From Commitment to Action: Ensure Investment to Build Resilience

Globally, Bangladesh is recognised for its significant achievements to manage disasters like cyclones and floods, and in reducing the number of deaths to a lower level.

Along with the Government of Bangladesh, civil society organisations – both national and international – play an important role in reaching the desired level of achievement in disaster management.

The achievements are not limited to emergency response management; disaster risk reduction (DRR) has also been embedded in the development plans of Bangladesh.
The 7th Five Year Plan of Bangladesh acknowledged the importance of DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA) and their integration in all ministerial plans. The National Plan for Disaster Management has been revised, disaster management law is available and the National Disaster Management Policy is revised. Other sectoral policies and plans acknowledge and partly integrate DRR and CCA. However, increasing urban disasters in the era of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, showed Bangladesh that it needs to significantly enhance its capacity to manage urban disasters and different environmental and industrial hazards. At the same time, it needs to translate the global targets to national achievable and realistic targets to lead the resilience building paradigm at local, national, regional and global levels.

The 5th session of Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) will be held from 22-26 May 2017 in Cancun, Mexico. A delegation of the Government of Bangladesh and representatives from civil society will participate in the session. Echoing Ban Ki Moon, the ex-UN Secretary General, we the members of the civil society of Bangladesh emphasise that “The international community must risk proof development because disasters are taking a heavy toll on rich and poor countries as well as outpacing their ability to respond”. We are taking this opportunity to raise our joint voice to the global community. We recognise that the GPDRR is the main forum at the global level for strategic advice, coordination, partnership development and the review of progress in the implementation of international instruments on disaster risk reduction. Policy makers and disaster risk managers from government and non-government are expected to participate from Bangladesh and around the world. In this Global Platform that marks the first opportunity to review global progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which was adopted in Japan in 2015.

Targeting the GPDRR 2017 Bangladesh Civil Society Group has organised consultations to develop this Position Paper to highlight key concerns, expectations and commitments to achieve the indicators set by Sendai Framework in 2015.

The Humanitarian Leadership Academy, along with BRAC organised consultation workshop with civil society organisations, national and international NGOs in Bangladesh to examine practical and creative solutions for DRR effectiveness, in the effort to build a road map of opportunity towards and beyond the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, in Bangladesh and around the Globe. Discussion and recommendations from the workshop and subsequent consultation has led to this Position Paper being developed, voicing civil societies experience and recommendations to aid discussion and advocacy initiatives of participants and representatives at the Global Platform.

We, in GPDRR 2017, recognise that social, cultural and economic losses attributed to disasters are increasing significantly at local and national level. Losses to housing, infrastructure and productive assets have made major financial implications and slowed down socioeconomic growth and development of Bangladesh. And disasters, whether big or small, significantly hamper the basic human rights of people, which should be embedded in DRR as its crucial to ensure human rights first during any disaster emergency.

We emphasise that small and recurring disaster events severely damage key pillars of economic development and growth such as critical public infrastructure, housing and economic production centres. The losses become a driver of progression of vulnerability and exposure to disaster risk and diminish resilience. We stress the fact that the poor and marginalised suffer disproportionately from natural and human-made hazards and disasters further deplete resilience and exacerbate poverty.

We underscore that reducing losses from disasters is essential to achieve economic and social development and environmental sustainability. Investing in disaster resilient infrastructure, including disaster reducing infrastructure and housing, is an effective way to do so. But for that, investment should be focused for the vulnerable communities recognising that good governance and systematic monitoring maximise the benefit from all investment.

We call on global leaders to “Listen to People” and have the knowledge and information on “the view and voice of mass people” and to civil society as mass people’s representative to ensure resilience building of local, national and regional actors. As part of civil society of Bangladesh, we have come up with an independent position paper to raise our national concerns and priorities for action to highlight these in GPDRR 2017. All four priorities for action of Sendai Framework are relevant to Bangladesh, so we have focused our positioning on all four priorities of actions for Bangladesh.
Priority 1
Understanding disaster risk

Our commitment:
We, Civil Society Group in Bangladesh, will continue to build capacity of ours and other actors, i.e. private sector, local government, youth, women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, transgender, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons to make sure that all kind of disaster risks including new hazards like urbanisation and industrialisation and impacts of climate changes are understood at local and national level in a transparent and accountable way.

The knowledge on disaster management acquired in the last four decades in Bangladesh is used to reach out to all vulnerable people at local levels and new knowledge generates by understanding dimensions of urban disasters and unpredictable disasters in an inclusive perspective.

We will closely work with the private sector, business and industries to identify their risk and impact made by disaster and hazards to prepare them from possible risks and encourage them to invest more to address and mitigate those risks. We will make a difference for businesses to integrate disaster risk into their management practices to enhance their knowledge on disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and resilience and to make their business plan resilience building focused.

We will work with academia, scientific and research institutions to work more closely together and to create opportunities for collaboration to develop competent and professional leaders in disaster management. At the same time transferring field and practical experiences of working with community to the academic knowledge system to generate and disseminate knowledge on DRR and CCA and document comparative analysis of DRR investment against achievement including cost effectiveness.

We call on World Leaders to ensure adequate resource support (financial and intellectual) to, national and local actors, so that substantial knowledge is generated on more significant urban disasters and technological hazards and reach all vulnerable people in rural and urban areas. Besides, listen to people of the region and consider region wise River Basin Management to reduce river erosion, flood and salinity intrusion especially in Lower Riparian Countries and endorse strong regional commitment and cooperation (as per Sendai and Delhi declaration). And encourage the national governments to enhance regional, sub-regional and transboundary cooperation which remains crucial for disaster risk reduction, including early warning, capacity building, networking and sharing of information (especially cross border information and transboundary issues) and good practices among stakeholders to avoid possible risks and hazards in the developing as well as middle-income countries as they need special attention and support to enhance local resources and capabilities through bilateral and multilateral channels, in accordance with international commitments.

We call on the Development Partners of Bangladesh to ensure adequate funding to enhance capacity of the most vulnerable urban and rural communities to understand the changing scale of disaster impacts, need of environmental sustainability, dimension of vulnerabilities and hazard characteristics to be prepared and resilient. Ensure disaster risk assessment and mitigation in the design and implementation of all projects, policies, plans and standards to ensure a more people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk reduction, to understand new disaster challenges and continued strategic priority of disaster risk reduction.

Referring to the declaration of WHS 2016, AMCDRR 2016, Dhaka Declaration 2015 (from Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management, Dhaka, Bangladesh December 2015) and Sendai Framework
Priority 2
Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

Our Commitment:
We will work with local actors to ensure that they are increasingly playing a leading role to understand the dimensions of disaster risk governance and collaborate with other local actors of the country to build preparedness and take measures for prevention and mitigation of disaster risks at local and national level by integrating risk reduction in local development programs, plans and activities.

We will continue our work with the communities to increase the awareness of rights and entitlements during and after disasters.

We will closely work with government and non-government actor's and stakeholders to enhance participation of vulnerable groups, especially women, children, elderly and disabled in making decisions about development programs, preparedness and resilience building.

We call on the World Leaders to recognise the role, capacity of local actors and invest in building their management and leadership capacity to manage disasters effectively and allocate resources for inclusive and DRR integrated development programs at local level and implementation of disaster management plan, policy and legal framework. Above and beyond, to invest on developing a strong governance system/mechanism/methodology that ensure authenticity of people’s voice and experience in pre-investment disaster risk assessment and ensure political commitment from the global community to safeguard people’s voice from grassroots so that they get involved with the entire process of disaster risk assessment and making the assessment useful for them at the same time participate in the process of progress monitoring and reporting of Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.

We call on the Development Partners of Bangladesh to provide adequate funding for Institutional Capacity Building of the local actors of Bangladesh and prioritise institutionalisation and professionalisation of DRR in Bangladesh to ensure participatory monitoring, evaluation and reflection of learning from implementation of resilience building policy, plan and programs of Bangladesh so that they can build institutional capacity and effective models of disaster risk governance.

Priority 3
Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

Our Commitment:
We will work with the government of Bangladesh to ensure that disaster risk reduction issues are identified and integrated with local and national development programs.

We will work closely with the local actors in urban areas to address urban disaster risks and threats of climate change and build DRR and CCA integrated urban development programs in collaboration with service providers and private sectors so that local actors are able to play an effective role in building resilience in urban and rural areas.

We will strengthen our advocacy effort to increase DRR and CCA fund and investment from private sector.

We call on World Leaders to increase investment for urban disaster risk reduction and provide sufficient financial and technical support to lower riparian climate vulnerable countries (CVC), especially Bangladesh, and its development programs to ensure resilience building for disasters in urban and rural areas and not to neglect the investment to build critical infrastructure to protect the people in coastal areas (constriction of permanent Embankment), and to provide planned shelter to urban poor/slum dwellers, which is also necessary to protect them from possible earthquakes. Besides, compels and push pressure to global corporates, investors, buyers and business community in some legal bindings to do and promote sustainable business and corporate social responsibility so that they invest on reducing risk on disaster and integrate disaster risk into their management practices.

We call on Development Partners of Bangladesh to give priority to increase investment to DRR integrated development plans and activities and implementation through local actors for urban disaster risk reduction from all dimensions. Simultaneously prioritise developing and promote mechanism for disaster risk transfer and insurance in Bangladesh.
Priority 4
Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

Our Commitment:
We will continue working with the local actors to support a knowledge-based network among them to ensure that disaster preparedness becomes an integrated part of their plan at local level.

We will increase our efforts to build rapport and collaborative programs with local actors of the urban areas to build preparedness against urban hazards. We will ensure that all our post-disaster activities fabricate on build-back-better approach.

We will work with community to develop, test and promote innovative model on build-back-better approach to strengthen and empower voice of the community to promote community based DRR.

Alongside, we will strengthen our advocacy with the national actors to integration of Build-Back-Better approach in all post-disaster programs at rural and urban areas in a transparent and accountable way.

We call on World Leaders to ensure that corporates and business sectors are investing in disaster preparedness and effective responses within their business policies and practices and provide substantial funding and transfer technologies to enhance preparedness against disasters, especially in urban areas at local and national level of Bangladesh.

We call on Development Partners of Bangladesh to prioritise innovation and strategical investment for development and give priority to work with rural and urban local actors to build their capacity and preparedness against disasters and provide technological resources to conduct multi-hazard risk assessment of existing critical infrastructure by 2020 and build back better of vulnerable infrastructures.

We, the Civil Society Group of Bangladesh:

- expect and believe that Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017 will be the right platform to translate commitments to action to build resilience of national regional and global communities against all types of hazards and significantly reduce impacts of disasters on people, societies and states.

- will continue the engagement with GPDRR at national, regional and global level. We will play proactive role to activate national and regional DRR networks of NGOs and governments and collaborate with UN and Donors to contextualise the seven global targets for countries and achieve those.

- is committing our will to transform global targets of Sendai Framework into national and local targets to support its implementation as an essential instrument to empower local actors, communities including women, children & youth, elders and persons with disabilities to achieve the targets. We believe that leadership and active participation of local actors to understand disaster risks, reduce vulnerabilities, build back better and enhance disaster preparedness will significantly build the resilience at local level against all types of hazards in Bangladesh by 2030.