRR (UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), and SAARC (Disaster Management Centre). The title is 'Webinar on Climate Risk Management in a Changing Environment'. The event details are as follows:

Opening Remarks:	Moderators:
1. Mr. P K Taneja, Director - SDMC(IU)	1. Mr. P K Taneja, Director - SDMC(IU)
Key Speakers:	2. Dr. Repaul Kanji, PMRO – SDMC (IU)
1. Dr. G. Bala, IISc Bangalore	
2. Dr. Krishna Achuta Rao, IIT Delhi	
3. Dr. Sanjay K Srivastava, UNESCAP	
4. Dr. Madhurima Sarkar, UNESCAP	
5. Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia, UNDRR ONEA-GETI	

Date: 15th March 2022 | Time: 13:30 – 16:30 IST
Platform: Zoom Meeting

The first session discussed the broader global picture of global warming or climate change including the latest scientific assessment by IPCC. The session highlighted that many recent changes in the climate system are unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years and the regional changes we experience would increase with

increased levels of global warming as for every tonne of CO₂ we emit into the atmosphere would add to future global warming.

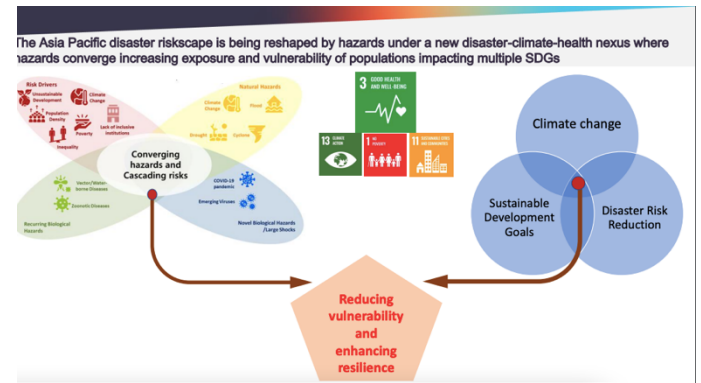


The second session discussed the South Asian regional scenario of the physical basis of climate change. The session highlighted that the South Asian monsoon has weakened in the second half of the 20th century and the dominant cause of the observed decrease is the anthropogenic aerosol forcing. The session stressed that heatwaves/humid heat stress and extreme precipitation will be intense and frequent during the 21st century.



The third session provided details of the insights provided by the ‘Risk & Resilience portal of UNESCAP’ for the SAARC region. During the session it was brought out that for SAARC countries, total number of Health

facilities exposed to cascading risk under Multi-Hazard worst case climate change scenario (RCP 8.5) is 38,370 which is 67% of total health facilities in the region.



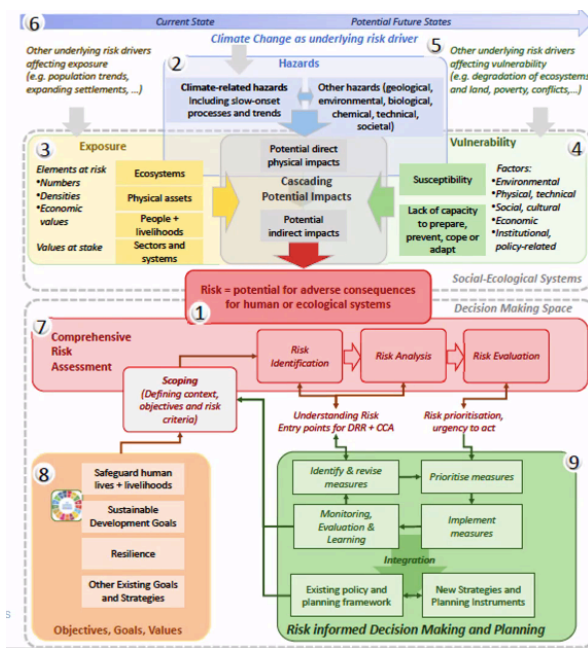
It was further revealed during the session that for SAARC countries, the total adaptation cost is estimated at \$ 56 billion with \$52.2 billion for adaptation to climate related hazards and \$3 billion for biological hazards and the highest total adaptation cost is recorded for India and Pakistan.

Climate change increases **frequency and intensity** of hazards and **exacerbates interactions** between biological and other hazards, which in turn **increases the underlying risk drivers of poverty and inequality**



The fourth session discussed that climate change is increasing disaster impacts, and smart adaptation as a

risk management strategy can strengthen resilience to disasters. The session highlighted the fact that disasters undermine climate change adaptive capacity and therefore effective disaster risk management can contribute in achieving adaptation goals. The session ended with an underlying notion that now it is time to shift the paradigm from ‘Managing Disaster Risks to Managing Uncertainties’.



The webinar concluded on high note with individual presentations from SAARC member nations except Pakistan.



Takeaways from recent editions of IPCC Reports for South Asian Region

Climate change and related risks are nowadays getting considerable airtime in the media due to the release of IPCC Assessment Reports which have already been declared as ‘code RED’ for humanity. According to these reports, climate breakdown is occurring quicker than anticipated and that, at current levels, many parts of the planet will become unlivable in the next few decades. The reports clearly highlights the fact that South Asia is on the ‘Front Lines’ of the climate crisis as the region houses some of the most vulnerable countries in terms of the population and is immensely prone to the impacts of hydro-meteorological hazards and will witness a serious disruption with widespread socio-economic impacts with ongoing pace of climate change. The trend in the ‘wet bulb’ temperature — an index of the impact of heat and humidity combined — and its effect on health will make it unsafe for people to work outdoors leading to serious consequences in terms of heat stress and industrial yield where the worker productivity is assumed to drop between 2% to 4% per degree Celsius rise in temperature. Global sea levels will likely rise this century even if the Governments meet their current emission-cutting pledges and with higher emissions, and if ice sheets collapse more quickly than expected, sea levels could rise as much as 2 metres this century and 5 metres by 2150. Rising sea levels and flooding threaten the coastal states of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Landlocked Afghanistan, Bhutan, and Nepal face rising temperatures, drought, and glacial melts. The region is

also home to the lowest lying country in the world: the densely populated island nation of the Maldives, which could be submerged in the not-too-distant future. Therefore, we need to understand that the risks of climate change are here to stay which is why all of us have to work together to appreciate the seriousness of these risks, and to start preparing for the changes they will bring. Rural-to-urban migration could lead to resource crunches in the cities, raising the risks of radicalization among people deprived of basic essentials. The IPCC report predicts urbanization will also intensify heat extremes and flooding. One of the IPCC report's main messages is there is still time to avert climate catastrophe through stronger mitigation policies. Some other necessary correctives—such as generating more non-agricultural livelihood opportunities and boosting officials' capacities on the climate front lines—will take a long time.

The IPCC reports acknowledge nature-based solutions as a tool to help support the environment and mitigate effects of climate change. The report acknowledges their proven benefits in promoting sedimentation to address flood risks, in delta areas that are at high risk of flooding even with a 1.5°C degree temperature rise. Nature-based solutions as a tool for climate mitigation is further highlighted due to its co-benefits in improving human well-being - change can be for the better!



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