



International Federation of Environmental Health

Date: 9 May 2019

Our ref: Dr Selva Mudaly (South Africa)
President IFEH

Henning I. Hansen (Denmark)
Hon. Vice President IFEH
Chairperson
IFEH DRR Committee

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

International Federation of Environmental Health

UNDRR 2019 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction

Phone: +45 2030 4540
(H. I. Hansen)

Email: henning.hansen@ifeh.org
Email: president@ifeh.org

**International Federation of
Environmental Health**
Chadwick Court, 15 Hatfields,
London, SE1 8DJ, UK

Website: www.ifeh.org

The International Federation of Environmental Health, IFEH, is a partner with the UNDRR in the frame of the UNDRR driven Scientific and Technical Partnership for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

IFEH is a worldwide umbrella organisation made up of national environmental health organisations as well as associated members and universities. IFEH represents various national member organisations in 45 countries across the globe with an estimated 40,000+ professionals working in the field of environmental health, mainly at local, regional and state governmental level as well as academics within colleges and universities.

The IFEH have highlighted the UNDRR driven DRR agenda – and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction at our IFEH World Congresses and at our IFEH World Academic Conferences since many years. We participated as co-planner as well as speaker in the Geneva 2016 S&T Conference where the UNDRR partnership program was launched. Next we participated as co-planner of the latest GP 2017 in Cancun, Mexico and at pre GP 2017 meeting Geneva where we gave presentation and emphasised the importance of highlighting the importance of all national signatories to the Sendai Framework to live up to the commitment of having national as well as regional/local strategies on Disaster Risk Reduction by 2020. This went out to be the core issue of the GP 2017 and next it has become an integrated part of UN SDG indicators on several SDG items. And at this UNDRR GP 2019 this is at the core issue as well. We may have kicked in an open door – but we have surely helped keeping it open. As this is important.

The IFEH is no rich organisation in terms of economy and we have no intention of becoming so. But the IFEH is rich in knowledge and in terms of connections throughout the World. Our network include connection to EH professionals in many countries – mainly at local/regional as well as national level and next to that at universities around the globe.

It is for sure that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and what it is about – is not known for many – and importantly not known for many government people – be that at local – regional nor national level.

This to me and the IFEH signals that we all together need to step up information campaigns about this unique UN Agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction.



International Federation of Environmental Health

But at all levels – be that local, regional or national level – it is for sure that – if not before – then due to climate change – and we are already there - many will be affected by disasters - and we need to do a concerted effort in order to avoid those catastrophic consequences.

A successful disaster risk reduction strategy needs to be initiated in a concerted effort and include many different technical skills and different stakeholders. The IFEH is well aware of the necessity of including many different skills and stakeholders and the IFEH welcomes the co-operations as co-operation is of vital importance.

In this setting, IFEH would like to offer its expertise regarding environmental health disciplines and the many thousands of environmental health professionals throughout the world. The core function of this professional group is to prevent impacts on human health and prevent impacts on the environment, which could affect living conditions. Environmental health disciplines cover a wide range of different specific topics, such as: drinking water, waste management, air pollution, housing and shelter, waste water, food safety, communicable diseases, vector & pest control, and debris management. Experience and knowledge on all of these disciplines is very relevant in a disaster situation as well as the planning to reduce the risk of a severe natural or man-made situation turning into a human disaster.

Many of our members and members of our national organisations are those professionals that take action when disasters do strike. Much information and knowledge is therefore stored through our EH professionals. All this knowledge – which is highly based on local and regional basis – is of vital importance when it is about how to avoid “natural hazards” getting into “disasters” – involving deaths of humans and loss of property etc. When disasters do strike, we hear a lot about the disaster on television etc. when it is at its heat. But the television etc. forget to tell about the aftermath. That is when many people do not have access to clean drinking water and when people return to devastated homes and devastated crops and then death or sickness due to polluted drinking water and loss of hygienic sanitation and functional sewers or sewer treatment plants play its role. And when the question is about – could – or even better – how could the effects of this “natural hazard” have been avoided – the television channels and news etc have moved on to the next item.

When the television and news etc. have turned down their lights and focus – that it where the EH professionals take over – in order to avoid the next coming in disasters. But having defined sewer systems or sewer treatment plant is not available in many corners of the World – which again compromise the access to clean drinking water. In the IFEH we are well aware of this discrepancy – and those countries that are hit most severely by natural hazards are often at the same time those that are in the low-income categories.



International Federation of Environmental Health

What are we doing in the IFEH to make a change and contributing to the DRR agenda:

1. Being present at UNDRR conferences to state the importance of EH knowledge and experience – which is very useful and important regarding DRR.
2. The IFEH have formed the IFEH DRR Committee in order to escalate and include all IFEH members in the process of getting all IFEH members informed about the Sendai Framework on DRR and to use our great network to both distribute information about DRR as well as collecting information from all our IFEH members in order to work together on DRR.
3. Distributing the words about the importance that all national signatories live up to their responsibilities of having national / local strategies on DRR by 2020 – as the IFEH already did, leading up to GP 2017 in Cancun.

What is the IFEH offering the UNDRR on the DRR Agenda:

1. The IFEH offer to use its great network to get this important agenda – the Sendai Framework - even more distributed.
2. Due to our many members in many countries around the Globe – using the IFEH as a channel will be a sure channel of getting important messages on DRR distributed to all corners of the World – and the receivers will all be relevant EH Professionals.
3. The IFEH tries to bring together both National Organisations as well as Universities around the globe to work together in order to work for the Sendai Framework.
4. The IFEH would like to offer assistance – in providing website space (for free) – in terms of demonstrating how a national or local strategy on DRR is set up. This could be strategies provided by national or local/regional authoritative - and the main purpose would be to let other authoritative bodies know how it can be done. If doing so – we would need the UNDRR acceptance also to include the UNDRR logo and the UNDRR acceptance that the IFEH is doing this in agreement with the UNDRR.

Kind regards

Dr Selva Mudaly

President IFEH