

## CASE STUDY: WORLD ANIMAL PROTECTION EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ACTION AT THE GLOBAL STAGE

### What is Sendai?

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is an intergovernmental agreement that:

- is inspired by the realization that disasters happen, will happen more frequently and more violently in the future and do cause increasing damage to people, the environment and the prospects of sustainable development; and
- seeks to establish global objectives on how to reduce the suffering caused by disasters by reducing the risk that disasters pose – we can't stop the disasters from happening but we can attempt to limit their impact.

The Sendai Framework guides international, regional and national action on disaster risk reduction, it suggests where national policies should focus their attention, what steps to take, who to involve in the process and how to work together. The Sendai Framework is not designed to facilitate, streamline or guide disaster response, although improved disaster risk management will have a positive impact on this as well. The Sendai Framework will guide all work in this area for a 15 year period and is closely linked to other recent agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement

### What has been our approach?

From our perspective, our main objective has been to get the Sendai Framework to reflect a global acknowledgement that animals suffer in disasters similar to humans, that animals are important to people and that therefore animal protection must be an integral element in the global disaster risk reduction approach and action.

To do this we had to do two things:

- First, we had to change people's perception of animals. Rather than seeing animals as commodities we presented animals as productive assets (something that has value beyond its intrinsic economic value). A productive asset is something people need to secure their livelihood. A productive asset is also something you need to take care off in order to preserve its productive capacity.
- Second, we had to change the narrative away from a focus on saving people's lives and the physical infrastructure that they inhabited to one where the main focus would be on securing people's livelihoods so that suffering could be reduced, recovery sped up and development gains maintained.

Through many trips to Geneva to meet with as many UN missions there as we could, through our active participation in UN debates on this both in Geneva and during regional meetings, by delivering a consistent message in all of these meetings and by presenting a very clear and relatively simple ask, we managed to find ourselves the champions (UN diplomats willing to do our bidding) we needed to introduce our language into the debate.

In the end, the Sendai agreement includes:

- ✓ a reference to 'protecting livelihoods' in the **expected outcome statement** (i.e. the change goal);
- ✓ a reference to 'protecting livelihoods and productive assets' in the **guiding principles** (i.e. the theory of change); and
- ✓ a reference to 'protecting livelihoods and productive assets, including livestock, working animals, tools and seeds' in the **priorities for action** (campaign objectives).

In essence, we have achieved our aim of changing people's perception of animals and re-directed the narrative to a focus on securing people's livelihoods and the productive assets they need for those livelihoods. Also, we have managed to get the UN to define which productive assets were key to the poorest and those most vulnerable to disasters, namely livestock, working animals, tools and seeds. These changes and clarifications will now drive global action on disaster risk reduction for the foreseeable future.

### What have we done recently?

Since the Sendai Framework was agreed, the UN turned its attention to monitoring and evaluation and established an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group (OIEWG) to develop a set of indicators that would be used to track, at a global level, how we are collectively doing in terms of achieving the goals and targets we set in Sendai. The OIEWG proposed indicators were to be presented to the UN General Assembly for adoption and will also guide the work of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators with regard to all SDG targets that relate to disasters.

Again, we undertook a number of trips to Geneva to meet up with old friends and make some new ones amongst the UN diplomatic community in order to ensure that the indicators would reflect the new narrative that we had been able to forge as well as to see whether we could find a way to have animals appear even more explicitly.

We proposed two indicators:

- The first was rather straightforward. Under the target calling for a reduction in economic losses attributed to disasters we sought to include an indicator that would measure the economic loss associated with livestock lost or injured during a disaster. We proposed that such an indicator should be embedded within a broader indicator seeking to measure agricultural loss but on condition that such an indicator would be disaggregated to reflect the various agricultural sub-sectors (including livestock) separately. In addition, we sought to get an indication that within the livestock subsector, countries would be asked to disaggregate between different types of livestock. Also, we sought a commitment that livestock would be defined as all livestock, not just four-legged animals as had been the case in the past.
- The second indicator we proposed was much more difficult as we asked countries to begin measuring something that they had not measured in the past. Also, UNISDR was not too convinced that our indicator was indeed necessary. We proposed that under the target calling for a substantial reduction in the number of people affected by disasters, an effort should be made to capture how disasters are affecting people's livelihoods, possibly through a focus on agricultural losses and the number of people affected by such losses. The trick here was to come up with a methodology for calculating livelihood loss without necessarily adding to the data collection burden of developing countries.

Besides building close relationships with governments and their representatives at the UN, we also sought to convince the key UN agencies, namely UNISDR and FAO. FAO was a willing partner given that building resilience for agriculture is part of their five corporate objectives. UNISDR was a slightly more difficult nut to crack but through a number of meetings with key staff, numerous email exchanges and us presenting them with some examples of how livelihoods could be measured, the key technical staff in UNISDR began to see the value of our suggestions and started to think with us and eventually came up with an indicator and methodology that was based directly on the number of livestock lost during a disaster.

With UNISDR and FAO supporting us, plus some very vocal voices arguing our case in the UN intergovernmental meetings, the two indicators were eventually adopted as proposed.

## What does it mean?

With the proposed indicators endorsed and adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 February 2017 (A/RES/71/276), every country in the world will, for the foreseeable future, endeavour to report on an annual basis how many livestock have been lost as a result of a disaster (disaggregated by type of livestock), what the economic cost of livestock loss is and how many people have been affected as a result of their livestock being lost.

As countries will seek to achieve the Sendai targets and seek to see their reported numbers improve, they will seek to be more active both at the policy level as well as in terms of direct action to protect livestock from disasters so that, over time, less and less livestock are lost due to a disaster. Livestock/animal protection will become a core element of national disaster risk reduction strategies.

Moreover, by adopting and endorsing both of our indicator proposals, the global community is, in effect, acknowledging that animals do not just have an economic value (animal as a commodity) but also a social value (animal as a productive asset without which people lose their livelihoods).

Finally, given that the Sendai Framework includes a great many issues that should be taken into consideration in effective disaster risk reduction, it is significant to note that out of the 20-odd issues selected to be monitored on a global level, two of these will be largely based on a determination of animal loss due to disasters. The choice of indicators and the level of debate referencing animals and livestock would suggest that animals and animal protection is now firmly mainstreamed in the DRR debate, at least at the UN level. Next is to ensure the same happens at the national level in all countries.