

**Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction  
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Honorable Minister of Disaster Management, Srilanka  
H.E Senior Vice Minister of cabinet office for disaster management,  
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Distinguished participants and colleagues at the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. It is a great honor to be here with you as a co-organizer today at this important Conference to have the opportunity to share some thoughts on the progress and the challenges in reducing disaster risks and protecting the development gains.

We all know the criticality of this subject with our increased understanding on how the change in climate going to affect our lives and economy.

2. The 2011 iteration of the Global Assessment Report that was launched by the Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, in the recently concluded third session of Global Platform for disaster reduction, informed us that there is still a huge gap in disaster losses and investment in disaster risk management. We are all aware that disaster losses in economic terms are quite significant and disaster risk management should be a top priority for governments. However, very few countries put disaster risk management as a priority, when it comes to investments.

3. The global review of the Hyogo Framework for Action revealed that very few countries are able to quantify their investment in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. We are still not aware how much is being invested in reducing our risk and building resilience and how much is still needed.

4. Although a lot is being done in DRR, the GAR11 flagged that the exposure of people and economic activities has been also

substantively increased. Statistics shows that there is net movement of people and economic activities to area prone to flood and tropical cyclones. The worlds population increased by 87% from 1970 to 2010 ( from 3.7 billion to 6.9 billion). In contrast, the proportion of the population living in flood prone river basin increased by 114 percent and that on cyclone exposed coastline 192 percent. This shows that the economic incentives for location in many hazard prone areas continue to out weigh the perceived disaster risks.

5. The report also revealed that the mortality risk is trending down where as economic loss risk is significantly trending up. In 2010, the economic loss risk to floods in the OECD countries, which constitutes about 53 percent of the global GDP exposed per year, is about 170 percent more than 1990. Economic loss risk in the OECD is rising faster than GDP per capita; which essentially means risk in losing wealth in weather related disasters is increasing faster than the wealth is created. It also means that the economic loss from disaster even hits harder to the developing and under developed nations.

6. The mid-term review of the HFA states that significant progress is being made in the implementation of the framework and that its principles are firmly established and endorsed. There is a clear sense of of urgency and clear political and economic imperative to invest in disaster risk reduction.

7. The analysis of HFA progress reports from more than 130 countries shows that countries are making good progress in strengthening there capacities in disaster preparedness and response and in developing institutional arrangements and legislations; however, majority of the countries still reporting less progress in priority area 4 - that is addressing the underlying risk drivers.

8. We are at an important juncture in time as there has been considerable progress in countries and internationally on the understanding of the necessity for risk management and risk reduction. However, there is still no match between the rapidly increasing disaster risk and risk reduction efforts. Let us consider in this meeting why and what we as risk reduction policy makers and practitioners can do to accelerate actions.

9. As you are aware, the third session of the global platform held in Geneva from 8-13 May of this year. The global platform this time brought together the broadest ever cross section of people. Over 2600 delegates representing 168 governments, 25 inter governmental organizations, 65 Non government organizations, parliamentarians, private sector, local governments, academic institutions, civil society and international organizations.

In order to place disaster risk reduction in the forefront of governments, institutions, communities and individuals, the chairs summary of the Global Platform emphasizes on engaging more local governments and non state actors; children and youth; private sector; parliamentarians; national and regional platforms; scientific and technical communities and so on.

10. Some of the critical steps identified by the global platform are:

- Increase investment in disaster risk reduction at the local level
- Develop standards and indicators for measuring the effectiveness of DRR efforts
- Account for disaster losses in a standardized manner
- Track investments in DRR
- Strengthen public awareness
- Identify and prepare for emerging risks
- Adapt innovative social protection and ecosystem management mechanisms
- And so on

We are going to discuss the global platform outcomes and how we can put these recommendations in the regional context more in depth tomorrow.

11. Another key process and probably most important for the region is the outcome of the 4th AMCDRR, i.e the Incheon Regional road map and action plan which we are also going to discuss more in details during this conference. We need to critically

see how these recommendations and action plans are effectively put in to practice.

I feel that the well thought through agenda of this meeting is going to cover many of these issues.

12. Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, we all know that we will have more extreme weather, but we know and can do a lot to avoid or minimize its worst impacts. Six years ago, 168 countries at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe adopted the HFA. We can still see that the commitments for cooperation and action are very much alive and we all together have to keep it alive.

I take this opportunity to invite all of you in this conference to reinforce cooperation and action in this important endeavour.

Thank you.