



SAARC  
SAARC Disaster  
Management Centre (IU)

# NEWS LETTER

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### Contribute

Interested in getting involved and  
sharing your stories to SDMC(IU).  
Contact SDMC Team at  
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## Director's Message



Dear Reader,

Seven years ago, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) was adopted by the international community as a comprehensive framework to reduce disaster risks worldwide. Although progress has been made in implementing the framework, recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria have demonstrated urgent need for effective disaster preparedness and response. The destruction caused by the earthquakes gives an impression that the "Build Back Better" component of SFDRR, which emphasizes transformative and resilient qualities, is not being implemented effectively. There has been considerable advancement in our efforts to decrease seismic risk, such as the creation of tools for modelling earthquake effects, retrofitting older buildings, and enforcing more stringent building codes for new constructions, the occurrence of recent earthquakes has exposed other risk drivers that are frequently overlooked. These risk drivers include rapid and unregulated urbanization, deterioration of the environment, and the systemic nature of risk.

"Build back better" entails avoiding relocating individuals back to areas prone to disasters and making them more resilient in case reconstruction becomes necessary. Prevention is cost-effective compared to the cost of reconstruction and recovery, but it is not being prioritized. It is essential for governments to prioritize disaster risk reduction efforts and take proactive measures to minimize the damage to life and property that a major hazard could cause. Most Nations of South Asian Region are considered unsafe from earthquakes due to the active tectonic plate movement, resulting in the deformation of the Himalayas and other mountains and unpredictable seismic activity. Scientists have already warned of a strong likelihood of a major earthquake in the Himalayan region. The SAARC region has already experienced several powerful earthquakes, including the deadly Bhuj earthquake of 2001 and the 2015 Nepal earthquake. While some SAARC nations have an earthquake-proof building policy, it is unclear how effectively it is being implemented in densely populated cities. There are guidelines for constructing earthquake-resistant structures, but as the release of strained energy and subsequent earthquakes cannot be predicted, the risk remains.

With India assuming the G20 Presidency for the current year and formation of "Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction", we have a credible opportunity to deliberate on implementation of preventive measures, improvement of our preparedness, response and recovery efforts and thereby reducing the significant and emerging risks prevalent in the region.

SDMC (IU) has been working tirelessly to promote a culture of disaster resilience in the region. We recently conducted a Workshop on "Urban Resilience" to provide a comprehensive framework for making cities resilient. Additionally, we organized a workshop on "Approaches to Socio-Economic Recovery from COVID-19" to emphasize the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach that considers the needs and aspirations of all segments of society. In the current issue of our biannual newsletter, we have highlighted the details of our activities over the past months. We hope that the content will be insightful for our readers.

## Residential Workshop on Urban Resilience and Making Cities Resilient

SDMC (IU) with support from United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Global Education and Training Institute (GETI) and Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative conducted a Residential Workshop on Urban Resilience and Making Cities Resilient on 5-8 December 2023. The overall objective of the workshop was to serve as a fundamental training on urban disaster and climate resilience. The Workshop aimed to increase the knowledge and capacities on disaster risk reduction and climate resilience and introduce the Resilience Roadmap, the normative framework guiding cities towards a long-term resilience investment and other offers by MCR2030 partners. It also tried to provide approaches and tools to further support resilience building at the local level and strengthen national and local government linkage and support on disaster and climate risk reduction to foster city-to-city exchange and learning of good practices.



The workshop was attended by delegates from the national ministry of urban development, and, officials from urban local bodies like municipalities of SAARC Member States. The training was facilitated by the trainers from UNDRR Global Education and Training Institute (GETI) and SAARC Disaster Management Centre (IU), joined by guest speakers from partner institutes.



Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030), is a 10-year global partnership accelerating local resilience, provides a clear 3-stage Resilience Roadmap guiding cities and municipalities towards taking a long-term and continuous approach to resilience investments, from awareness raising to enhanced strategic planning and taking a whole-of-society approach to implementation. Founded on the fact that disaster prevention is an investment and not a cost, MCR2030 aims to leave No Municipality Behind in this ambition.

MCR2030 prioritizes strengthening of the local resilience agenda and the link between national and sub-national in terms of coordination, planning and to the implementation of resilience actions as well as across city actors. MCR2030 offers a platform for cities to access knowledge, experience, networks, tools, resources and services in support of their resilience journey to ensure cities become inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable by 2030, contributing directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG11) "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", and other global frameworks including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda.

## Residential Workshop on Approaches to "Socio-Economic Recovery from COVID-19"

In response to COVID-19, countries have implemented post COVID recovery and stimulus packages around the world; but the focus remains on livelihoods and employment creation, and environment is once again not a priority. For example, green recovery measures are still a small component of total COVID-19 spending (only 21% of recovery spending, or only around 4% of the USD 17 trillion rescue and recovery spending combined). Significant funds are still allocated to measures with likely environmentally negative and mixed impacts. However, the recovery plans that governments are putting in place have the potential to create a recovery that is both green and inclusive. Such a recovery can be defined by its potential to create opportunities for income, jobs and growth, and at the same time accelerate action on medium and long-term environmental goals, both national and global. Such action will significantly enhance the resilience of economies and societies in the face of accelerating environmental challenges.



SDMC (IU) with support from United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducted a 4-day Residential Workshop on "Approaches to Socio-

Economic Recovery from COVID-19" on 1-4 March 2023. The objective of the workshop was to discuss the systematic and scientific approaches for promoting green and sustainable recovery in the response to Covid-19. The workshop also aims to highlight the critical role of green infrastructure in supporting economic growth and livelihoods, while safeguarding the Paris Agreement targets. The workshop was attended by Senior Officers from Ministries (especially, health, education, tourism, industry and commerce, employment and livelihoods, gender, social protection) from SAARC Member States dealing with Disaster Risk Management, Disaster Response; National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMOs) from all the SAARC Member States.



During the course of the Workshop deliberations were made on Recovery Challenges in COVID- 19 and Developing a Recovery Framework and Strategy, Approach to assessing Socio Economic impacts of COVID -19, Approaches to Health Recovery, Approach to Economic Recovery with Sectors focus on Agriculture, Food Security Tourism, Trade, Commerce, MSMEs, Employment and Livelihood Recovery etc. The Workshop also covered details about Green Recovery Approaches, Ways to Building Resilient systems and Innovations in COVID-19 Recovery.



## Celebration of 38th SAARC Charter Day

The 38th SAARC Charter Day was observed on the 8th of December 2022, during the regional workshop on Urban Resilience and Making Cities Resilient, to commemorate the signing of the SAARC Charter on the 8th of December in 1985 by the leaders of the Seven South Asian Countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

SAARC was joined by the Afghanistan as a Member in the month of April, 2007.



To reinforce the spirit of building resilience in the South Asian Region, a special session was organised to discuss and learn from some good practices in the realm of urban resilience and sustainability. The panel discussion highlighted various aspects of urban resilience through deliberations on case-studies from Surat City (by Mr. Kamlesh Yagnik), GIFT City (by Mr. Rajeev Sharma) and concluded with a discussion on how sustainability is profitable (by Mr. Sameer Sinha). Although the discussions focused on urban resilience, the moderator (Mr. P. K. Taneja, Director – SDMC (IU)), ensured that the cited examples are looked at as initiatives with potential to be upscaled and extrapolated much beyond the urban boundaries.

## South Asians 15 times more likely die from climate change impact: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

South Asia has been identified as one of the global climate crisis hotspots where people are 15 times more likely to die from climate impacts than other regions, according to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Speaking at UN-sponsored fund-raising conference in Geneva to aid Pakistan's recovery from last year's devastating floods, he highlighted that developing countries least responsible for climate change are the first to suffer. He urged global leaders to address the brutal injustice of loss and damage suffered by developing nations due to climate change.



Pakistan, which represents less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, was hit hard by the floods, affecting over 33 million people, killing more than 1,700 and laying waste to 1.8 million hectares of farmland, according to the UN. Pakistan received pledges of more than \$9 billion at the conference, with more than half of the commitments coming from developing nations. Also, developed nations were called upon to fulfil their promise to double adaptation finance of \$100 billion goal to support developing countries in their efforts to cope with climate change.

## **Empowering and prioritizing women in the forefront of climate action**

Climate change has emerged as a significant non-traditional security threat over the past decade, and South Asia is identified as one of the most susceptible regions to its impacts. According to the IPCC's sixth assessment report, the region will experience more extreme weather conditions, including heatwaves and flash floods, which will have serious consequences for vulnerable and marginalized populations. Women are disproportionately affected by climate-related dangers, particularly in informal settlements or urban slums, due to their lack of authority and rigid gender limits and restrictions. Climate change and related risks have exacerbated existing gender disparities, rendering women less robust and disabled in the face of current and future difficulties. The socioeconomic consequences of climate change have hit South Asia hard, with agriculture and aquaculture expected to be impacted by sea-level rise, floods, heat, and water stress. Climate change has also become one of the leading causes of migration, and disasters frequently destroy people's money, livelihoods, and houses, forcing them to relocate in search of work. Women are disproportionately impacted by catastrophes, and gender-based violence, human trafficking, and prostitution are forced on vulnerable women and children in refugee camps and informal settlements.

Despite the need for a Gender Action Plan, which aims to incorporate a gender perspective in all aspects of climate action, the process of involving women in different parts of climate change negotiations and policy procedures is moving slowly. The conservative nature of most main regional religions, which are frequently motivated by patriarchal ideas that place women in a

secondary position, contributes to even greater gender related discrepancies. Thus, policymakers need to integrate women into the climate dialogue and take into account their linked social and economic vulnerabilities. Governments in South Asian nations have used climate change adaptation techniques that can be valuable for other countries in the region. Despite the challenges, South Asia is pioneering climate-smart solutions built on women's leadership, from coastal resilience and disaster risk reduction to sustainable forest management. Gender transformative climate initiatives are driving innovative approaches to climate resilience, with the new Regional Gender Action Plan (FY23-28) placing inclusive climate responses at the center of its efforts to improve outcomes for women in terms of skills, jobs, freedom from violence, and related focus areas.

## **G20's First Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group Meeting to Take Place in Gandhinagar from 30 March – 01 April 2023; Curtain Raiser Event at GIDM**

Climate change has emerged as a significant non-traditional security threat over the past decade, and South Asia is identified as one of the most The G20 is set to hold its first Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group meeting in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, under India's G20 Presidency from March 30th till April 1st, 2023. The meeting is expected to bring together over 80 delegates from G20 countries, Invitee Countries, and various international and regional organizations. The G20 Troika, comprising Indonesia, India, and Brazil, came together with the aim of catalysing efforts to achieve targets set by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The G20 Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group Meeting (DRR WG) intends to

include considerations for the Sendai Framework's mid-term review, renew multilateral cooperation at all levels, and inform future global policies and initiatives related to Disaster Risk Reduction. The DRR Track of the G20 India Presidency will include three DRR WG Meetings. During these meetings, discussions will be held on the five priorities identified, which include the global coverage of Early Warning Systems, increased commitment towards making infrastructure systems disaster-resilient, stronger national financial frameworks for DRR, a strengthened national and global disaster response system, and an increased application of ecosystems-based approaches to DRR. The main working group meeting will be led by India's National Disaster Management Authority, MHA, chaired by Shri Kamal Kishore, Member Secretary. Additionally, two side events are envisaged on 'Early Warning-Early Action' and 'Disaster Risk Reduction and its Impact on Global Infrastructure Resilience: Insights for the G20' respectively.

Delegates will also be hosted for the 'DRR WG: Curtain Raiser' session, which will provide a platform for them to share their experience of disasters and how they have used learnings from these to design a green, inclusive, and resilient future. The G20 1st DRR meeting will be inaugurated on March 30th, 2023, by Dr. PK Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister of State for Communication, and Government of India Shri DevuSinh Chauhan. The meeting is expected to inform future global policies and initiatives related to Disaster Risk Reduction.

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