

Webinar:
**Building back better: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance the role of
parliaments in disaster risk reduction**

9 July 2020, 14.00 Geneva, 19.00 Bangkok, 21.00 Seoul

Registration: <https://bit.ly/2MFkhJW>

Concept note

Background

A first IPU/UNDRR/WHO webinar for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on COVID-19 was held on 28 April 2020. Based on the outcomes of the webinar and the feedback from participants, a topic identified as requiring further knowledge and discussion on the part of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff was the better integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and health plans and strategies, as well as their effective implementation.

National and sub-national multisectoral DRR strategies and plans provide direction for implementing and monitoring a country's risk reduction priorities. They establish the key roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and identify technical and financial resources. They also facilitate countries' efforts to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which outlines seven targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks, namely: (i) understanding disaster risk; (ii) strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; (iii) investing in disaster reduction for resilience; and (iv) enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "build back better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.¹

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial that national DRR strategies cover all hazards – prioritizing biological ones – and are aligned with health plans. However, only a few of the 81 Member States that have adopted national DRR strategies included biological hazards. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that preparedness for a pandemic was not adequate. Parliaments can strengthen a systemic approach to DRR and emergency preparedness by engaging with all relevant sectors, in particular by breaking up existing silos between disaster management and health workers. Moreover, parliaments are instrumental in monitoring the implementation of government strategies by ensuring policy integration between DRR and health.

However, for effective implementation, DRR strategies must be supported by legislation and policy-level action from the government. Parliaments and parliamentarians have a key role in developing the required legal framework; in scrutinizing draft legislation for its scope and alignment with existing laws and plans; in collective and individual leadership in parliament and national and subnational forums; and in advocating for implementation at the local level and engaging with communities to ensure accountability and transparency. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that existing strategies for pandemic risk management in many countries were not adequate to deal with the impact of this event and that further engagement is required.

Content and objectives

The webinar will present – from a parliamentary perspective – country experiences of managing the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications for developing and implementing DRR strategies to build back better by engaging with sectors beyond health. The webinar will provide an opportunity for peer learning with a view to strengthening risk governance through enhanced engagement of parliaments and parliamentarians.

¹ <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>

This webinar complements a new joint initiative between UNDRR and the IPU: the creation of an Advocacy Toolkit for Parliamentarians on Disaster Risk Reduction as an Instrument for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Target audience:

It will be a global webinar. The target audience includes parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from all regions, as well as DRR stakeholders and representatives of ministries of health and WHO country and regional offices. The webinar will be held in English.

Date and time:

The webinar will be held on 9 July 2020 from 2 to 3.15 p.m. CEST.