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## Towards Improving Disaster Risk Reduction and Response capacities in Tajikistan

*a Joint Project Steering Committee Meeting took place in Dushanbe*

**Dushanbe, 19 January, 2017.** The first joint Steering Committee meeting of projects recently launched within UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme for the period of 2016-2021 has been conducted with participation of all contributing agencies, national implementing stakeholders and international partners.

Three new project documents were signed by UNDP with the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense and corresponding funding agreements with the Government of Japan, the Russian Federation-UNDP Trust Fund for Development and the Swiss Agency for Cooperation for the implementation of projects to strengthen disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response capacities, as well as disaster risk governance in Tajikistan.

Ms. Pratibha Mehta, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative in Tajikistan in her opening remarks highlighted the direct contribution of Disaster Risk Management Programme to increasing the resilience of people and places to natural disasters which are linked to at least 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Mehta, stated: *“We are confident that all three projects will contribute to reducing the disaster risks and will strengthen capacities of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense as well as of all other stakeholders to ensure that Tajikistan is fully prepared and equipped to effectively deal with disasters”.*

The Chairman of Committee of Emergency Situations, Mr. Rustam Nazarzoda, noted that in order to *“to establish a modern effective service – system that could in a timely manner, respond quickly and effectively to any emergency situation - it is important to prepare the high qualified search and rescue teams, strengthen the legislation framework in the field of disaster risk reduction and continue effective cooperation with all stakeholders.”*

Speaking at the meeting H.E. Mr. Hajime Kitaoka, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Tajikistan stressed Japan’s commitment and support highlighting: *“The project is expected to benefit as many as 8.2 million people, not only in Tajikistan but also in Afghanistan.”*

The Country Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan, Ms. Walburga Roos in her opening speech emphasized that: *« implementation of the projects will improve disaster management*

*capacities by strengthening the legislative framework for DRR, early warning systems, as well as formalizing mechanisms for disaster management at the national and regional levels. »*

As stated by Mr. Valeriy Dergachyov, Minister Consular of the Embassy of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan: *“These projects serve as one of the mechanisms which will strengthen the work of the Committee of Emergency Situations and help to reduce the vulnerability of community to natural disasters. Russian Federation carefully reacts to assistance in the field of disaster risk reduction in Tajikistan and is ready to continue its cooperation”.*

The meeting provided an overview of the three projects, with focus on the progress made so far and the planned activities for 2017, and highlighted the interlinkages and complementarities as well as the potential challenges envisaged during the implementation period. The presentations made showcased each project’s essential role in achieving the overall goals of the Disaster Risk Management Programme at all levels: national, provincial, urban, and communities, covering all aspects of disaster risk management and policy.

In conclusion, Steering Committee members emphasized the significant role of community to ensure sustainability of the results and effective coordination.

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**“Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Response Capacities”** a US \$10.6 million four-year project funded by the Government of Japan and designed to support the Government of Tajikistan in undertaking a nation-wide risk assessment, establishment and implementation of risk reduction measures, improvement of early warning and disaster management planning, preparedness and response, as well as strengthen capacities of search and rescue teams.

**“Strengthening Preparedness and Response Capacities”** a US \$1.5 million two-year project funded by the Russian Trust Fund for Development and designed to support the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacities in the country through: 1) *establishment of a Unified Emergency Preparedness and Response System for emergency situations; and 2) strengthening technical bases, as well as search and rescue capacities, of Tsentrosipas (specialized department of the Committee responsible for search and rescue operations).*

**“Improved DRR Policy Making Mechanism. Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance in Tajikistan (SDRGT)”** a US \$800,000 three-year project funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and designed to improve the risk governance in the country at all levels and broaden the engagement of key government, private sector and external organization actors in disaster risk governance in Tajikistan. The project will also increase the awareness of River Basin Organizations on managing water related hazards.

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