

Closing Remarks

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Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the 8th International Wildland Fire Conference comes to an end, I would like to thank all the participants for their contributions over the last four days.

We are all aware of the increasing severity of wildfires over the past years, which have caused the loss of lives and livelihoods, and caused significant damage to health, ecosystems, and infrastructure.

However, these wildfires, while increasing due to climate change, are not inevitable and can be stopped.

Key to this is shifting “investments from reaction and response to prevention and preparedness,” as was called for by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in the opening ceremony.

This means, countries must move from thinking about how they will respond to wildfires to thinking and acting on measures that can reduce the risks of fires occurring in the first place. This proactive risk management is the basis for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

And as we pass the midpoint of the Sendai Framework’s implementation, the findings of the Midterm Review offer great insights into how countries can make this shift towards prevention.

This includes good practices from countries, such as Portugal, which updated their legislation to manage wildfire risk and other emerging risks.

But more is needed, across the world, especially around building risk knowledge, strengthening multi-sectoral risk governance, and expanding decision-making to include all members of society.

We hope the Landscape Fire Governance Framework can help strengthen these areas through its promotion of integrated fire management and multi-sectorial risk governance to address the underlying causes of wildfires. And in turn, support the achievement of the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and other environmental and biodiversity agreements.

Before I close, allow to me share three recommendations from the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework to accelerate disaster risk reduction efforts around the world:

- First, all-of-government should be accountable for implementation and not simply a single agency.
- Second, the implementation of risk reduction measures should be supported with dedicated funding, with incentives to encourage risk reduction in the private sector.
- And third, risk knowledge and public participation should be afforded to all members of society. After all, risk reduction is everyone's business.

With that, I would like to congratulate you on the conclusion of this conference, and I thank you for your commitment to eradicating the risk of wildfire.

Together, let us work for a sustainable and resilient world for all. Thank you.