

Press release

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COVID-19 AND THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY TELL US ALL WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF DISASTER RISK GOVERNANCE

GENEVA, 1 September 2020 – ‘Disaster risk governance’ was announced today as the theme of this year’s International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October in a year when a great number of people have died and fallen ill because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement today, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mami Mizutori, said:

“We have learned from the worst single disaster of the 21st century so far, that if we do not strengthen disaster risk governance to take on the challenge of existential threats, we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the last eight months which have cost so many lives and damaged the health and economic and social well-being of millions.

“This year’s International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction is all about governance. You can measure good disaster risk governance in lives saved, reduced numbers of disaster-affected people and reduced economic losses. COVID-19 and the climate emergency are telling us that we need clear vision, plans and competent, empowered institutions acting on scientific evidence for the public good.

“This requires having national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction in place by the end of the year as agreed by UN member States when they adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. We need to see strategies which address not just single hazards like floods and storms but those that respond to systemic risk generated by zoonotic diseases, climate shocks and environmental breakdown.

“Good national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction must be multi-sectoral linking policies in areas such as land use, building codes, public health, education, agriculture, environmental protection, energy, water resources, poverty reduction and climate change adaptation.

“It’s time to raise our game if we want to leave a more resilient planet to future generations.”

About UNDRR: UNDRR (formerly UNISDR) is the UN office dedicated to disaster risk reduction. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which seeks “the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses, in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”

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