

**Comments from UNISDR  
on Government of Australia Consultation Paper: Benchmarks for Australian Aid**

UNISDR appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Benchmarks for Australian Aid. The work further builds on the 2012 Australian Multilateral Assessment Report (AMA) which also guided UNISDR to further strengthen its own work and impact. UNISDR was pleased with the 2012 Scorecard process leading to a joint effort to improve performance and delivery.

Disaster risk reduction crosses many areas of work including humanitarian assistance, sustainable development, and climate change adaptation. The Government of Australia is a frontrunner in integrating and adopting disaster risk reduction measures both at the national level as well as in international cooperation with clear strategies and programmes.

UNISDR's mandate is to support the implementation of disaster risk reduction and the international instrument the *Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities*. UNISDR policy guidance, information and ability to connect to partners leads to substantial technical and capacity support to developing countries.

In this context, UNISDR suggests the following be considered in the new benchmarks for Australian aid.

1. UNISDR's role within the UN system is to serve as the focal point for the coordination of disaster risk reduction. Multilateral agencies with coordination mandates tend to be more difficult to assess in terms of delivery of immediately evident and verifiable results, especially in comparison to emergency response and humanitarian mandated agencies. A question for reflection and future assessment is how best to measure a mandated coordination entity, like UNISDR, whose delivery on results may require a more nuanced assessment appraisal.
2. The benchmarks should consider the potentially differentiating timelines for results depending on mandate and focus of aid support. For example, reducing risk may not be immediately visible in the short term. More subtle indicators need to be developed to show progress that is context specific in terms of timelines.
3. On the level of benchmarking:
  - (i) Project-funding level increases the burden of reporting and has cost implications for both the donor and the recipients of funding.
  - (ii) Country-level should incorporate risk considerations. Results and program performance in high-risk, fragile or conflict-driven areas are more difficult to achieve and need to be factored into the meeting of generic benchmarks.
4. A distinct set of benchmarks can be considered for coordination and advocacy work as compared to operational program and project implementation.

5. Consideration should be given to risk reduction and building resilience as a cross-cutting indicator/benchmark for the Australian Aid Program.
6. Australia's engagement in initiatives such as the development of a Disaster Risk Management Marker in the OECD DAC Creditor Rating System could support a) the development of global definitions and benchmarking approaches as well as b) the development internal systems aligned to Australia's reporting duties as a donor, thus, helping Australia to ease costs and work load of the performance measurement processes.

Geneva, 20 February 2014