

UGANDA RESILIENCE DIALOGUE REPORT

The Office of the Prime Minister, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, convened the first Uganda Resilience Dialogue on 26 November 2015 in Kampala. The objective of the Dialogue was to provide a space for representatives from Government ministries, departments and authorities and Uganda's development partners to present their perspectives on resilience in the context of Uganda's development and to explore options for enhancing resilience in the implementation of the second National Development Plan, the Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The Dialogue was moderated by Dr. Roy Mayenga, ResilientAfrica Network, Makerere University.

I. Background

Uganda derives much of its economic base from natural resources to sustain growth and livelihoods. Over 25 per cent of the country's GDP and 70 per cent of total labour force employment are directly related to the agriculture sector.¹ This represents both the formal and informal labour force, the majority of whom are women.

However, Uganda is highly vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Over 70 per cent of natural hazards are related to extreme hydro-meteorological events such as droughts, floods, severe thunder and lightning storms, among others. In the last decade alone, Uganda has experienced over 2,500 disaster events, causing death, destruction and lost opportunities. It is estimated that 43 per cent of Ugandans could regress into poverty during shocks.²

The second National Development Plan 2016-2020 (NDPII), in line with Vision 2040, sets out a roadmap towards Uganda achieving middle income status by 2020. To reach this, the Government of Uganda has prioritised investment in five areas: (1) agriculture; (2) tourism; (3) mineral, oil and gas; (4) infrastructure; and (5) human capital development. For investments in these areas to be fully realised, there is an implicit need to manage potential disaster and climate risk and to enhance the resilience of Ugandans to potential shocks.

The recently adopted 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' recognizes the need to reduce the risk of disasters and to strengthen the resilience of communities and nations to disaster and climate risk. Disaster risk reduction cuts across different aspects and sectors of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are 25 targets related to disaster risk reduction in 10 of the 17 SDGs, firmly establishing the role of disaster risk reduction as a core development strategy.

Success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will, in part, be measured by progress in the implementation of disaster risk reduction. To support this, Uganda joined the international community in the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. This framework supports countries and communities to take practical steps to strengthening their resilience to disaster and climate risks.

Against this backdrop the Government of Uganda, with support from a range of development partners, is implementing a number of programmes and interventions geared towards strengthening resilience at both the community and systems levels across key sectors in Uganda. With the NPDII, the Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 now in place, there is an opportunity to nationally define resilience in the context of Uganda's development priorities.

¹ Government of Uganda. Second National Development Plan (NDPII) 2015/16 – 2019/20. Kampala, 2015. Print.

² *Ibid.*

The objective of the Uganda Resilience Dialogue was to provide a space for Uganda's development partners to:

1. Present their perspectives on resilience in the context of Uganda's development; and
2. Explore options for enhancing resilience in the implementation of the NDPII, the Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

II. Key Messages

Introduction

The Commissioner of Disaster Preparedness and Management, Office of the Prime Minister, Martin Owor, reiterated the Government of Uganda's commitment to building the resilience of its people to shocks and stresses through the reduction of vulnerability to climate and disaster risks as enshrined in the Uganda Vision 2040 and the NDPII. While noting the importance stakeholders place on resilience in Uganda, he reflected on differences in understanding and approaches. He called for Uganda's partners to come together to define resilience and harmonise approaches across activities.

Reviewing the current risk landscape, he urged stakeholders to consider how Uganda can mirror its success in reducing mortality to a reduction in damage and losses associated with natural hazards. In this respect, he noted the importance of flexible funding arrangements and the need to improve how results are measured and quantified, to better address capacity gaps. A priority sector for reducing vulnerability is agriculture, given the climate risk challenges faced. Other priorities include tourism, mineral exploration and infrastructure. The importance of measuring resilience, as a means to guide and prioritise efforts, was also stressed.

The United Nations Development Programme's Assistant Country Director, Patience Alidri, representing the Resident Representative, referenced the *United Nations*

Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience as a system-wide guide to coordinate support on addressing disaster risk. This is part of broader, comprehensive resilience-building efforts to reduce and manage disaster risk and climate change impacts in the context of sustainable development.

Reflecting on UNDP's position, vis-à-vis resilience, she outlined the transformative nature of strengthening the capacity of people, communities and countries to anticipate, manage, recover and transform from shocks. Building resilience necessitates the assessment and management of climate and disaster risk across all areas of development and a recognition that other actions across the development spectrum, including in governance and poverty eradication, contribute to this process.

On the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations in Uganda is supporting the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals within local development planning, to underpin risk-informed development and investment decisions, and contribute to resilience building.

Resilience in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Dialogue provided an overview of resilience in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Head of the Regional Office for Africa at the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Sharon Rusu, presented action on disaster risk reduction as crucial to risk-centred development and resilience as an outcome of development.

The recently convened 'Understanding Risk and Finance Conference' at the African Union³ provides a set of elements as the basis for resilient communities:

1. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is now known by decision-makers across the Continent. There is a

³ Understanding Risk & Finance, 17-19 November, Addis Ababa

clear understanding of roles; the inclusive, all-of-society nature of the Framework; and the primacy of Governments as the responsible party for implementing Sendai across sustainable development, environment and climate change investments;

2. As the transition from MDGs to SDGs takes place, there is a need to take stock of the transformative shifts presented by the SDGs to address big questions on sustainable development, peace and security;
3. Managing disaster risk is central to implementing the SDGs and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda: there are 25 targets related to disaster risk reduction action in 10 of the 17 global goals;
4. The Sendai Framework has created space for alternative voices: locals, youth, civil society, parliamentarians, elderly, disabled, indigenous people and the private sector are recognized and empowered. The imperative now is to act globally, think locally;
5. The humanitarian paradigm is in decline. The existing approach is no longer effective. Moving from aid dependency requires that local actors and duty bearers be given capacity to address development issues and that preventing disasters, though not visible, is a prerequisite to developing resilience;
6. There are three elements to economic resilience, central to positive development outcomes, (1) Absorptive Capacity: managing risk and planned development; (2) Adaptive Capacity: people-centred early warning, asset diversification, enhanced international co-operation; and (3) Transformative Capacity: governance, insurance, safety net.



Resilience – as an outcome of development – requires that the challenges of poverty, weak social and economic infrastructure, environmental degradation, institutional weaknesses, food insecurity, demographic pressures, climate change, rapid urbanization, and conflict with associated forced movements are addressed if the investments in people and planning are to be fully realised. The Sendai Framework contributes to this, as it provide guidance on ‘how to’.

On the financing side, the international community has committed over USD 3 trillion in aid alone over the last decade, while the impact and magnitude of disasters continues to increase. Global losses are estimated to reach USD 415 billion every year to 2030, indicating that investments in development are being increasingly exposed to risk. The current disaster risk reduction-related investment of 40 cents in every USD 100 is insufficient.

The absence, or lack of, integrated approaches in institutional planning presents an additional challenge. Given the cross-cutting nature of disaster risk reduction, it requires coherence in policies and programmes across sustainable development, environment and climate to ensure the reduction of disaster risk. On the financing side, the budgetary implications of disaster risk reduction needs to shift from disaster management agencies alone, if greater value for money is to be achieved. In this context, the Sendai Framework marks a new paradigm in disaster risk reduction, as it does not separate disaster risk reduction and development. Rather it acts as a catalyst for processes leading to the achievement of sustainable development, resulting in risk-informed development.

Exploring options for enhancing resilience in Uganda

Based on the discussions following the presentations, participants observed

convergence across a range of resilience definitions that exist. At the core is the capacity of people and systems to mitigate, adapt to, recover and learn from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability and increases wellbeing. The role of the community, including in the conceptualization and planning phases, was underscored as was the need for stakeholders to be empowered, rather than passive participants.

Approaching resilience as a development outcome necessitates consideration beyond natural hazards and that include contributing elements, such as water scarcity or the absence of other inputs. Participants called for risk and vulnerability analysis to consider issues related to manmade stresses and vulnerabilities, in addition to natural and climatic hazards.

On implementation, participants shared experiences and lessons related to disaster risk reduction in development practice in general. It was agreed that the entry point and subsequent approach must be underpinned by an understanding of the risks faced. 'Know your risk' is considered an essential element across development.

Risk governance was another area where participants attributed particular relevance. It was noted that the Government of Uganda already has disaster risk reduction structures in place at all levels, including at the community level. The need to support these structures, as an existing vehicle, was highlighted. At the national level, the absence of a legal framework on resilience was noted.

Further, at the sub-county level, embedding disaster risk reduction within development planning, including at the annual budget conference, was seen as an important entry. On managing urban risk and supporting efforts to strengthen resilience, it was agreed that a risk analysis to inform policy and decisions was needed.

The utilization of indigenous knowledge within development planning, and encouraging knowledge transfer was discussed in the context of promoting greater awareness of past experiences. Community-driven innovations are frequently undervalued and offer tested approaches to a range of challenges.

Connected to this, was the opportunity to use historical data and modelling to support development planning. The quality of forecasts and projections needs to be improved, to further enhance early warning systems. Key issues identified, include accuracy, lead times, and packaging and delivery of messages to decision-makers and communities.

In light of the National Policy of Disaster Preparedness and Management, in addition to a number of regional and sub-regional frameworks, participants urged for greater practical linkages to support resilience building. Measuring progress and quantifying capacities across these frameworks can guide, prioritize and support investment decisions. In doing so, the disparities in vulnerabilities was recognised. Women, girls and boys can be affected differently by certain shocks and stresses.

III. Conclusion

Participants at the Uganda Resilience Dialogue welcomed the opportunity to exchange views, recognising that a shared understanding of resilience can encourage increased political commitment and economic investment to reduce risks.

Overall, supporting development actions that consider disaster risk is seen as critical to poverty reduction and a key enabler of sustainable development. The Sendai Framework provides a useful tool to support the Government in the implementation of both the Global Goals and the NPDII.

Seeing resilience as an outcome of risk-informed development, underpinned on the principles of understanding risk, taking a people-centred approach and building capacity to empower, rather than as an activity in of itself was emphasized.

In the context of Uganda, the Dialogue underscored the need to address the drivers of risk. Improving existing mechanisms of risk governance, increasing participation and providing flexible funding arrangements were highlighted.