

Voices of Leadership from South Asia



Photo: AIDMI.

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

It is conventional wisdom that disasters derail the development process. However, the impacts of disasters can be far more debilitating on developing countries as compared to their more developed counterparts. Plagued by a plethora of humanitarian challenges, the region of South Asia is consistently ranked as one of the most vulnerable regions exposed to the risk of natural hazards. Recurring disasters in the region and the devastation followed in their aftermath only serve to highlight this enhanced vulnerability of South Asia.

It is therefore timely and pertinent to focus on voices of DRR leaders from South Asia. The 3rd World Conference of Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was a perfect opportunity to focus on such voices. This issue of southasiadisasters.net highlights the country statements issued by the dispensations of various South Asian nations at the 3rd WCDRR. A compendium of these statements helps in understanding the South Asian perspective on DRR. These country statements also list out the achievements of these nations in making their countries and communities safer to the various risks they are exposed to.

A lot of common strands emerge from these country statements that can and they have been listed as a 'Way Ahead' towards the end of this issue. This issue is a must read for all who are interested in understanding the DRR aspirations and apprehensions of South Asia. ■

Source of speeches: <http://www.wcdrr.org/conference/programme/statements>

Voices of Leadership from South Asia

Ravaged by one disaster after another, the countries of South Asia have emerged as highly vulnerable to the risks posed by natural hazards. In light of this enhanced vulnerability, a regional perspective on risk and resilience arising out from South Asia is both pertinent and desirable. The 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) provided an opportunity to hear the insights of South Asian perspective on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Held from 14-18 March, 2015 in the Japanese city of Sendai, the 3rd WCDRR saw the heads of disaster management dispensations from all the South Asian countries issue country statements regarding the progress of their respective countries in implementing the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). These leaders also expounded on their vision for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) aptly putting forward their nations' aspirations and apprehensions.

This booklet is a compendium of the country statements delivered by these South Asian leaders at the 3rd WCDRR and aims to capture a South Asian perspective on DRR. It contains country statements from India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives (which represented the Alliance of Small Island States), Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. These statements provide a greater insight into the DRR achievements and anxieties of these countries.

A lot of common strands emerge from these statements such as the need for local level planning in DRR; promotion of risk sensitive development; integrating climate change adaptation with risk reduction; consolidating upon the progress of HFA and enhancing international cooperation to build a safer world. Moreover, it was unanimously agreed upon by all the South Asian countries that the synergies between the SFDRR, the Climate Change negotiations and Sustainable Development Goals be leveraged to engender sustainability in the present systems and processes of DRR.

The UN Secretary-General recently drew the attention of the world to the fact that an annual investment of USD 6 billion in DRR could lead to savings in the vicinity of USD 360 billion. This implies widespread cooperation and sharing of resources, technology and manpower to cultivate a global culture of preparedness. The first step towards this vision starts from South Asia, which is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world. This booklet is an attempt to present a regional South Asian perspective and vision on DRR as enunciated by its leaders. ■

– Mihir R. Bhatt



Photo: AIDMI.

Regional Cooperation for a Resilient South Asia

Country Statement by His Excellency Rajnath Singh, Minister of Home Affairs, India



Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of the Indian delegation for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. On behalf of the Government and the people of India, I wish to congratulate the United Nations and the host, the Government of Japan, for organizing this event.

The Hyogo Framework for Action has provided a blue print for disaster risk reduction activities including promotion of culture of prevention, mitigation, preparedness and resilience at all levels. Since then, considerable progress has been made by investing resources and enhancing capacities in dealing with the disasters. However, much needs to be done in the future. We are pleased to note that the post-2015 framework has provided us a practical and useful document with people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk. This would contribute to the reduction of disaster risks and strengthen resilience of the poor and the most vulnerable. We need to take risk informed decisions while making public and private investments. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development programmes and community resilience building are some of the noteworthy features in the new framework. Indeed, the concurrent post-2015 focus on sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk would further provide the international community with a unique opportunity to ensure coherence and alignment across



The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Head Ms Margareta Wahlstrom meets the HM Rajnath Singh at WCDRR in Sendai.

policies, practices and partnerships for implementation.

Recent events in India such as the landslides and floods of 2013 in the Himalayan State of Uttarakhand, cyclone 'Phailin' in Odisha in 2013, the floods and landslides in Jammu & Kashmir and cyclone 'Hudhud' in Andhra Pradesh in 2014 have once again brought into focus the need for multiplying our efforts towards disaster risk reduction. In addition, Typhoon 'Haiyan' in Philippines in 2014, Ludian and Yutian Earthquakes in China in 2014 and extreme weather events in United States of America and South Canada have taken place in the world. The unplanned development of cities and lack of proper infrastructure are the major challenges of the future. While communities, particularly women

and children, exposed to these events are trying to adapt to these regular occurrences, the economic and social costs continue to mount year after year. In this context, we believe that there is a need to actively build synergies among the DRR framework, the climate change adaptation framework and the sustainable development framework to ensure that our collective efforts enable us to create a safe, secure and disaster-free environment.

In India, our ancestors gave us the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which means that the whole planet – with all its human beings, plants, animal, birds and natural resources – is one family. This ancient realisation of our inter-connectedness is even more relevant and urgent today. I would like to call

upon this august gathering to embrace this notion and enhance international cooperation through sharing of technology, expertise and necessary resources. Here I would also like to reiterate the commitment made by our Prime Minister in SAARC Summit last year by ensuring India's help and expertise to the neighbouring countries.

India hosts the SAARC Disaster Management Centre which is working towards putting in place a framework to reduce disaster risks and promoting knowledge sharing among the SAARC countries. The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services operates the Tsunami Early Warning System. This is a State-of-the-Art warning system which benefits not only India but also the littoral countries of Indian Ocean. As a part of SAARC Monsoon Initiative, an integrated Operational System for monitoring and forecasting monsoon weather systems has been set up to address monsoon induced hydro-

meteorological disasters in the region. Our National Disaster Response Force which has the expertise in addressing national disasters also attends to disasters in the region and beyond. The National Institute of Disaster Management organizes trainings on various thematic domains of disaster risk management. We are keen to share our expertise and help other countries in disaster response and capacity building. We envisage a bigger role in capacity building in the Asia Pacific region and look forward to build sustained regional and international partnerships under the post-2015 Framework.

I would like to share that the Government of India has mainstreamed disaster risk reduction in its development policies at all levels, and has earmarked 10 percent of development funds towards innovation, disaster mitigation and restoration. Our Finance Commission, a constitutional body that recommends distribution of tax

proceeds between the federal government and the states, in its recent report has called for hazard, risk and vulnerability assessment in all our states. This will be critical first step in ensuring that over time, notions of risk reduction are embedded in every penny we spend on development. We are promoting cooperative federalism and devolving more power and resources closer to the ground of action.

Before concluding, we pledge our support to the post-2015 Framework, its goals and priorities. We commit ourselves to work with countries in the region and beyond in building resilient nations and communities, against disasters. We would also like to call upon all entities, public and private, to strengthen the international support mechanisms for disaster risk reduction by sharing of reliable and affordable modern technology for capacity-building and enabling institutional and policy environment at all levels.

Thank you all... ■

Business of Reducing Risk

International Recovery Platform (IRP) Public Forum on "Actions on Engaging Private Sector in Recovery: Ensuring greater impacts of recovery programs at the community level" was held at Tohoku University on March 16, 2015 during third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai, Japan.

Mihir R. Bhatt as a panelist, said that Business of Reducing Risk is not yet regular mainstream business and as a result we cannot reduce risk fully or involve private sector in reducing risk. He said we need to know far more on the market of reducing risk, the demand for risk reduction, and the nature and extent of risk reduction services and products



from left to right: Mr. Stefan Kohler, UNOPS; Mr. Dale Sands, AECOM; Mr. Mihir Bhatt, AIDMI; Dr. Kit Miyamoto, Miyamoto International; Mr. Gay Mitchell, Former Member of European Parliament, Ireland; and Mr. Damon Coppola, Bullock and Haddow, LLC.

available from supply side. We also do not know when risk is reduced, and how much, in most cases, and even more so when we face individual families. He said that we need to know

far more on the nature and extent of business of reducing risk before we cannot on it in Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction implementation. ■

Building Back Better for a Culture of Preparedness

Country Statement by Dr Mohammad Daim Kakar, Director General, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, Afghanistan



Excellences, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be invited to participate to the 3rd UN World Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction. Our presence today illustrates the importance and timeliness to understand and learn from the experiences of each other in area of Risk Reduction.

Now we have to address the underlying risks factors to ensure that the future disasters will not cause devastation, in line with DRR policy to "Build back better" to create the culture of prevention. It is also important to ensure that medium and longer-term disaster risk reduction and resilience building be made a strong component of the recovery process and embedded in the needs assessment and implementation plans of disaster recovery framework.

Afghanistan is exposed to multiple hazards the most prominent among which are earthquakes, extreme winter conditions, landslide, avalanches, floods as well as droughts and sand storms threatening the Afghan population in 30 out of 34 provinces of the country. According to a study conducted by UNDP/ Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), which reviewed vulnerability to the impact of various natural disasters in 200 countries, Afghanistan ranks at 5th and 17th respectively in terms of its relative vulnerability to earthquakes and floods. In 2014 the flooding season brought particularly devastating impacts. Flash floods in northern Afghanistan from 24 to 30 April 2014



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affected over 10,000 families (70,000 individuals) across 10 provinces in northern, north-eastern and north-western provinces. 2,500 families (17,500 individuals) were displaced, an estimated 450 people killed, 214 other sustained injuries and over 8,000 homes destroyed.

In addition to the natural hazards, Afghanistan is also facing the challenges of man-made disasters, conflict, war, explosion and mines cultivation. More than 500 Kmsquare of Afghan lands in 1700 villages are still cultivated with remnants of war and mines which pose a huge threat to the local population.

Afghanistan is among those nations which is signatory to the Hyogo framework for action 2005-2015 and is committed to take necessary actions for reducing the risks of disasters and making its communities resilient. Moreover, Afghanistan is responsible to monitor the progress of all five priorities for action with 22 indicators set for. And over all achievements toward these indicators has been

satisfactory over the last ten years (The overall level achievement for HFA priority points is 2.5 out of 5 score).

Thanks UNDP for being instrumental in revising Disaster Management Act which significantly shift Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) from post disaster response to comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). It also provides a legal basis for establishing the roles and responsibilities of the Authority. Simultaneously, preparedness and recovery mechanisms and capacities are being formalized and improved including guidelines for effective and transparent use of the National Emergency Fund and strengthening of the National Emergency Operation Center.

Afghanistan is also fully committed to the Istanbul Process, for Heart of Asia, Confidence Building Measures for disaster Management as its permanent co-chair and will do its best to take it to the next level of

gradual but concrete, practical results. We highly appreciate the significant importance to Afghanistan's membership in all existing regional platform, frameworks and initiatives and I would like to reiterate our commitment to contribute to strengthening the existing mechanisms and seek mutual support from these kind of platforms. The Istanbul Process is not intended to substitute the existing efforts of regional organizations, but to cooperate with them, and complement their work where necessary, particularly where they relate to Afghanistan. This process is a testament to the commitment, hard work and success of the Heart of Asia countries, the leadership of the Afghan Government and the positive engagement of the supporting countries. In this time of transition, the Istanbul Process plays a crucial role in bringing together Heart of Asia countries for political consultations on the situation in Afghanistan and the region to enhance mutual cooperation and highly appreciate the progress on the agreed confidence-building measures.

I will conclude myself by emphasizing the commitment of Government of Afghanistan for strengthening all instruments and mechanism for disaster management and the same time I will be looking for mutual and complementary support from international and regional agencies in terms of technical, capacity and financial support to realize the commitment in true sense on the ground.

At last let me take this opportunity to once again convey my best wishes to UN office for DRR to the president, all heads of the states who has worked diligently to put this great event together made this conference possible.

Thanks for your attention. ■

Towards Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction



Country Statement by His Excellency Damcho Dorji, Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs, Bhutan

In view of this, Bhutan has made sustained efforts towards enhancing our disaster management and risk reduction capacities. And our development policies guided by the unique concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) have been complimentary to these efforts.



Photo credits: <http://www.iisd.ca/isdr/wcd13>

Madam President,

I would like to highlight some of the key achievements made by the Royal Government of Bhutan under the five priorities of Hyogo Frame of Action:

1. The Parliament of Bhutan enacted the Disaster Management Act of Bhutan in March 2013, which calls for a decentralized and inclusive disaster risk management.
2. Mainstreaming DRR has been included as one of the 16 National Key Result Areas in our 11th Five Year and reflected as an important cross-cutting issue in the local development planning guideline.
3. Bhutan has invested adequate resources towards initiating and strengthening Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) and Safe School Program throughout the country.
4. We have implemented the first National Adaptation Program for Action (NAPA) project in the region to enhance the adaptive capacity in preventing climate-change induced disasters.

Bhutan places great emphasis on building community resilience and believes in participation of communities as equal partners in having an inclusive disaster risk reduction policy. In terms of resilient public investments, Bhutan has been advocating for linkages between sustainable development and disaster risk reduction and the need to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Lastly, on behalf of Royal Government of Bhutan, I would like to offer our earnest commitment to the adoption and implementation of the post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

I wish this third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction every success.

Thank You for your attention and Tashi Delek!! ■

Addressing Climate Change for a Safer Future



Country Statement by His Excellency Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister of Environment and Energy, Maldives

Distinguished [SG, President, Co-Chairs, etc] Excellencies, Colleagues,

May I begin by extending our congratulations to the Government of Japan, and this beautiful city of Sendai, recognised by the World Disaster Reduction Campaign, as a role model for its efforts on promoting community based disaster risk reduction. I join previous speakers in extending our gratitude for the Government and the people of Sendai and Japan, for your warm welcome and the generous hospitality.

The Maldives has the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), a coalition of 44 low-lying and coastal nations.

[AOSIS would like to associate with the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the G77 and China.]

[Mr. President,]

2015 is a critical year at the United Nations. This year we will finalize the multilateral frameworks through which disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, financing for development, and climate change action will be addressed in the coming years. Given the close inter linkages between these processes, while keeping in mind the respective and distinct mandates for each process, our efforts in each line of discussion necessarily impacts the others. At the same time, the complexity of the



negotiations requires us to do what we can to ensure coherence throughout.

[Mr. President,]

The international community has long recognized the importance of concerted international action to lower the human suffering caused by disasters. Despite these efforts, which include the UN General Assembly's designation of the 1990's as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the subsequent adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action, global disaster risk may be at an all time high. According to the 2015 Global Assessment Report expected losses from disasters associated with earthquakes, volcanic hazards and risks, tsunamis, tropical cyclone winds, storm surges and flooding are now estimated at 300 billion US dollars annually.

Disasters violently undermine our progress towards sustainable development. They pose a particular threat to small islands developing states. Our small size, geographic isolation, narrow resource base, and exposure to global environmental challenges and external shocks makes it challenging to prepare for disasters before they strike and exceptionally difficult to recover in their aftermath.

SIDS cannot think of disaster risk reduction in isolation from climate change. For us, increasing impacts of human-induced climate change have only added to the challenge of disaster risk reduction. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned of increased and more severe extreme weather events, such as heat waves, droughts and floods, as a result of climate change. What's more, sea level rise, more frequent and intense storms, coastal erosion, and saltwater intrusion from

human-induced climate change will only compound the challenges we already face from natural disasters.

Scientists are warning us that the policy space available to reduce the impact of disasters is becoming smaller. Impacts from disasters go beyond direct deaths, and have wider and disproportionate implications on the socio-economic order in SIDS. It affects our livelihood and the well being of our peoples and communities. Given our limited resources, we then remain highly concerned of our capacity to cope with and meet the challenges from the projected increase in extreme weather events.

[Mr. President,]

In the SAMOA Pathway, the international community recognised these realities that SIDS face. We also identified the critical need to build resilience, strengthen monitoring and prevention. We noted the need to reduce vulnerability, raise awareness, and increase preparedness in SIDS to respond and recover from disasters.

The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction then must undoubtedly take into consideration the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS and LDCs. It must be an ambitious renewal of the Hyogo Framework for Action that prioritizes prevention and mitigation. It must also work in synergy with other related processes on sustainable development and climate change. It is indeed necessary to take a holistic approach. And we are glad that the Outcome document indeed is action-oriented, and seeks to build on where the HFA1 left off.

Many of us have integrated disaster risk considerations into national development plans and policies. We are already spending significant amounts of public funds on resilience building and climate adaptation. We have the political commitment to institutionalize disaster risk reduction:

But the reality is we can't do this alone and need the financial, technical and capacity building support of the international community to respond to the increased risks we face.

We therefore ask for firm agreement from our partners to fulfill existing commitments, as well as to mobilize the resources required to build the resilience of vulnerable nations. As such, we wish to stress on the need for financial resources for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation initiatives in SIDS. We also call for the strengthening of risk insurance facilities at international level to support SIDS and other particularly vulnerable nation states to manage financial risk from natural disasters.

[Mr. President,]

We look forward to a strong and successful outcome to this Conference. Through better international coordination and cooperation we can make great strides in building resilience and reducing risks associated with disasters. Let's endeavor here to set a high bar for the rest of the year. The road to the "future we want", must begin in Sendai.

Thank you. ■

Building Resilience of Vulnerable Communities



Country Statement by Her Excellency Myat Myat Ohn Khin, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar

Excellencies, President of Conference, Head of States and Governments, Ministers, and delegates from all over the World, Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

Very Good afternoon, Mingalapar...

First of all, I wish all of you for good health, happiness, success and well being. It is a great honor for me to be

here as designed by our President and to deliver the official statement at 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai, Japan. In this auspicious occasion, Myanmar delegation and I myself express our special appreciation to the Government of Japan for warm welcome and hospitalities.

Taking this opportunity, I have to explore my sincere sympathy to the



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Government of Japan and its people for the loss of lives and properties caused by earthquake and Tsunami in Sendai City, Tohoku region in March, 2011. I'd also appreciate for the most effective and successful response and recovery tasks you have been taken.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...

It has been nearly 4 years that Myanmar is getting momentum to transform the Country into a new modern, developed and democratic nation through 1st wave, 2nd wave and 3rd wave reform processes. At the same time, Myanmar moves to help itself out of least developed countries (LDC) category.

You all aware that Myanmar has successfully taken the ASEAN Chairmanship 2014. In doing so, success is being achieved and on the other hand, the challenges like man-made and natural disasters are also being faced with. However, disaster risk reduction programs generated from our Cabinet plays a vital role in the reform processes. It is sure that these disaster management activities will contribute for socio-economic development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...

Our Ministry, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement takes responsibility for Disaster Management in terms of mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, recovery and rehabilitation in line with international standards and for social welfare services for all age groups ranging from child to older people including women, persons with disabilities and youth.

By taking this opportunity, I would like to highlight some obvious achievements -

1. As legislation body, we have

enacted the Myanmar **Natural Disaster Management law** on June, 2013. We have already adopted rules and regulations for that law.

2. National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee chaired by Vice-President, National Disaster Preparedness Management Working Committee Chaired by me, sub committees and up to village tract committees have been formed to carry out disaster management activities.
3. We have already ratified the standing order for emergency management. And we have established the Emergency Operation Center for rapid response and urgent communication among ASEAN member states as well as states and regions in our country.
4. As mandated by our President, we are going to open the Disaster. Management Training Center at Hintada Township, Ayeyarwaddy Region in September, this year.
5. We are implementing Social Youth Volunteers programs and Disaster Reduction Youth Volunteers programs with our owned Government budget. Up to now, we have completed the T.O.T trainings and the Multiplier courses covering over (3000) youths resided from over (800) villages across the Country.
6. As a chair madam for the working committee of Social Protection, the **Myanmar National Strategic Plan for Social Protection** has been launched at the end of 2014. And we have drawn a plan for disaster risk management and social protection which is one area of (8) tasks.
7. We have been contributing ASEAN Disaster Management

Emergency Response Fund (ADMER fund) and ASEAN coordinating center for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA fund) since 2012. Nationally budgets have been allocated for risk financing.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...

Myanmar is known as one of the disaster prone countries like Japan, Indonesia, Philippine and other Asian countries. Struggling for recovery and rehabilitation was in fact difficult. However, we have overcome it through cooperative, collaborative and coordinated efforts with relevant all organizations. This Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is extremely important for all of us because outcomes will accelerate our ongoing efforts to strengthen resilience and to build culture of safety through inclusive and integrated approach for forthcoming decades.

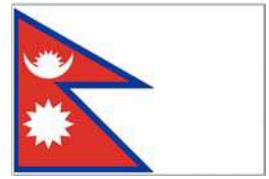
With full commitment to Hyogo Framework for Actions, we have developed **Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction** in June 2012. It includes 7 main components and 65 priorities actions to achieve the strategic goal of Hyogo Framework as well as our national goal which means "to make Myanmar safer and more resilient against **Natural Hazards**, thus protecting lives, livelihoods and development gains".

In conclusion, on behalf of Government of Myanmar and our Ministry, we have committed to take appropriate actions and to join hands with all development partners for implementation of post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction adopted from this Conference.

Thank you so much... ■

Towards a Risk Sensitive Development Agenda

Country Statement by His Excellency Mahendra Bahadur Pandey,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nepal



Mr. President,
Excellencies Heads of State and
Government
H.E. Mr. Secretary General of the
United Nations,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honour and privilege for me to address this Conference. First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over this conference and assure you of my delegation's full support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Japan for their warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the UNISDR for the excellent coordination for the organization of this important event.

We attach great importance to this conference as it symbolizes the culmination of our collective endeavours in ensuring that disaster risk reduction is a sustainable and embedded process within the overall development of our countries.

Nepal is committed to the principles, goals and priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). This framework has provided us a valuable guidance and support in developing our disaster risk management approach. It has inspired us to develop a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management. Based on this strategy, we have also drafted a new Disaster

Management bill for the consideration of our parliament. It will provide us an important institutional framework to strengthen disaster risk reduction in the country.

Even in the absence of a new and separate Disaster Management Act in force, the Government of Nepal has been undertaking necessary actions on reduction of disaster risks. With the support of our national stakeholders and development partners, the Government has created the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) to implement key areas of our National Strategy. Through the NRRC and the National Platform, the Government has been coordinating efforts to ensure that risk reduction work is also aligned with the national vision.

We have made significant progress over the last decade in line with the spirit of HFA. Nepal has been able to strengthen resilience both at local and national levels. Our reach has been expanded to both rural and urban communities. We are also encouraged by the global recognition of our progress in this regard as well as our efforts for innovative coordination mechanisms. Nevertheless, we are seriously concerned that Nepal continues to remain one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to disasters such as earthquake, flooding, landslide, glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF), etc. The fact that Nepal continues to lose an average of two citizen everyday to natural disasters is something that alarms us. It is also estimated that the human losses in the Kathmandu Valley alone, should there be a major



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seismic event, will be similar to those in Haiti in 2010.

The year 2015 is critical for Nepal as it is for the global community to underpin resilience in our efforts to promote health, wealth and safety for individuals and communities. Towards this end, our focus this year has been on improving our evidence base. We are currently completing the stocktaking phase of a national risk assessment, strengthening engagement with private sector and evolving our systematic search and rescue capacity. Nepal will shortly complete a substantive review of progress so far made towards search and rescue plans and operations. The Government is committed to formulating a long-term plan in line with the global understanding, resolve and partnership that evolves during this conference. We also expect continued support of and partnership with the international community in the implementation of this plan. Countries like Nepal which is a least developed country and at the same time highly vulnerable to natural and other disasters needs focused attention in terms of building

resilience through enhanced level of resources and technology from the international community.

Nepal has accorded due priority to ensure easy access to adequate risk information in view of its significance for the promotion of evidence-based decision making and resource allocation for risk reduction. The stocktaking work, currently underway in Nepal, is expected to support the Government's initiative towards defining Nepal's risk reduction priorities over the long term and also ensure that our work is closely aligned with post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction for the next decade and beyond.

The HFA has provided a solid foundation for the global efforts in the disaster risk reduction. Building on this, we expect that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to be developed during this conference will be a milestone in protecting the lives and properties of the peoples in the world. It will help shape priorities over the next decade and allocate resources towards risk reduction. The stocktaking and analysis currently underway in our respective countries will continue to facilitate this task. The Government of Nepal is aware of the need for an enhanced disaster management financing and expects development partners to ensure that their development support is risk informed and disaster management remains a priority for them as well. The Government looks forward to forging necessary collaborations with the development partners in support of our priorities on both hardware and software.

Mr. President,

Disaster risk reduction cannot be a stand-alone process. It must be well integrated with the government priorities and development agenda. In Nepal, despite great progress in



Photo: AIDMI.

our efforts towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals, we have not always been successful in ensuring that these achievements are risk-sensitive. It is, therefore, important that the post-2015 framework for action place greater focus on the integration of disaster risk reduction with development. At national level, we must be prepared to engage all stakeholders across all sectors. In particular, working with private sector is a priority for the Government of Nepal. We welcome the inclusion of this in the post-2015 framework and look forward to sharing our experiences and learning from other countries on strengthening Public-Private Partnership in the days to come.

Nepal also attaches importance to the regional cooperation for disaster preparedness and response. Recent trends in disasters also call for strengthened regional cooperation. The decision to establish the SAARC Environment and Disaster Management Centre in the region is also an indication of our understanding of the need for regional collaboration. We also look forward to working under the umbrella of Asia Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) in the same spirit.

The HFA adopted a decade ago in Japan has been an important instrument in the disaster risk reduction. We need to keep the momentum generated by its implementation throughout the world. Given the seriousness and commitment of all gathered here, again in Japan, I am confident that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be a significant document for the next decade and beyond.

Before I conclude, I would like to appreciate strong commitment demonstrated and proactive role being played by Japan in advancing international cooperation in this field. Japan being one of the most disaster-prone countries has exhibited remarkable resilience in dealing with major disasters in the past. As a global leader in the field of disaster management, its expertise and experience both in the field of disaster preparedness and post-disaster management are exemplary. On this occasion, we also have fresh memories of how Japan effectively handled the deadly triple disaster caused by Great East Japan Earthquake that hit the Tohoku region causing colossal loss of thousands of precious lives and virtual dislocation of the economy of three prefectures in March 2011.

Thank you! ■

International Assistance for DRR in Developing Countries



Country Statement by Mr Syed Tariq Fatemi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Pakistan

I thank you Chairperson

At the outset let me appreciate the efforts of co-chairs for bringing out the zero-draft of the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction that is intended to serve as the basis for further negotiations. I wish to emphasize that Pakistan would continue its constructive engagement with the process leading up to the Sendai Conference.

My delegation envisions a Post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction that builds on the experiences of HFA1 implementation, which should be sustained to consolidate its gains. A lot of progress has been made since HFA1 but much needs to be done, especially with respect to enhancing international cooperation that remained one of the main gaps.

The availability of international technical and financial assistance to vulnerable developing countries to achieve HFA / post HFA agenda needs to be facilitated to bridge resource constraints of these countries and to create enabling conditions for enhanced implementation of DRR policies and strategies. Developing countries require predictable, adequate, sustainable and coordinated international assistance, through bilateral and multilateral channels, for the development and strengthening of their capacities, including through financial and technical assistance and technology transfer. It is important that the final document adequately deals with



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this important aspect of the future framework.

We share the belief that the overall timeframe of Post-2015 Framework should be aligned with the time period as being set for Climate Change and SDGs Framework, i.e. 15 years.

We also feel that more clarity is required in each priority area

activities and more focused and action oriented steps should be defined so that they become clearer and measurable both in qualitative as well as in quantitative terms. Furthermore the priorities for action should clearly differentiate between developed and developing countries.

Pakistan welcomes the sharing of draft elements for the Political Declaration by Japan. As an important part of the Conference outcome, political declaration must be negotiated by the Member States in a formal, open-ended and intergovernmental process, for which sufficient time should be provided.

In conclusion, I once again, express my delegation's strong commitment to this consultative process for a future framework that is capable of responding to challenges arising from disasters and vulnerabilities, especially in developing countries.

I thank you co-chairs. ■



Photo: ADM/1.

Addressing Vulnerability through Policy Level Mechanisms



Country Statement by His Excellency John Amarathunga, Minister of Public Order, Disaster Management and Christian Religious Affairs, Sri Lanka

Madam President
Secretary General of the United Nations
Heads of Government and State Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered in this city of Sendai, today, in the Tohoku region of Japan which bore the brunt of the earthquake and tsunami in 2011. Coming from the island nation of Sri Lanka which suffered similar unprecedented devastation as a result of the Indian Ocean, tsunami in 2004, we recognise fully the significance of this World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Although several years have now passed since the 2011 and 2004 disasters, our thoughts are still very much with the victims of those tragedies and their loved ones and I convey the sincere appreciation of the Government and peoples of Sri Lanka, to the Government of Japan for hosting this important Conference for the global community.

With increasing widespread disasters worldwide and the magnitude of the financial and human cost involved, the urgency of addressing disaster risk reduction and framing appropriate strategies cannot be overemphasized.

My country, Sri Lanka is experiencing disasters with increased frequency and severity. The Government has taken a number of initiatives to promote and strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in the country as per the Hyogo Framework for Action.



Photo credits: Webtv.un.org

Following the 2004 tsunami, successive Governments in Sri Lanka have taken positive steps in this aspect. As a result, Sri Lanka has achieved substantial progress in priority areas of governance, disaster response and preparedness. This has helped to reduce mortality and impact linked to hydro-meteorological disasters in terms of reducing vulnerability of communities.

Incorporating Disaster Impact Assessment system for road construction, Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into Housing sector and Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into development projects and approval processes at both national and local government levels are a few of our achievements during the last decade under HFA.

Sri Lanka now adopts the Who does What, Where" (3W) database system developed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as the standard reporting format in managing all

disaster response situations. This has assisted in streamlining national disaster management efforts.

Madam President,
The UN Secretary-General recently drew the world's attention to the fact that annual investment in disaster risk reduction of USD 6 billion can result in savings of up to USD 360 billion. It is apparent that investment in disaster risk reduction can save enormous financial and human resources necessary for development.

Whilst identifying opportunities associated with disasters is a prerequisite for more resilient, capable communities in the aftermath of disasters during the phase of recovery and reconstruction, post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation is a complex issue with several dimensions. Government, non-governmental and international organizations all have a responsibility in disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Therefore, stronger linkages must be established and forged among these

entities as well as within communities to promote disaster risk reduction.

Recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation are phases that provide opportunities to minimize future disaster risk by identifying, planning, and implementing failure modes as well as the intended risk of uncertainties associated with phenomena such as climate change. The Government of Sri Lanka is committed to the active implementation of the concept of *"Build Back Better"* as per the post HFA frame work.

Since governments bear the responsibility of ensuring national resilience, implementation, coordination and monitoring of post HFA mechanisms should be led by the Government through a national platform that assures multi-stakeholder participation.

Highlighting the common but differentiated principle at all levels of disaster risk reduction, Sri Lanka earnestly urges the international community for increased global

cooperation and partnership with a view to transfer technological know-how, financial assistance and capacity building particularly for developing countries. I may further wish to place on record that a large number of people in Sri Lanka, who were affected by natural disasters, are still languishing due to scarcity of funds. As a result, the process of reconstruction, rehabilitation and resettlement has taken an unduly extended length of time, thus making those people suffer even more. The Government of Sri Lanka has tenaciously endeavored to raise funds but, often, has been abortive. That said, the Government of Sri Lanka would be most grateful and appreciative to the international community and to donor agencies if they seriously consider extending cooperation and assistance to Sri Lanka at times of such calamity.

Madam President,

The year 2015 is a significant year for the world community. It is our fervent hope that the new updated global response framework for disaster risk reduction, arising

through our deliberations here in Sendai, would be well aligned with the outcomes of the financing for development conference to be held in Addis Ababa in July, the post-2015 development agenda and the climate change agreement to be reached in Paris. These conferences provide a unique opportunity for the global community to execute more efficacious courses of action, thus underlying risk factors, risk sensitive investment enhancing methodology and public and private partnership, which are strongly envisaged to prevent disasters and extreme changes of climate, among others.

I wish this Conference all success in her deliberations and urge all stakeholders to be mindful of the responsibilities we owe to our citizens as we take the initial steps in Sendai which would galvanize the processes that would enable and facilitate us to ensure that by the end of this year, the world community would have a better and more stable foundation and road-map to realize enduring sustainability.

Thank you. ■



Photo: AIDMI.

Way Ahead

South Asia ranks amongst one of the least developed regions in the world and is plagued by diverse humanitarian challenges. Development and disaster risk reduction are inextricably linked in this region and the Sendai Framework for Action (SFDRR) aptly captures this reality. The statements issued by the 7 South Asian countries at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (3rd WCDRR) also highlight this link. These country statements have given an insight into the South Asian perspective on DRR. While many themes from the field of DRR were discussed in these country statements, some common strands have emerged. They are listed below:

- **Promoting Local Level Planning in DRR**

One of the most important themes emphasized by South Asian countries is the importance of local level planning in DRR. The impacts of disasters can vary vastly across the ground level due to differing contexts. To address this problem, local level planning that emphasises local risks and provides measures to overcome them should be prioritized. Local approaches of risk reduction should be given priority.

- **Promotion of risk sensitive development**

Repeated disasters in South Asia have constantly eroded the benefits of development. To ensure that the development clock is not set back due to such recurring disasters all the South Asian nations should aim

mainstream disaster risk reduction in development programmes and community resilience building. This will necessitate a widespread realignment of development objectives and practices to achieve coherence with the exigencies of disaster risk sensitive development.

- **Integrating climate change adaptation with risk reduction**

The threat of climate change has emerged as one of the greatest challenges of this age. The disruption of weather patterns as brought about by climate change is a recipe for disaster. It is already acknowledged that climate change has exacerbated the severity and intensity of disasters. To effectively manage this emerging threat, there needs to be greater integration between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The repeated cyclones that hit the eastern coast of India (Phailin and Hudhud) along with the devastating Typhoon Haiyan all bear testimony to climate change making disasters more severe and frequent. Thus, risks of climate change need to be incorporated in planning to mitigate the adverse impacts of disasters in South Asian countries.

- **Consolidating upon the progress of HFA**

Through the HFA, South Asian countries have indeed achieved a lot of progress in building up the resilience of their countries and communities to disaster risk.

This framework gave South Asian countries a model to work systemically towards disaster risk reduction. It should be noted that the progress achieved through the HFA should be consolidated by the new framework (SFDRR). The progress of HFA can be leveraged to meet the unmet DRR needs of the South Asian nations such as greater regional cooperation.

- **Greater Regional Cooperation in DRR**

Since South Asia is highly vulnerable to the risks of natural hazards and climate change, it is only befitting that there should be greater degree of regional cooperation to address this enhanced vulnerability. Greater regional cooperation in the form of sharing of technology, expertise and necessary resources should be strived for. The SAARC disaster management centre that aims to promote knowledge sharing in the field of DRR among the SAARC countries is an apt example of this regional cooperation. Many more of such structures and practices need to be promoted.

- **Saving lives and protecting livelihoods**

As the economic losses from disasters become astronomical, South Asian countries need to come up with more innovative coping mechanisms to keep them minimal. For instance, Cyclone Phailin laid waste to paddy crop worth INR 24,000 crore.¹ In such

¹ Cyclone Phailin hits 90 lakh people, huge loss to crops, houses, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-13/news/42993138_1_cyclonic-storm-severe-storm-odisha-coast

a scenario, protecting the livelihoods of vulnerable communities becomes as important as protecting their lives. Livelihood resilience should be a theme which should be actively pursued by all the South Asian nations. For, in the absence of such strategies, disaster hit people can be pushed and entrapped in the vicious circle of poverty.

- **Promoting the leadership of women in DRR**

In the developing nations of South Asia, due to patriarchal social structures, women tend to bear a greater burden of disasters than men. Conventional risk reduction programmes know this fact and strive to increase women participation in DRR. But there is a need to promote the leadership of women in such programmes. Promotion of women's leadership in DRR would not only make risk reduction more equitable but would also impart a much needed sustainability of resilience outcomes.

- **Leveraging on the synergies of SFDRR, Climate Change**



Photo: AIDMI.

negotiations and the Sustainable Development goals

2015 is a landmark year. It will see the finalization of multilateral frameworks for disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change action and sustainable development. Since sustainability is the key to achieving success in risk reduction, therefore South Asian countries ought to leverage the synergies of these multilateral frameworks. It is common knowledge that development and DRR are inextricably linked and nowhere is this link more obvious than in South Asia. Perhaps common targets or reporting structures within all

these multilateral frameworks are a way forward to ensure that the synergies of all these frameworks can be leveraged for effective and sustainable risk reduction in South Asia.

Apart from these common points, the South Asian countries also listed their achievements in implementing the priorities of the HFA and emphasized to consolidate on the progress of HFA to effectively achieve the goal of risk reduction for countries and communities of the region. This points made in the country statements can be viewed as the 'Way Ahead' for South Asia in the field of DRR for the next 15 years. ■

- Mihir R. Bhatt

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