The need for pragmatism

Everyone wants disaster data

Especially because of:

- the Sendai Agreement, and;
- The climate change “loss and damage” mechanism.

As well as national, regional, local, sectoral (eg insurance), research, etc, demands.
Many existing approaches to, and influences on, global disaster data, + a range of emerging approaches – most dedicated to high standards.

Some examples:

Data eg:
EM-DAT
DesInventar
Global re-insurers Munich Re and Swiss Re, as well as the large risk related corporates;

Loss assessment approaches eg:
eg World Bank and Red Cross/Red Crescent, many national level approaches eg HAZUS,

Emerging approaches eg:
• the IRDR, the OECD, UNISDR (as part of the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2020), and EU.
• Across the climate change adaptation community – the loss and damage mechanism.
• The Fujitsu et al. initiative.

Diverse mandates, constituencies and disciplinary views of these groups and the many existing approaches, make important differences certain. Organisations and countries are unlikely to abandon their own approaches to assessment which suit their mandates, and which represent considerable investment.
The data will not be perfect

inconsistency is inevitable given:

- the range of ways that loss is valued and counted, some of it contested;
- the expertise and resources available for data collection and analysis;
- the variety of reasons for data collection; and
- Uncertainty in most aspects of the data handling process.

These factors hinder the aim of contributing to a uniform global database.

Accurate loss assessment can systematically discriminate against poorer people in a CBA context. The demands of equity and climate justice suggest results would need to be negotiated, regardless of the purity of the original data.
Transparency and disaggregation

• Instead of focusing on a single approach, we could work with all those collecting disaster related data, to negotiate some compatibility on key aspects.

• High levels of transparency and disaggregation can help with comparisons. These principles would be useful regardless of what is eventually agreed globally.
While we await global agreement we can use pragmatic approaches

- Locally relevant evidence to inform decisions remains unmet, and the study of long term trends requires historic data.
- An Australian study developed worked with the available material, rather than making normative standards the priority. A high level of disaggregation of economic and human losses, where available, and reliability metadata help comparability with other databases, now and in the future.
- Understanding each other and being able to use each others data without trying to make everything uniform.
- **We could examine different approaches to loss data, eg a “synthetic” approach**, which can address equity concerns.