



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

APEC YOUTHS' FRAMEWORK ON EFFECTIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

*Insights from HOPE Workshop 2025: APEC Young Professionals in
Disaster Risk Management*



APEC Emergency Preparedness Working Group

June 2026



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A special thanks to the youth participants representing government agencies and grassroots organisations during HOPE Workshop 2025. Their passion, openness in sharing ideas, and enthusiasm during discussions held throughout the workshop helped to shape the ideas encompassed in this framework. This document is a written proof that young professionals and community representatives across APEC economies are keen to engage and share their voice to enhance disaster governance at the local, economy-wide and regional scales.

Lastly but not the least, we would like to take this space to thank the workshop's organisation committee members who contributed energy, time and manpower to make the programme a success.

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

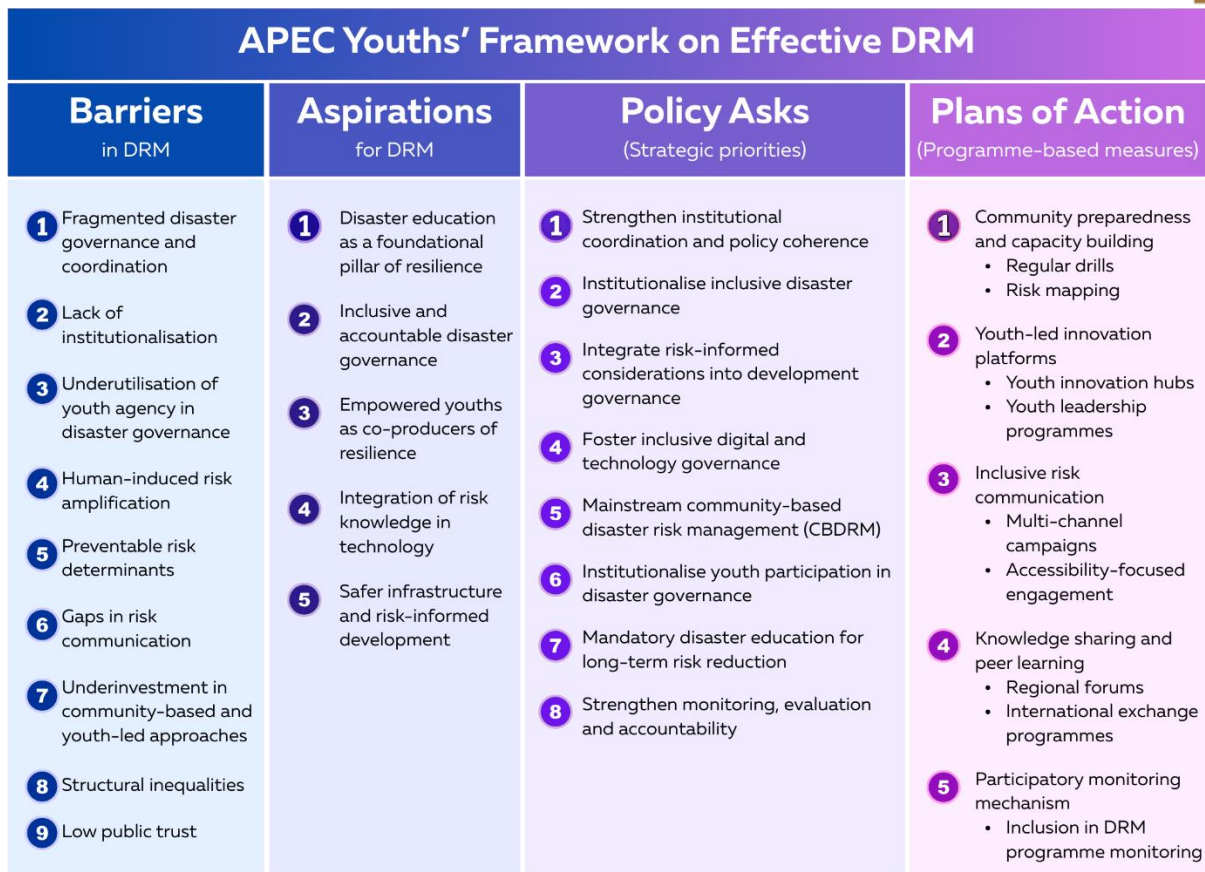
Disaster risks across the Asia-Pacific region continued to intensify as climate change, rapid developments, environmental degradation, and socio-economic disparities interacted with increasing hazard exposure. While advances in early warning systems and preparedness have contributed to declining mortality trends over recent decades, economic losses, infrastructure disruption, and cascading impacts on livelihoods and development remained as common threats for APEC economies, demonstrating that disaster risks were increasingly shaped by development pathways, governance arrangements, and levels of societal inclusion.

APEC Youths' Framework for Effective Disaster Risk Management was developed through the HOPE Workshop 2025 as a youth-centred, participatory reference document to bridge grassroots perspectives with governance dialogue across APEC economies. It consolidated youth and practitioner insights into a coherent set of barriers, aspirations, policy asks, and operational actions aimed at strengthening inclusive, preventive, and resilience-oriented disaster governance. Findings from the workshop as presented in this document validated the idea that youths were no longer just beneficiaries of risk reduction policies, but were indispensable contributors to governance innovation, community mobilisation, digital engagement, and long-term resilience building.

A set of systemic barriers that constrained effective disaster risk management (DRM) was thoroughly discussed, including fragmented governance and coordination, limited institutionalisation of inclusive participation, underutilisation of youth agency, risk-generating development practices, gaps in risk communication, underinvestment in community-based approaches, structural inequalities, regulatory non-compliance, and low public trust. These barriers reflected the interaction of governance, development, and social factors that shaped vulnerability and recovery capacity across diverse APEC contexts.

In response to these barriers, five shared aspirations for the future of DRM in the region were articulated: (i) disaster education as a foundation for long-term resilience; (ii) inclusive and accountable disaster governance; (iii) youth and communities as co-producers of resilience; (iv) technology as an enabler of accessible and trusted risk knowledge; and (v) safer infrastructure and risk-informed development. Together, these aspirations called for a shift from reactive, response-focused approaches that were still common in many economies towards proactive, preventive, and learning-oriented governance systems.

Facilitated discussion subsequently guided youth participants in translating these aspirations into governance direction through the framework presented in Figure 1. These institutional and regulatory reforms included strengthening coordination and policy coherence; institutionalising inclusive governance mandates; integrating risk-informed criteria into development and environmental governance; promoting interoperable and accessible digital risk information systems; mainstreaming community-based DRM; formalising youth participation in disaster governance structures; mandating disaster education; and strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms. These policy directions emphasised that resilience depended on institutional arrangements, enforcement, and sustained investment in people and systems.



APEC Youths' Framework on Effective DRM			
Barriers in DRM	Aspirations for DRM	Policy Asks (Strategic priorities)	Plans of Action (Programme-based measures)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Fragmented disaster governance and coordination 2 Lack of institutionalisation 3 Underutilisation of youth agency in disaster governance 4 Human-induced risk amplification 5 Preventable risk determinants 6 Gaps in risk communication 7 Underinvestment in community-based and youth-led approaches 8 Structural inequalities 9 Low public trust 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Disaster education as a foundational pillar of resilience 2 Inclusive and accountable disaster governance 3 Empowered youths as co-producers of resilience 4 Integration of risk knowledge in technology 5 Safer infrastructure and risk-informed development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Strengthen institutional coordination and policy coherence 2 Institutionalise inclusive disaster governance 3 Integrate risk-informed considerations into development governance 4 Foster inclusive digital and technology governance 5 Mainstream community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) 6 Institutionalise youth participation in disaster governance 7 Mandatory disaster education for long-term risk reduction 8 Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and accountability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Community preparedness and capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular drills • Risk mapping 2 Youth-led innovation platforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth innovation hubs • Youth leadership programmes 3 Inclusive risk communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-channel campaigns • Accessibility-focused engagement 4 Knowledge sharing and peer learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional forums • International exchange programmes 5 Participatory monitoring mechanism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion in DRM programme monitoring

Figure 1. APEC Youths' Framework for Effective Disaster Risk Management.
Source: Derived from youth discussions and stakeholder inputs from the HOPE Workshop 2025.

Complementing these proposed policy reforms, this framework also outlines a plan of action consisting of several practical programmes and initiatives that could be implemented at local, economy-wide, and regional levels. These included: (i) community preparedness and capacity-building programmes to strengthen grassroots readiness; (ii) youth innovation and leadership platforms to position youths as competent future leaders; (iii) inclusive multi-channel risk communication campaigns to improve public understanding and risk perception; (iv) regional knowledge-sharing mechanisms to encourage cross-economy learning and sharing of best practices; and (v) participatory monitoring and learning systems to promote accountability and integrity.

In summary, this framework document presented a youth-informed pathway for advancing proactive, inclusive, coordinated, technology-enabled, and accountable disaster governance in APEC economies. By integrating policy reform with operational action and by institutionalising youth and community engagement, it was believed that APEC economies could enhance their achievement of shared regional priorities and development goals, as well as create a more resilient Asia-Pacific community in the future.

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INTRODUCTION



Disaster risks across the world have increased significantly over the past decade due to climate change, urbanisation, environmental degradation, and ongoing socio-economic pressures (IPCC, 2023). Floods, landslides, extreme weather events, environmental pollution incidents, heatwaves, and public health crises disrupted communities, undermined resilience-building efforts, and impeded development trajectories regardless of levels of development (UNDRR, 2021). These hazards were no longer distinct or episodic; instead, they increasingly interacted and compounded in ways that place sustained pressure on communities, infrastructure systems, and public institutions (IPCC, 2022).

Across APEC economies, a defining feature of disaster risk was its strong linkage with prevailing development patterns. Rapid urbanisation, the expansion of informal settlements, land-use and land-cover change, degradation of natural environments, and deteriorating infrastructure had significantly increased vulnerability to hazards, particularly in densely populated urban and peri-urban areas (World Bank, 2021; UNDRR, 2022). At the same time, the protective functions of natural systems had been weakened, while unequal development had concentrated risks among populations with the least access to resources, information, and institutional capacity to respond. This dynamic further exacerbated existing social and economic inequalities.

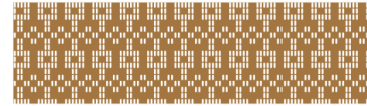
Youth across APEC economies have demonstrated growing interest in contributing to the increasingly complex landscape of disaster risk management, whether through community engagement and operational support or by driving innovation. Youth participation spans both strategic and operational activities, including disaster preparedness, strengthening risk communication, mobilising volunteers, and utilising digital platforms to enhance situational awareness before, during, and after systemic shocks (UNDRR, 2023). Research indicated that recognising young people as active contributors rather than passive recipients could significantly strengthen preparedness, coordination, and community resilience.

Despite this potential, opportunities for youth to engage systematically with disaster management agencies and related institutions remained uneven across APEC economies. In many contexts, youth involvement remains informal, project-based, or event-driven rather than being embedded within continuous planning, coordination, and learning processes (UNICEF, 2020). Strengthening structured pathways for youth engagement would enable disaster management systems to benefit more fully from youth perspectives, skills, and innovation while also enhancing coordination and operational effectiveness.

In support of this vision, the HOPE Workshop 2025 was organised to establish a youth-centred platform for dialogue, reflection, and shared learning on disaster risk management, grounded in the experiences and perspectives of APEC economies. The workshop brought together young professionals, practitioners, and advocates from diverse agencies and communities to explore disaster risk trends, discuss governance challenges, and exchanged experiences across economies. Rather than focusing primarily on technical policy formulation, the workshop prioritised participatory dialogue, peer learning, and the sharing of lived experiences as a foundation for

understanding how youth could contribute meaningfully to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. These insights were subsequently synthesised and integrated into the present framework document to carry forward the voices, perspectives, and aspirations of APEC youth in support of strengthening disaster risk management across APEC economies.

DISASTER RISK CONTEXT IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC



The *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report (2023)* highlights the disproportionate share of global disaster impacts borne by the Asia-Pacific region, reflecting its distinct risk profile. Disaster mortality in the region was driven primarily by sudden-onset hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis, while the number of affected populations was predominantly linked to flood events. In contrast, global patterns showed a greater influence of slow-onset hazards, such as drought, in shaping mortality trends. These relationships reflected the intensification of disaster risk associated with dense populations, rapid development, and settlement patterns in hazard-prone areas, including floodplains, small island economies, and rapidly urbanising regions.

Economic losses further illustrated the region's structural exposure, with floods and earthquakes representing the principal drivers of damage. This demonstrated how urban expansion, infrastructure concentration, and development in high-risk zones translated physical hazards into large-scale economic disruption. The region also exhibited a multi-hazard economic risk profile closely connected to development pathways, environmental management practices, and climate change dynamics. As hazard events became more frequent, the likelihood of cascading disasters increases, resulting in amplified impacts that severely disrupted industries, infrastructure systems, economic development, and social order in affected areas.

Decadal trends in the Asia-Pacific region presented an even more complex picture. While the decline in average disaster fatalities since the 1970s indicates improvements in early warning systems, preparedness, and response capacities, this positive trend contrasted with a sustained increase in economic losses driven not only by rising exposure but also by the climate-related intensification of hazards. The number of affected people rose sharply from the 1970s to the 2000s before stabilising in more recent years, although exposure levels remained high due to persistent settlement patterns and expanding economic activity in risk-prone areas. Figure 2 illustrated the long-term evolution of disaster impacts in Asia and the Pacific from the 1970s to the 2020s, based on three critical indicators: average number of deaths, number of people affected, and economic losses. When viewed as a whole, these trends pointed to a critical transition in disaster impacts in Asia and the Pacific, namely a shift from high mortality in earlier decades towards rapidly increasing socio-economic losses in more recent years. This transition also underscored the importance of conducting regionally differentiated analyses, as the impacts of disasters vary substantially across subregions depending on their levels of development and exposure to hazards, governance capacity, and resilience measures.

Asia-Pacific subregions exhibited notably varied patterns of loss, both in economic terms and in the proportion of affected populations (see Figures 3 and 4). In 2022, South and South-West Asia (SSWA) emerged as the most affected subregion, surpassing South-East Asia (SEA), with fatality rates at least ten times higher than those of other subregions. In contrast, East and North-East Asia (ENEA) and North and Central Asia (NCA) recorded generally lower mortality rates, indicating stronger institutional capacity, more effective early warning systems, and higher levels of disaster preparedness.

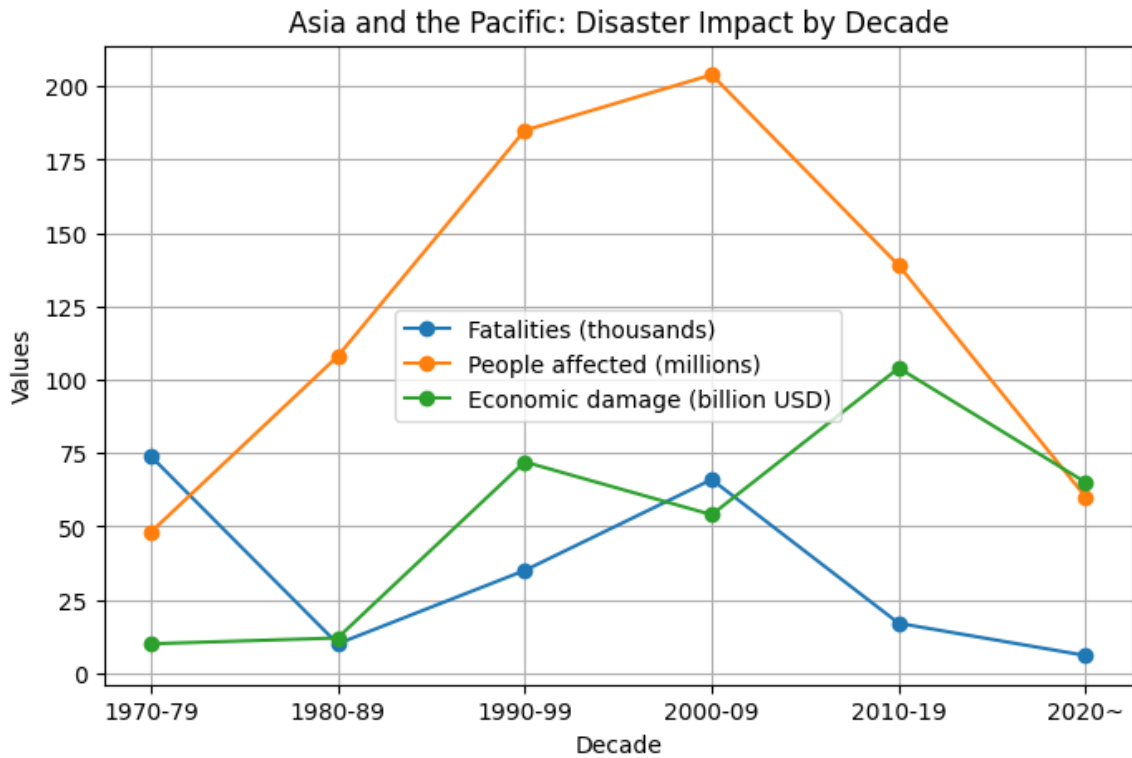


Figure 2: Disaster risk trends in Asia-Pacific (Source: EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database).

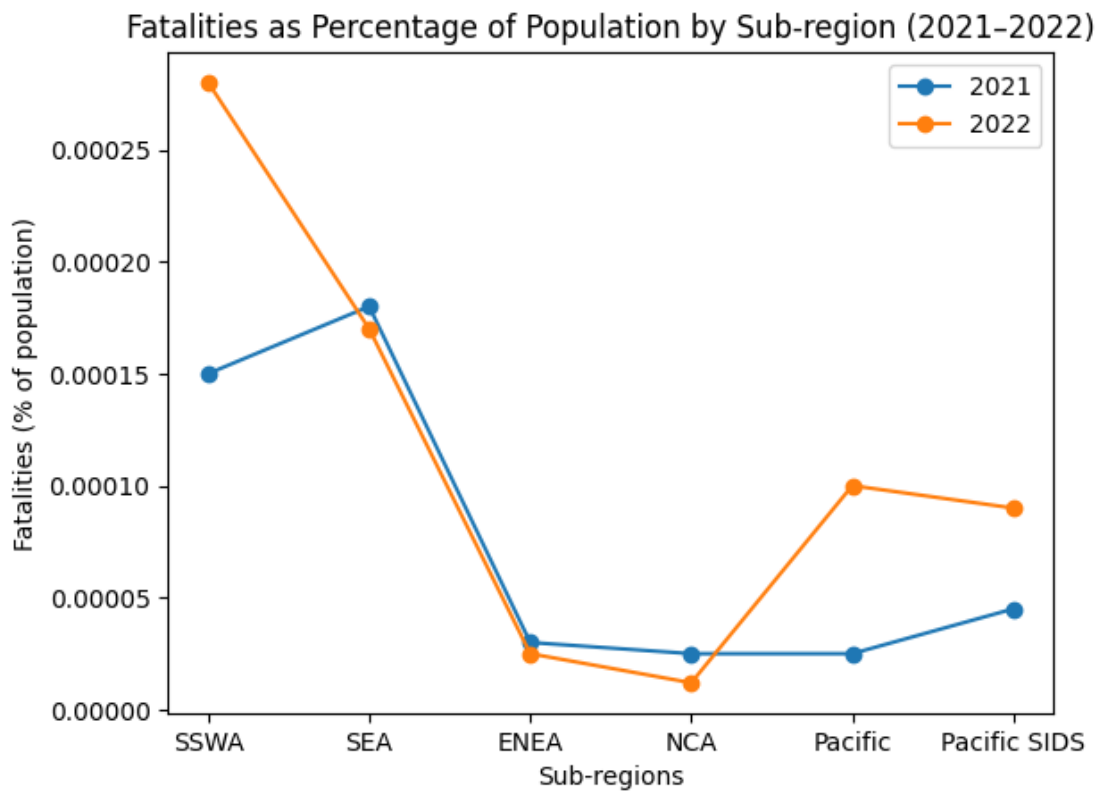


Figure 3: Fatalities as a percentage of population by sub-region in Asia and the Pacific (2021–2022) (Source: EM-DAT and SDG Gateway). **Note:** SSWA = South and South-West Asia; SEA = South-East Asia; ENEA = East and North-East Asia; NCA = North and Central Asia; Pacific = Pacific; Pacific SIDS = Pacific Small Island Developing States.

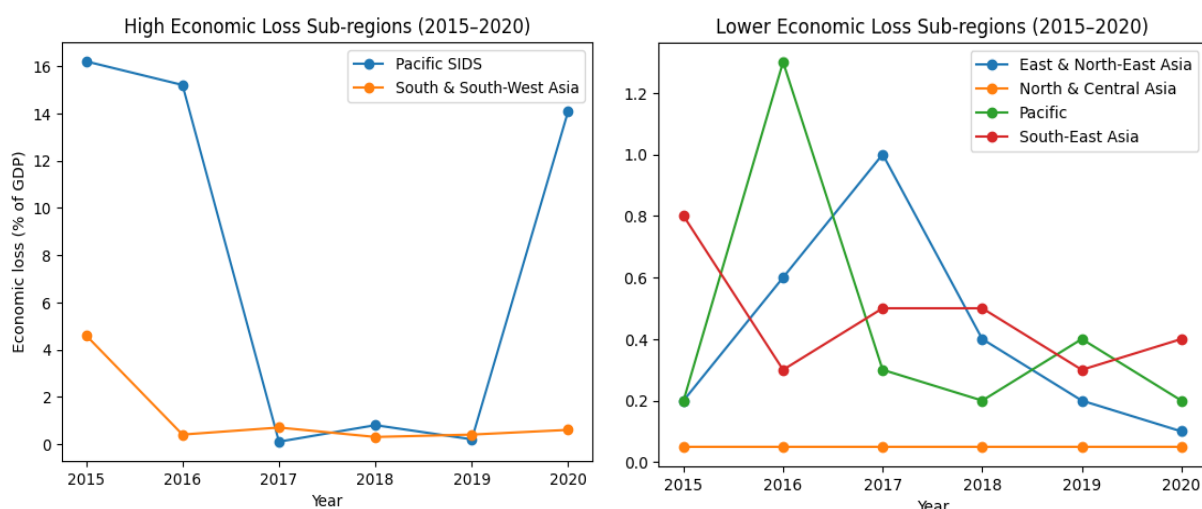


Figure 4: Average economic loss as a percentage of GDP in high-loss and lower-loss sub-regions (2015–2020) (Source: EM-DAT and GDP data from SDG Gateway).

Disaster-related economic losses as a share of GDP reveal marked disparities across Asia-Pacific subregions. Pacific Small Island Developing States (Pacific SIDS) experienced the highest relative losses, with sharp peaks in several years reflecting the disproportionate impact of extreme events on small and highly exposed economies, where a single disaster could account for a substantial proportion of annual GDP. This pattern highlighted a region characterised by structural vulnerability in small island and densely populated subregions, alongside episodic yet severe economic shocks across the wider Asia-Pacific. Small island economies faced acute economic disruptions, South and South-West Asia (SSWA) experienced persistent exposure of both human and economic systems, while rapidly developing subregions such as South-East Asia (SEA) confronted increasing asset concentration in hazard-prone areas. These differentiated risk profiles underscored the importance of tailored, context-specific governance and disaster risk reduction strategies within a shared regional framework.

Furthermore, the subregional profiles presented in Figure 3 indicated that disaster risk in Asia and the Pacific was not only high but also unevenly distributed across geographical space and social groups. While hazards might extend over wide areas, their impacts were often concentrated in large urban centres, informal land-use planning (ILUP) zones, and high-risk corridors. Access to information, the quality of physical infrastructure, and the availability of institutional support continued to shape community vulnerability, influencing both disaster impacts and post-disaster recovery capacity (UNDRR, 2022). These findings confirmed that disaster risk emerges from complex interactions between hazards and the combined effects of environmental stressors, social vulnerability, and development processes, rather than from hazards alone.

In this context, technology and Early Warning Systems (EWS) had assumed an increasingly prominent role in mediating disaster impacts across APEC member economies. Many economies had invested in surveillance systems and digital platforms to strengthen preparedness and response capacities. However, persistent gaps in accessibility, communication effectiveness, and data connectivity continued to

affect both the dissemination of risk information and public response behaviour (World Meteorological Organization, 2022). This underscored the need for technological interventions to be embedded within robust communication channels, strong institutional coordination, and sustained community engagement. Together, these elements were essential for translating risk information into effective disaster governance and for reducing vulnerability across diverse subregional contexts.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This framework was developed through a participatory and evidence-informed process grounded in the deliberations and outputs of the HOPE Workshop 2025: *APEC Young Professionals in Disaster Risk Management*, held from 21 to 23 October 2025 at the Palm Garden Hotel, Putrajaya, Malaysia. The programme was organised around progressive daily themes, beginning with building a foundational understanding of disaster risks on the first day, followed by strategies and implementation for disaster risk management (DRM) on the second day, and concluding with policy approaches for DRM on the third day.

The three-day workshop brought together young professionals, practitioners, academics, civil society representatives, and community advocates to engage in experience-sharing sessions led by invited experts, as well as structured discussions across three thematic tracks: (i) environmental management and climate change adaptation; (ii) inclusive development and community resilience; and (iii) urban planning and critical infrastructure. This approach sought to combine technical analysis with lived experience and the diverse perspectives of stakeholders, particularly those who remain underrepresented in disaster management dialogue and decision-making processes.

Drawing on the outcomes of the workshop, this document reflects the collective perspectives of participants and translated workshop-level insights into a coherent and regionally relevant reference for disaster governance across APEC economies. Rather than presenting the findings as a standalone academic or policy analysis, the framework consolidated and synthesised diverse experiences, group discussions, and action-oriented proposals generated by participants from different APEC economies and professional backgrounds.

To generate the source material for this framework, the facilitated thematic discussions conducted during the workshop were structured as follows:

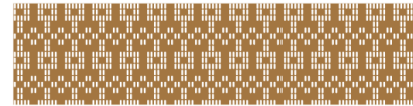
- i. Track-based discussions on disaster risk drivers, governance challenges, community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM), environmental risk management, and climate change adaptation;
- ii. Vulnerability and capacity analyses focusing on groups disproportionately affected by disasters, particularly persons with disabilities (PWD), youth, low-income households, and marginalised communities;
- iii. Hazard-specific discussions, including floods, earthquakes, and cascading hazards, to examine exposure, vulnerabilities, existing measures, and implementation gaps;
- iv. Solution-design and policy dialogue sessions, in which participants developed practical actions, scalability pathways, and institutional roles; and
- v. APEC youth perspectives on the future of disaster risk management, particularly their aspirations, policy priorities, accountability mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation approaches.

Throughout the workshop, assigned facilitators systematically documented key discussion points, proposed solutions, and areas of consensus across all sessions. Two defining features of the HOPE Workshop 2025, and consequently of this framework, were its youth-centred orientation and commitment to inclusive participation. The workshop emphasised that participants were not passive beneficiaries of disaster risk management policies, but active contributors to governance analysis, solution design, and policy articulation.

As a result, insights related to youth leadership, education, volunteerism, digital engagement, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and intergenerational resilience emerged organically from the discussion sessions. These insights were subsequently consolidated into policy-relevant narratives and strategic directions that the project team considered suitable for application across diverse APEC contexts.

Based on the points outlined in this section, this framework document is intended to serve as a reference for policymakers, disaster management agencies, and risk managers by bridging grassroots perspectives with higher-level governance discourse. The recommendations presented in the following sections remain faithful to participant contributions, aligned with APEC policy priorities, and adaptable to varying institutional and socio-economic contexts.

BARRIERS IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT



Across the different discussion tracks, participants consistently highlighted that disaster risks were shaped not by hazards alone, but by the interaction of environmental conditions, development practices, governance arrangements, and levels of engagement at both community and institutional levels. While contexts vary across APEC economies, several common challenges emerged repeatedly during group discussions. The issues and challenges faced by different stakeholders in managing disaster risks were compiled and synthesised as follows:

1. Fragmented disaster governance and coordination.

A recurring barrier identified by participants was the fragmentation of disaster governance systems across APEC economies. Overlapping mandates, siloed institutional structures, and weak coordination between economy-wide, sub-economy, and local authorities undermined coherent disaster risk management. In many contexts, disaster preparedness, environmental management, urban planning, and social protection were addressed through separate policy domains, thereby limiting their collective effectiveness. This fragmentation reduced the efficiency of preparedness and response mechanisms and weakened the inclusion of communities, civil society, and youth actors. In fragmented governance environments, inclusive participation was often treated as discretionary rather than integral to decision-making processes. Coordination challenges became particularly evident during emergencies, when delays in response and inconsistent communication hindered timely and effective action.

2. Lack of institutionalisation.

Persistent gaps were identified between policy-level commitments to inclusivity and their practical implementation. While inclusive disaster governance was frequently referenced in strategies and frameworks, it was rarely embedded within enforceable institutional mandates, standard operating procedures, or accountability mechanisms. As a result, participation by vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities (PWD), rural and low-income youth, and individuals without access to digital platforms or assistive technologies remained uneven. Participants stressed that inclusion without institutionalisation often resulted in symbolic engagement rather than structural change. Vulnerable groups were consulted intermittently and were rarely integrated into planning, implementation, or evaluation processes in a sustained manner. These gaps weakened both social equity and the effectiveness of disaster governance systems.

3. Underutilisation of youth agency in disaster governance.

Another significant barrier was the underutilisation of youth as governance actors within DRM systems. Youth engagement was often confined to volunteerism, awareness campaigns, or disaster recovery activities, with limited opportunities to influence strategic planning, policy design, or evaluation. Participants noted that this instrumental approach overlooks the capacity of youth to contribute innovation, digital expertise, local knowledge, and peer mobilisation. Limited formal youth leadership

pathways within government agencies, advisory mechanisms, and institutionalised roles reduced the overall impact of youth engagement. Without meaningful participation beyond ad hoc activities, disaster governance systems did not fully realise the potential of younger generations in building long-term resilience.

4. Human-induced risk amplification.

Participants consistently framed many disaster risks as human-driven rather than purely natural events. Poorly maintained drainage systems, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, and limited community engagement were identified as contributors to frequent urban flooding and landslide risks. Rapid development undertaken without adequate consideration of social and environmental impacts had reduced natural water catchment areas, increased surface run-off, and heightened exposure across cities and peri-urban settlements. While climate change was recognised as a risk multiplier, participants stressed that ineffective land-use planning, environmental degradation, and weak local enforcement remained central drivers of risk intensification across APEC economies.

5. Preventable risk determinants.

Vulnerabilities were viewed as structural and largely preventable, as they were rooted in governance and investment decisions. Key vulnerabilities identified included inadequate preparedness and mitigation infrastructure, loss of natural buffers, socio-economic constraints that limited recovery capacity, high population density that complicated evacuation, and land-use planning that did not minimise exposure to hazards. For most of these vulnerabilities, their persistence was attributed to insufficient enforcement of standards, underinvestment in prevention, and limited integration of disaster risk considerations into development planning. Participants emphasised that failure to address these structural conditions perpetuated cycles of loss, higher disaster impacts, and slow recovery, particularly among low-income and marginalised populations.

6. Gaps in risk communication.

Despite growing investment in early warning systems and digital platforms, persistent barriers remained in relation to risk communication and digital governance. Access to disaster information was uneven, with warnings often delivered in unclear formats or through channels that did not reach high-risk populations. Language barriers, digital divides, and limited accessibility for persons with disabilities further constrained effective and inclusive risk communication. Participants also highlighted weak interoperability between information systems and a lack of disaggregated data as major constraints on evidence-based policymaking and accountability. Without inclusive, timely, and comprehensible risk communication, public trust and compliance with disaster warnings were frequently undermined.

7. Underinvestment in community-based and youth-led approaches

Participants underscored that DRM financing across APEC economies remained disproportionately focused on response and recovery, with limited investment in prevention, preparedness, and community-based approaches. Community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) initiatives and youth-led programmes were often

short-term, project-based, or underfunded, thereby limiting their scalability and long-term sustainability. Participants stressed that without predictable funding, institutional recognition, and sustained support, community and youth capacities remained peripheral to disaster governance systems, despite their critical role as first responders and resilience builders.

8. Structural inequalities.

Disaster risk management systems across the region continued to inadequately address intersecting vulnerabilities. Marginalised groups, particularly Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and rural youth faced barriers in accessing disaster risk information, evacuation facilities, recovery assistance, and decision-making platforms. These inclusion gaps not only undermined social equity but also reduced the effectiveness of disaster governance, as vulnerable segments of society remain exposed and disengaged. Participants emphasised that inclusive disaster governance was both a matter of justice and an operational necessity.

9. Regulatory non-compliance.

Participants noted widespread and normalised non-compliance with safety standards in hazard-prone areas in some economies. Residential and public structures continued to be constructed without adequate consideration of seismic or climate-related risks, thereby increasing the likelihood of structural failure. Damage to roads, bridges, and utilities could impede rescue operations, delayed relief delivery, and prolonged recovery processes. These failures were linked to broader governance challenges, including weak oversight, fragmented regulatory systems, and risks of corruption.

10. Low public trust.

Low public trust in disaster governance institutions was identified as a cross-cutting barrier in several economies. Ineffective communication, limited transparency, and top-down decision-making practices reduced community confidence and willingness to act on risk information. Lack of trust undermined preparedness, compliance with early warnings, and long-term engagement in resilience-building efforts. Participants emphasised that effective disaster governance required sustained, two-way engagement with communities, particularly young people beyond periods of crisis. Building trust, ownership, and collective responsibility was therefore essential for strengthening inclusive and resilient disaster governance at both local and economy-wide levels.

APEC YOUTH ASPIRATIONS FOR DRM

Inspired by the challenges identified in Chapter 3, APEC youth echoed the call for disaster risks in the Asia-Pacific region not to be viewed as the inevitable result of natural hazards, but rather as outcomes shaped by governance decisions and development pathways. They expressed a shared aspiration to shift disaster risk management from a reactive, response-based approach towards a proactive, inclusive, and learning-oriented governance model. The following five priority areas collectively represent the aspirations of APEC youth for the future of disaster risk management in the region.

Aspiration 1: Disaster education as a foundational pillar of resilience

Disaster education was repeatedly highlighted as a long-term investment in shaping risk-informed attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making. Participants noted that in many economies, disaster preparedness practices remained largely reactive and event-driven, and that disaster risk understanding was not sufficiently integrated into formal education systems. This had contributed to low levels of preparedness, limited risk awareness, and restricted youth participation in disaster risk reduction. Through the institutionalisation of disaster education, APEC youth envisioned fostering a culture of preparedness through economy-wide and local education systems in which:

- Disaster risk reduction (DRR) was incorporated into primary, secondary, and tertiary curricula;
- Educational materials were sensitive to the capacities of youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs);
- Students acquired practical knowledge and skills in preparedness, evacuation, environmental stewardship, and risk-informed problem-solving.

Aspiration 2: Inclusive and accountable disaster governance

APEC youth aspire for a disaster governance system that is functional rather than symbolic. Participants of the workshop agreed that although policy frameworks often acknowledged vulnerable populations, their actual roles in disaster planning, implementation, and evaluation remained limited. Persons with disabilities, youth, and marginalised communities sought recognition as equal and formal stakeholders in governance processes. This aspiration was grounded in a call for transparent, participatory, and accountable governance arrangements that generated disaster policies responsive to diverse needs and lived realities. Such a system included:

- Institutionalised inclusion through mandates, participation platforms, and accountability mechanisms;
- Transparent, trustworthy, and continuous two-way communication between governing bodies and community representatives;
- Accountable actors who take responsibility for measurable outcomes rather than symbolic policy commitments. Accountable actors willing to be responsible for measurable impacts, not just policy commitments.

Aspiration 3: Empowered youths as co-producers of resilience

Youth expressed a strong desire to be recognised as co-producers of disaster resilience rather than passive beneficiaries. They argued that communities, often the first responders in disasters and holders of local knowledge, had been overlooked by bureaucratic disaster management systems. This vision sought to reposition disaster governance towards community and youth-led paradigms grounded in local ownership and sustainability. Participants emphasised the importance of building youth and community capacities through sustained investment in preparedness activities, training, and volunteer network development alongside grassroots leadership. Accordingly, disaster resilience as envisioned by APEC youth should be built upon:

- Robust community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) approaches, including implementation and evaluation mechanisms;
- Institutional recognition of youth and community leadership;
- Continued investment in local preparedness programmes, disaster simulations, and volunteer training.

Aspiration 4: Integration of risk knowledge in technology

Technology was viewed as a bridge between institutions and communities for building shared risk awareness, rather than merely as a technical early warning device. Workshop participants emphasised that current technological systems often failed to reach vulnerable populations due to language barriers and accessibility limitations, particularly among rural communities and persons with disabilities. This aspiration was grounded in the belief that digital tools should enhance trust, communication, and informed decision-making across society. Participants stressed that technology must be user-centred and evidence-based, presenting risk information in ways that were timely, understandable, and actionable for all groups. In this context, APEC youth envisioned a disaster management system with:

- Accessible, multi-format risk communication channels;
- The use of technology to strengthen preparedness and early action;
- Equitable digital tools that bridged language barriers, local capacity gaps, and socio-economic differences.

Aspiration 5: Safer infrastructure and risk-informed development

Development should not generate new disaster risks but should instead contribute to long-term safety and sustainability. Participants highlighted weak enforcement of construction standards, environmental degradation, and unplanned development as factors that exacerbated disaster risk across the region. This aspiration reflected the view that disaster risk was increasingly anthropogenic rather than solely the result of natural processes. APEC youth called for infrastructure development and urbanisation to be guided by risk assessments, environmental sustainability, and resilience principles. Prioritised approaches to reduce future risks included:

- Urban planning and infrastructure design that prioritised environmental sustainability and community resilience;
- Protection and restoration of natural buffers;
- Development strategies that prioritised long-term safety over short-term gains.

RESOLUTIONS

Building on the barriers and aspirations articulated during the HOPE Workshop 2025 and presented in the previous chapters, this chapter outlined a set of resolutions proposed by APEC youth. Rather than advocating a “one-size-fits-all” approach, participants expressed a preference for shared policy directions and concrete actions that could be adapted to the specific contexts and needs of individual APEC member economies.

6.1 Youths Policy Asks to APEC Member Economies

1. Strengthen institutional coordination and policy coherence

Governments should review and align economy-wide disaster risk management (DRM) frameworks to clarify institutional mandates, formalised whole-of-government coordination mechanisms, and established interoperable communication protocols. Revisions to disaster management legislation and economy-wide DRM strategies should define cross-sectoral standard operating procedures (SOPs), eliminate overlapping agency roles, and articulate complementary responsibilities for civil society and the private sector. Economy-wide DRM frameworks should also incorporate coordination platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement at multiple levels, from local to regional. At the regional level, APEC should facilitate policy harmonisation dialogues, peer-learning platforms, and shared coordination standards to strengthen cross-economy coherence and promote the transfer of best practices among member economies.

2. Institutionalise inclusive disaster governance

APEC member economies should revise economy-wide DRM legislation, policies, and SOPs to mandate the participation and representation of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, older persons, women, children, Indigenous communities, and informal settlers, across all stages of the DRM cycle. To ensure that inclusion is embedded as a governance obligation rather than an ad hoc practice, policy measures should include:

- i. Legal provisions requiring inclusive consultation in DRM planning and implementation processes;
- ii. Accessibility standards for early warning systems, evacuation procedures, and shelters;
- iii. Accountability mechanisms and reporting requirements to track inclusivity outcomes.

3. Integrate risk-informed considerations into development governance

Disaster risk considerations must be systematically integrated into development planning, land-use regulation, and environmental governance frameworks. APEC youth strongly emphasised the need for governments to strengthen enforcement of land-use zoning laws, building codes, and environmental regulations.

DRM criteria should be embedded in infrastructure planning and environmental impact assessments to ensure that development projects were designed, located, and operated according to risk-sensitive standards rather than solely technical or economic feasibility. These criteria should include hazard exposure assessment, projected climate conditions, critical infrastructure resilience, cascading disaster impacts, and social equity considerations.

4. Foster inclusive digital and technology governance

APEC economies required policy frameworks that promoted interoperable, accessible, and open disaster information systems, supported by technical standards for data interoperability among agencies. Data governance regulations must ensure the accessibility of early warning information for vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities and marginalised communities. Policies supporting open data principles, cross-border information exchange, and innovation cooperation in digital disaster governance should be prioritised.

5. Mainstream community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM)

Governments should institutionalise support for CBDRM within economy-wide DRM policies and financing mechanisms. CBDRM approaches had been shown to strengthen preparedness and resilience at the local level while complementing economy-wide and regional systems.

Proposed policy instruments included:

- i. Dedicated budget allocations and grant schemes for community-led DRM initiatives;
- ii. Integration of community risk mapping, drills, and volunteer programmes into local governance frameworks;
- iii. Strengthened partnerships between local authorities and community-based organisations.

6. Institutionalise youth participation in disaster governance

Youth empowerment was both a stand-alone and cross-cutting policy priority. To address this need, APEC member economies should establish formal institutional mechanisms for youth engagement in DRM decision-making. These may include youth advisory councils within local and economy-wide disaster management agencies, support for youth leadership and volunteer development programmes linked to DRM institutions, and increased representation of youth in economy-wide DRM coordination platforms.

7. Mandatory disaster education for long-term risk reduction

A key Youth Resolution was the inclusion of compulsory disaster education within member economies' education systems as a sustainable measure to reduce vulnerability and strengthen societal resilience. Governments should adopt education policy reforms that integrated disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate risk awareness, and preparedness training into primary, secondary, and tertiary curricula. This might require:

- i. Education ministry directives mandating DRR curriculum inclusion;

- ii. Teacher training programmes in disaster education;
- iii. Partnerships between educational institutions and disaster management authorities to facilitate technical knowledge transfer.

8. Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and accountability

The workshop emphasised the need for robust checks and balances in disaster governance, with clear indicators of inclusivity, effectiveness, and sustainability informing policy and programme design. Accordingly, APEC youth called on governments to establish comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks, which might include:

- i. Economy-wide DRM indicators measuring inclusivity, preparedness, and resilience outcomes, particularly for publicly funded programmes;
- ii. Public reporting mechanisms and independent review processes to validate programme performance and outcomes.

6.2 Plans of Action

While Section 6.1 outlines policy and institutional reforms, this Plan of Action presented practical programme-based measures proposed by participants of the HOPE Workshop 2025 that governments, local authorities, civil society organisations, and APEC platforms could implement to translate policy commitments into tangible resilience outcomes. These actions as listed in Table 1 emphasised community engagement, youth leadership, innovation, and learning mechanisms that strengthened DRM implementation at both local and economy-wide levels.

Table 1: Proposed plans of action for a more inclusive and resilient disaster governance

No.	Approach & programmes	Lead	Level	Implementation Timeframe
1.	Community preparedness & capacity building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular community drills • Participatory hazard mapping • Local volunteer training 	Disaster management agencies and local authorities	Primarily local, with economy-wide support	1 to 3 years for programme design and rollout
2.	Youth-led innovation platform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth innovation hubs • Youth leadership programmes. 	Disaster management agencies, with support from youth or relevant ministries	Economy-wide, with regional APEC support	1 to 3 years for design and implementation
3.	Inclusive risk communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-channel campaigns on social media platforms, community centres, and schools 	Disaster management agencies, with support from communication	Economy-wide initiative, with local implementation	1 to 2 years, with continuous improvement

No.	Approach & programmes	Lead	Level	Implementation Timeframe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement programs to understand accessibility needs 	authorities and/or service providers		
4.	Knowledge sharing and peer learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional forums International youth exchange programmes focusing on DRM 	APEC (EPWG), with support from economy-wide disaster management agencies of APEC economies	Regional	1 to 2 years for setup, with annual cycles afterwards
5.	Participatory learning initiatives via inclusion in monitoring of DRM programmes	Disaster management agencies, supported by youth organisations and academia	Economy-wide initiative, with local implementation	1 year to start, with ongoing implementation

CONCLUSION



This framework stressed that disaster risk in the Asia-Pacific region was not an inevitable consequence of natural hazards alone, but was shaped by governance decisions, development pathways, and levels of investment in people and institutions. Drawing on the collective insights of APEC youth and stakeholders from the HOPE Workshop 2025, this document articulated a shared vision for inclusive, preventive, and resilience-oriented disaster governance. across APEC economies.

Aspirations and recommendations by APEC youths presented in this framework underscored the need to move beyond reactive disaster management towards integrated approaches that prioritised education, institutional coordination, community empowerment, inclusive digital governance, and risk-informed development. These priorities recognised that resilience was built not only through technology and infrastructure, but also through trust, participation, and sustained engagement with vulnerable and marginalised communities. The recommendation for mandatory disaster education as a long-term strategy further reinforced the importance of intergenerational resilience and preparedness. By embedding disaster risk awareness within education systems as early as the primary education level, APEC economies could develop better risk perception and cultivate a culture of prevention that equipped future generations with the knowledge and skills needed to anticipate, reduce, and respond effectively to disasters.

Altogether, this framework carried the voice of youths across the region towards advancing inclusive disaster governance in the Asia-Pacific region. It affirmed that youth were not merely recipients of disaster policies and instead key agents of innovation and building of regional resilience. Empowerment of youths in this field would lead to a more inclusive, proactive and equitable disaster risk governance in individual economies and in the region.

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