



# **DISASTER RISK REDUCTION FOR RESILIENCE PROGRAMME**

**Resilience Mainstreaming Strategy**

**2015-16**

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

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*Our DRR4R strategy sets out to ensure that UNOPS has a risk-based culture, which is fully integrated into all of our activities around the world.”*



Photo: Government of Norway/  
Torgeir Haugaard

UNOPS has made formal commitments to a number of global policy agendas, including the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, the Climate Change Frameworks and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was launched in Sendai, Japan in March 2015.

In September 2015, the UN and its Member States will also launch the new Sustainable Development Goals, and in 2016 they will convene the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey.

The challenge for UN agencies and Member States alike will be in aligning the priorities and commitments of each of these global agendas to ensure that they are addressed in a cohesive and coordinated manner, as part of core-business functions that contribute to national sustainability and resilience objectives.

The successful delivery of a project, product or service does not in itself constitute sustainability or resilience. UNOPS contributions to our partners' projects will be measured in terms of how our deliverables interact with the external risk environment and other development initiatives to collectively achieve resilient outcomes. We must therefore continue with our strong internal risk management frameworks, while simultaneously strengthening our ability to analyze and consider the external built environment, so as to close the risk management loop.

In this regard, we have taken some positive steps to achieving this goal, including through the establishment of UNOPS Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience (DRR4R) Programme and the development of a comprehensive strategy.

Our DRR4R Strategy will compliment and strengthen our broader Enterprise Risk Management strategy and ensure that UNOPS has a risk-based culture that is fully integrated into all of our activities around the world.

UNOPS has emerged as a key player in the DRR4R and climate change fields with our Strategy being widely promoted as a best practice model by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Other UN agencies are also displaying wide interest in our DRR4R Programme. During 2015 UNOPS will serve as the Co-Chair of the International Recovery Platform (IRP) which is clear reinforcement of our leadership status.

Since November, 2014, the DRR4R team engaged in consultations with UNOPS management and personnel, at both headquarters and regional office levels. The aim of this exercise was to identify critical DRR4R mainstreaming entry points within existing policy, planning and practice, to enable UNOPS to achieve desired compliance outputs, while maintaining a strong presence as an innovative leader in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grete Faremo".

**Grete Faremo**

Under Secretary-General and Executive Director, UNOPS

## 1. INTRODUCING THE UNOPS DRR4R TEAM

Hosted by UNOPS Sustainable Infrastructure Practice Group (SIPG), the DRR4R team has a mandate to mainstream DRR/Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) across all of UNOPS Practices and Regions.



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## 2. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the DRR4R strategy is to achieve and maintain programme alignment with UNOPS commitments to global frameworks, including the preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015. The main global frameworks are:

- the United Nations Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience;
- the DRR Framework for Action - Post 2015;
- the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- the World Humanitarian Summit 2016.

## 3. DRR4R AT UNOPS

### What?

DRR4R is a risk management philosophy that aims to influence policy, planning and practice at all levels, to enhance the likelihood of more sustainable and resilient project and programme outputs, which contribute in a meaningful way to the national development outcomes of UNOPS partners.

### Why?

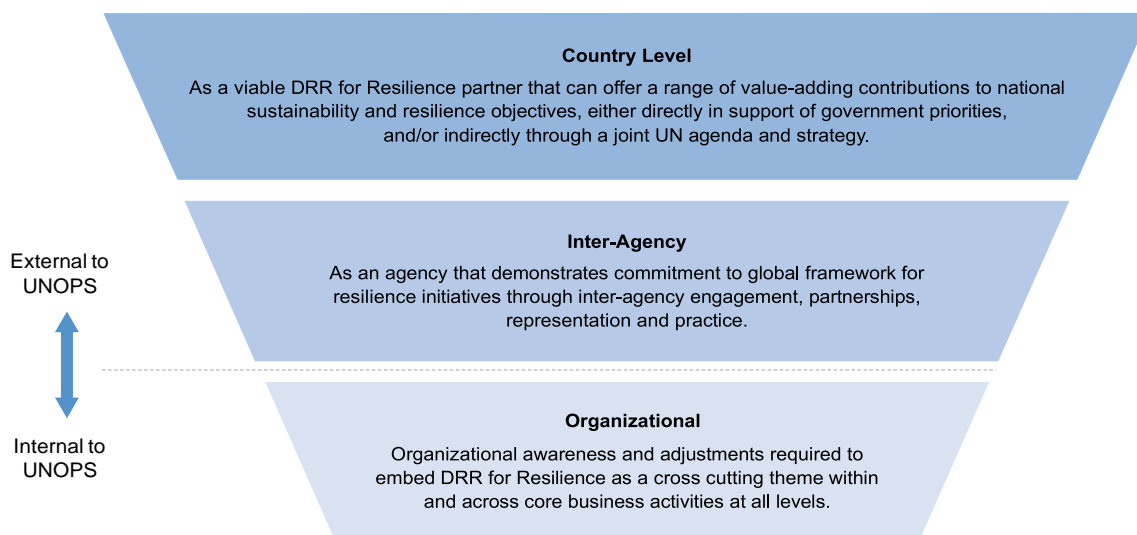
In order to deliver on its commitment to global frameworks, UNOPS must examine what this means in terms of transformational shifts in current core-business thinking, practice and resource prioritization, under the DRR4R strategy.

### How?

Delivering on UNOPS global commitment should be primarily achieved through the review and adjustment of existing strategies, initiatives and tools, implemented as far as possible as a seamless process within core-business activities and programs.

## 4. SCOPE

The scope of the strategy will focus on two related dimensions (internal and external), as shown in the diagram below.



## 5. OUTCOMES

Implementing the DRR4R programme will ensure that UNOPS is able to:

- regularly contribute to and influence the global CCA, DRR and SDG resilience agendas;
- identify and provide services that add value by contributing to the sustainability and resilience objectives of host governments and other stakeholders;
- remain abreast of global DRR/CCA trends, and emerging and strategic initiatives that are relevant to UNOPS core businesses;
- provide guidance on DRR/CCA on a UNOPS-wide basis, as demands increase for UNOPS engagement in global and regional planning events and high-level meetings;
- achieve heightened recognition, representation and visibility on regional and global platforms in DRR4R; and
- be recognised as the lead UN organization in the delivery of project management, procurement and infrastructure technical and advisory services, contributing to building sustainability and resilience.

## 6. BACKGROUND

Since emerging as key issues in 2005, DRR and climate change have become progressively unregulated fields. One of the consequences of this is that associated terms and actions have not been consistently understood or applied. A common and shared understanding of the terms used and how the concepts are applied is important for UNOPS.

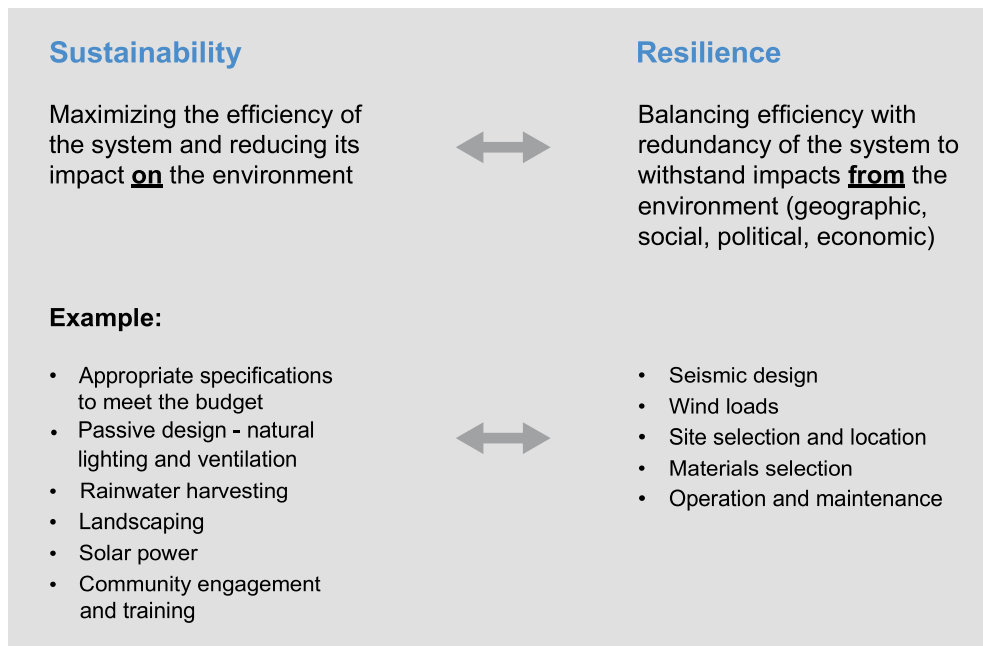
This section sets out to establish a shared understanding of the key terms while defining the boundaries and 'influencing' relationships that exist within the UNOPS context.

### 6.1. Defining sustainability and resilience

Sustainability and resilience can be considered as two sides of the same coin - but what do they mean?

Broadly speaking, sustainability can be defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" - Brundtland Commission, 1987.

Sustainability considerations usually include an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure that the project, product or service does not have an adverse impact on the environment. Resilience, on the other hand, considers both EIA and the reverse - it also considers the impact of the external risk and built environment on planned activities, in order to close the risk gap in planning, design and implementation processes.



Sustainability and resilience (or ‘robustness’) are about ensuring people, economies, infrastructure and environmental systems are better prepared to withstand shocks and stresses, recover and continue to develop and grow.



*After 9/11, lower Manhattan contained the largest collection of LEED-certified, green buildings in the world, But that was answering only part of problem. The buildings were designed to generate lower environmental impacts, but not to respond to the impacts of the environment – for example, by having redundant power systems.” Andrew Zolli, Learning to Bounce Back, NYTimes*

## 6.2. Defining climate change

Climate change can be considered as either global warming through greenhouse-gas emissions (cause) or climate variations in the form of rainfall and temperature variations, including sea-level rise, glacial melting, changes in ocean temperatures and other events (consequences).

Climate variations can introduce new risks or alter existing risk scenarios, and therefore should be used to inform risk analysis processes undertaken under DRR. This is the causal relationship between the two fields.

The mitigation of greenhouse-gas emissions is the primary strategy for tackling global warming. Climate change variations can bring about new and changing risk environments, which can be addressed through either long-term development and adaptation strategies.

### 6.3. Defining disaster risk reduction for resilience

#### Resilience Defined

“Resilience is: “The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions<sup>1</sup>.”

#### Risk Informed Development<sup>2</sup>

Resilience is achieved through adopting risk informed and gender sensitive processes to guide adaptation and development planning and project designs. This involves (1) the analysis of climate change variables and their direct and indirect impacts on sectors and natural hazards; (2) the identification of the total risk context (climatic and non-climatic) pertaining to existing, future and external risk variables in addition to residual risk issues; (3) building the technology and capacity to identify sector and cross sector impacts; and (4) the formulation of base-line information upon which resilient adaptation and development projects are framed and delivered.

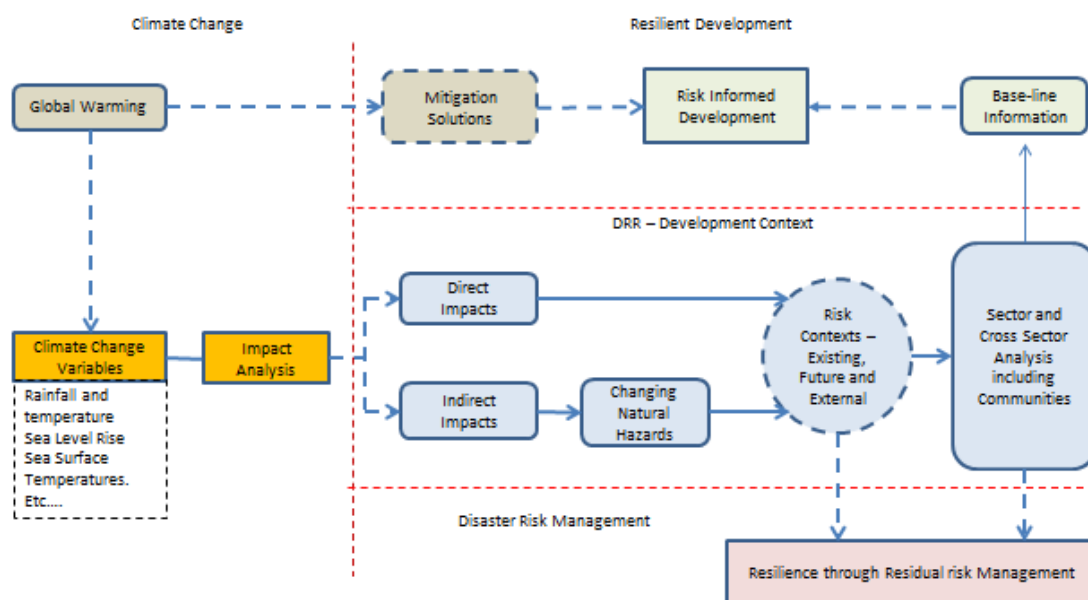


Figure 1 Interaction of CC, DRR, DRM and development

The ultimate aim of UNOPS DRR4R strategy is to ensure that UNOPS products and services compliment national development priorities and align with the outputs of government agencies and other stakeholders, thus contributing to sustainability and resilience outcomes. This is often difficult to achieve due to the challenges associated with silo sector-based approaches (government and UN) as well as the lack of information management and sharing.

#### Achieving Resilience

Resilience efforts are structured around the following conceptual graphic (figure 2). The key features of this process are that it addresses the issue of resilience holistically by providing pathways<sup>3</sup> for (1) proactive resilience in future development; (2) guiding reflections on what has happened in the past and correcting resilience deficiencies retrospectively; (3) it provides a “feedback” mechanism through

<sup>1</sup> Source: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), “2009 UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction”, Geneva, May 2009 (<http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>).

<sup>2</sup> Risk informed means that project designs have been evaluated and assessed as compliant with indicators associated with the application of baseline risk and vulnerability information and social and gender inclusiveness.

<sup>3</sup> Proactive, Retrospective and Reactive resilience streams taken from the UNOPS DRR4R Technical Guidance Note 2015



failure analysis to learn lessons where risks have not been properly managed or identified to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated again; (4) achieve resilience through effective residual risk management strategies associated with effective early warning, preparedness and response.

Resilience as a frame of analysis applies not only to infrastructure systems, but to all development functions and systems, including livelihood systems, ecosystems, food security and water systems, etc. The project design seeks to strengthen the resilience approach in all of these, calling for new forms of cooperation and the recognition of the need for bottom-up approaches to inform national policy and practice.

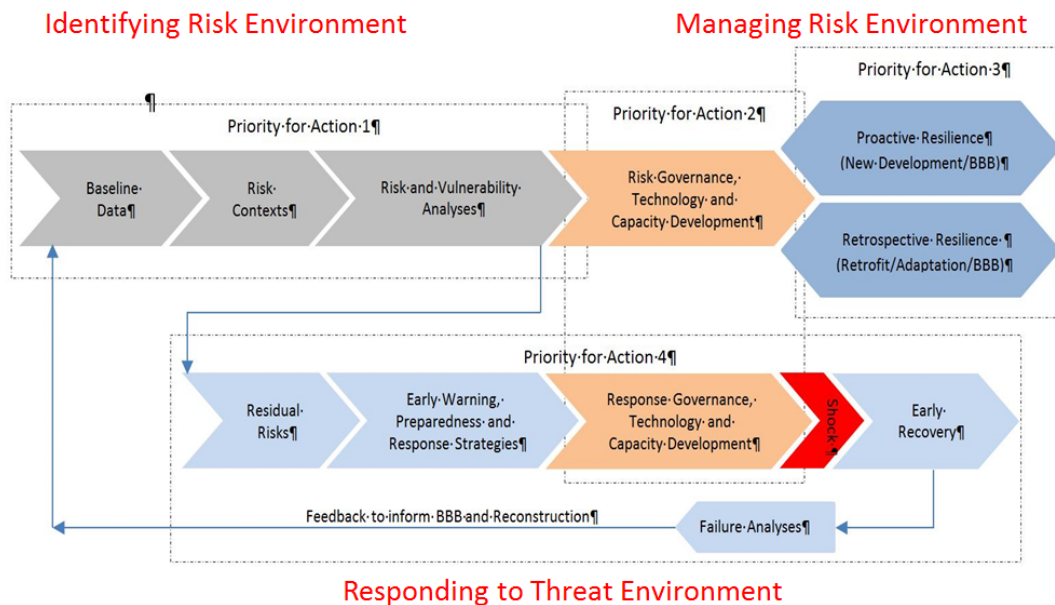


Figure 2 Resilience Framework

## 7. IMPLICATIONS FOR UNOPS

UNOPS products and services alone do not create sustainability and/or resilience; they are merely a range of outcomes that can potentially contribute toward national sustainability and resilience outcomes. Sustainability and resilience must come from the combination of a number of inter-related factors:

- **Organizational factors:** To ensure that every product created and every service delivered are both sustainable (or 'fit for purpose') and resilient (or 'robust'), in that they are designed and implemented within a risk-based framework.
- **Capacity development factors:** Resilience is not only about products and services, it is also about culture, capacity and changing mind-sets, in order to effect a transformation to sustainability and resilience thinking.

- **Built Environmental factors:** The social, political, geographic and economic environment within which the products and services are designed and delivered must be clearly analysed, to ensure they are contextualized and fit for purpose. This includes the broader built environment, where there may be a range of known and unknown secondary risk factors.
- **Partnership factors:** Resilience as an outcome can only be achieved with the commitment of all stakeholders. Each partner's contributions must be clearly understood and strategically linked, in much the same way as the pieces in a jigsaw puzzle.

UNOPS can play a leadership role in a literal sense, particularly where it has a mandate (i.e. infrastructure) or has clear value adding expertise (e.g. project management and procurement). UNOPS can also lead by example, through ensuring that it has developed and implemented strategies that encompass elements of organisational, capacity development, built environment and partnership factors.

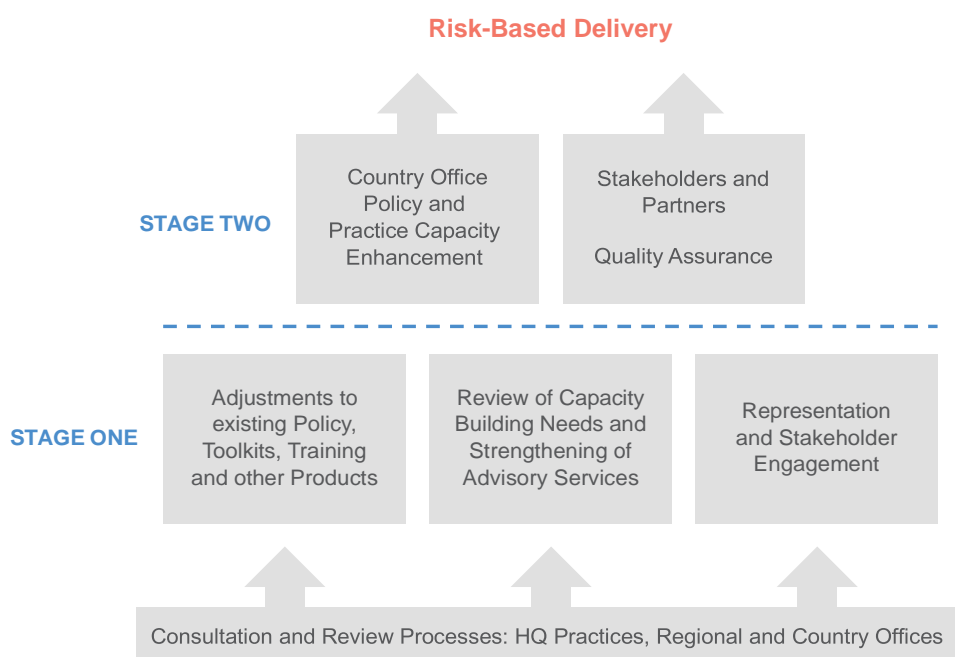
## 8. HOW DOES THIS TRANSLATE TO THE UNOPS RESILIENCE STRATEGY?

### 8.1. Approach

Much of the alignment with global commitments will be achieved through adjustments to existing core business policy, planning and practice (including toolkits), capacity development and other services that facilitate and guide the identification, design and implementation of UNOPS programmes and services.

Aligning the organization with global commitments will require a two-stage multi-dimensional approach. This means that every aspect of UNOPS core business (including HQ practices, regional and country offices) is delivering risk-informed programmes and services that contribute to the achievement of sustainable and resilient development outcomes in host countries.

#### Focus on Sustainable and Resilient Development Inputs:



Externally, the DRR4R programme will build upon existing partnerships and will expand to include new partners where it is perceived that UNOPS can add value or influence initiatives to ensure they are consistent with the DRR4R philosophy. This may include:

Focus	Area	Potential Partners
<b>Infrastructure systems</b>	Impact assessments	CADRI
	Capacity assessments	CADRI
<b>Project management</b>	Capacity assessments	CADRI
	Capacity building	PMI/UNOPS
	DRR4R alignment	CADRI/UNOPS
<b>Urban risk</b>	Urban infrastructure planning	UNHABITAT/UNOPS
	Safer schools	UNICEF/WB/UNOPS
	Safer hospitals	WHO/UNOPS

## 8.2. Stage one - preparations for Sendai (consultation, review, plan of action)

### Phase One: Representation and Stakeholder Engagement for Participation in Sendai

**Timeframe: November 2014-March 2015 (Completed)**

The main focus was to make the appropriate preparations for the World Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai, including representation on the various committees and groups, inputs to concept papers associated with various conference working sessions and broader stakeholder engagement on joint initiatives.

A key acknowledgement for UNOPS was its appointment as the Co-Chair of the International Recovery Platform (IRP) for 2015. This role brings obligations and commitments to guide and drive IRP strategic reforms as approved by the Steering Committee.

### Phase Two: Consultation and Review

**Timeframe: February-December 2015**

This phase focuses on two main activities and is designed to:

- create awareness of UNOPS DRR4R Programme within and across the practices and regional offices;
- strengthen the DRR4R team's knowledge and understanding of the roles of each practice and regional office; and
- identify mainstreaming entry points through mutual agreement.

The aim is to ensure that each of the selected entry points will provide the greatest level of impact in terms of positioning UNOPS for longer-term engagement in DRR and CC initiatives as they apply within the development context.

#### **Consultation with headquarters practices:**

The main goal of this consultation is to identify three to four mainstreaming entry points within each practice. The process involves discussion on the core-business functions and the identification and analysis of those functions that have direct relationship with DRR4R issues.

This consultation also identified potential gaps and find solutions, including identifying what knowledge UNOPS needs to be able to effectively engage in high level negotiations on DRR4R and CCA issues at the global, regional and country levels.

**Consultations with regional and country offices:**

These consultations strive to identify one to two potential mainstreaming initiatives in each region that have the potential for the greatest levels of scale-up and/or replication. This is being done in parallel to the HQ consultations, to ensure the results of activities on the ground can be used to influence the content of policy and other resources designed to guide and support regional operations. In addition we will respond to ad hoc requests for advice and guidance arising from unplanned events such as the Ebola crisis.

**Additional support:**

This includes providing support to individual HQ practice business development initiatives, regional conferences and partnership coordination – which will be integrated into the overall DRR4R work-plan.

### **8.3. Stage two - implementing the plan of action**

The implementation of agreed actions, and the introduction of new strategies to regional and country offices are part of a longer-term outlook of embedding DRR4R within UNOPS. This will be informed by the outcomes from Sendai, to ensure alignment with the broader global and UN agendas. A detailed implementation plan will be developed once the outcomes from Sendai are known.

It will be important to articulate the changes made through well-structured capacity-enhancement strategies that will lead to transformational change in policy, planning and practice. Such strategies must move beyond website access and Skype calls to include face-to-face consultations, mentoring and empowerment.

## **9. DESIRED DRR4R PROGRAMME OUTPUTS**

- Strengthen existing policy, planning and practice to underpin a strong risk-based culture within and across all UNOPS activities.
- Improve UNOPS capacity to effectively engage in strategic initiatives at global, regional and country levels.
- Establish consistent standards in business development approaches across the organization.
- Strengthen risk-management frameworks through the consideration of external risk factors within project design and implementation phases as standard practice.
- Establish an effective advisory service that monitors and remains abreast of emerging issues and best practice, effectively representing the agency at high-level meetings and responding to requests from across the agency.
- Position UNOPS as a global best-practice leader in areas where it has a clear mandate.
- Position UNOPS as a value-adding partner to advance DRR and CCA policy agendas globally.

