

Chapter 11

Integrating the Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction with the Food Systems Summit Stocktake

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The period between 2012, when the global community embraced a collective vision of ‘The future we want’ at the Rio+20 conference, and 2015, when the global community adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, felt like a period of hope and enthusiasm to many. This was a period where Member States converged on a common agenda, a shared sense of urgency and a collective conviction of the need for true transformative change, while at the same time retaining a sense of focus.

The need for transformative change was reflected in both the title of GA resolution 70/1 - ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ - as well as its core content where Member States “*committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner.*” With this, Member States redefined the concept of sustainable development by i) clarifying that the three dimensions of sustainable development are one integrated whole, ii) elevating the protection of the environment to equal the need for economic prosperity and social progress; and iii) determining that progress across the three dimensions can only be achieved in a balanced and parallel manner.

The sense of focus was encapsulated in the phrase “*Leave no one behind*” reflecting a consensus that in order to effectively address the world’s sustainability and development challenges, the effort should start with addressing the issues of poverty and the vulnerability of both people and planet.

That seemingly clashing need for transformative change and a sense of focus was also reflected in the Sendai Framework in what was a clear and perhaps relatively simple narrative embedded throughout the language of the Framework and subsequently also in the Sendai Framework core indicator set.

The narrative becomes apparent almost immediately in the expected outcome statement of the Sendai Framework. Here, in a departure from the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA), which largely focused on the imperative to saving people’s lives and protecting critical infrastructure, the Sendai Framework clarified that effective disaster risk reduction requires a strategic shift from disaster management (or how to deal more effectively with the effects of disasters) to disaster risk management (or how to be more effective in preventing the effects of disasters from occurring in the first place). Additionally, and equally important, the Sendai Framework

expected outcome statement recognized that this shift means that real resilience comes from the protection of not just people's lives but also their livelihoods and health.

Subsequently, in the Sendai Framework's Guiding Principles, UN Member States further clarify that the protection of people's livelihoods means, first of all, a focus on the protection of people's productive assets and, secondly, a need to provide special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest.

In the Priorities for Action section of the Sendai Framework, Member States defined the key productive assets most in need of protection to secure the livelihoods of the poorest and those most vulnerable to disasters as "livestock, working animals, tools and seeds," recognizing that agriculture is the most vulnerable sector to the effects of disasters.

This sense of focus on the need to protect people's livelihoods was eventually also reflected in the core set of Sendai Framework indicators through the inclusion (for the first time) of an indicator (B5) that specifically measures the impact of disasters on people's livelihoods.

One could argue that this clear narrative is also present in Sustainable Development Goal 2 where targets 2.1 and 2.3 encouraged a focus on the poor and vulnerable and stimulating the livelihoods of small-scale producers while target 2.4 recognized the particular vulnerability of the agricultural sector to the effects of disasters.

A great deal of progress has been made since the adoption of the Sendai Framework, particularly in the areas of early warning systems, strengthening disaster loss and risk data, and transboundary cooperation. However, the 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Co-chair's summary clarifies that there is still a clear need for accelerated implementation across the Sendai Framework's priorities to stop the spiral of increasing disaster impact and risk. Government policies remain largely reactive and the vast majority of public spending is still allocated to recovery efforts and infrastructure and not in support of affected people and their key productive assets. Agriculture remains the most vulnerable sector to disasters and absorbs most disaster losses.

As such, it will be important that the Sendai Framework Mid-Term Review and subsequently the Food Systems stocktake moment will revisit and re-emphasize the key narrative and sense of focus that was identified back in 2015. In order to truly protect the lives of the poorest and those most vulnerable to disasters, it is crucial to focus on enhancing the resilience of people's livelihoods. To do this, greater attention and investment is needed in relation to the protection of the key productive assets that the poor and vulnerable rely on for their livelihoods, in particular livestock, working animals, tools and seeds.

The UN Food Systems Summit equally reflected the Sendai Framework narrative through the inclusion of the importance of advancing equitable livelihoods and building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses in two of its five action areas. With natural disasters already being the single greatest cause of agriculture production losses across the globe, it will be critical for the upcoming stocktake event, which is intended to be solutions-oriented, to highlight the

need for greater attention and investment in the protection of key agricultural productive assets, as defined in the Sendai Framework, and to equip Member States with practical tools to do so.

More broadly, the protection of animals and their welfare could be considered an effective pathway to ensure an integrated approach or policy coherence across UN processes and conferences, particularly those focused on securing a sustainable future for all.

For instance, with regard to climate change, the protection of animals is crucial to maintaining the carbon sequestration capacity of Earth's natural carbon sinks, without which the drive to achieve net zero will fail. In relation to biodiversity, the IPBES 2019 Global Assessment clarified that the systems of production and consumption that rely on the inhumane use of animals are the dominant drivers of harm to nature. Similarly, with regard to pollution, it is increasingly clear that only a transformation towards more regenerative, nature-based and humane food systems can stem the tide of altered biochemical cycles (phosphorous and nitrogen) exceeding planetary boundaries even further. Finally, with regard to health, only a truly integrated One Health approach focused on preventing zoonotic disease from emerging can contribute to reducing the risk of future pandemic disease.

On a related note, it will also be important for Member States to heed the call by the UN Secretary-General in "Our Common Future" to urgently find measures of progress that complement GDP and account for planetary sustainability. The valuation of nature is crucial to ensuring the true value of the natural world and all that inhabits it are taken into account when developing policies to secure economic prosperity or social progress. Within such a context, animal welfare will unavoidably be regarded as an investment that provides positive direct benefits across all three dimensions of sustainable development.

The direct benefits of the protection of animals and their welfare for addressing environmental challenges and achieving sustainable development and resilience was recognized by Member States in the Sendai Framework, the Food Systems Summit and again, more recently, in UNEA resolution 5/1. To achieve the kind of transformation envisioned in Sendai, Paris, and New York back in 2015, it is now imperative this recognition be applied and translated into real action in the coming years.

Specifically, with regard to the Sendai Mid-Term Review and the 2023 Food Systems stocktake event, following the pathway of protecting livelihoods through a focus on the key productive assets of the poor and those most vulnerable, including livestock, working animals, tools and seeds, is perhaps the most efficient route to addressing vulnerability, enhancing resilience, addressing food insecurity, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development agenda.