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Official Statement of the Government of Georgia
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delivered by Nino Sharashidze

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Mr. Chairman
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Government of Georgia, I would like to thank UNISDR, the United Nations office for disaster risk reduction and ISDR secretariat for convening the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. It is my privilege to address today the distinguished participants of the world's foremost gathering of stakeholders committed to reducing disaster risk and reinforcing resilience of communities and nations.

The Global Platform represents the unique high-level forum where Governments can reaffirm their commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action, share experiences and knowledge for better strategies and effective implementation of disaster risk reduction measures at the national and local levels towards sustainable development.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Due to the convoluted mountainous terrain, climatic conditions and the negative impact of human activities on the state of environment, disasters caused by natural hazards in Georgia are characterized by high extensiveness, frequency and risk level. Among the mountainous regions of the world Georgia is one of the most vulnerable countries to disasters. Major natural hazards (floods, flash floods, landslides, mudflows, snow avalanches, earthquakes, hail, heavy rains, storm winds, droughts, etc.) substantially affect the national economy. Over the last 40 years 70% of the territory of the country experienced natural hazards of hydro-meteorological and geological origin; economic losses exceeded 14 billion USD.

According to the medium term national reform program, environment protection from this year became one of the priority areas for the government. It results in augmented allocations of funds from the state budget for monitoring, forecast and prevention measures in the sphere of environmental and disaster risk management. In parallel, the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia regards disaster risk reduction as a priority for the ministry, which is furthermore reflected in the structural reorganization of the ministry.

DRAFT

It is noteworthy that disaster risk reduction is one of the three pillars of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Georgia for 2011-2015. It provides measures to be implemented in disaster risk reduction with stakeholder participation and closely follows the Hyogo Framework for Action. Nevertheless, further mobilization of resources and donor community in is required.

Georgia is committed to achieving the strategic goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 “Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters”. The HFA implementation progress report for 2011-2013 was developed through multi-stakeholder consultations and submitted to UNISDR. The Government of Georgia undertakes efforts to reduce disaster risks in the country. We have to acknowledge, for the moment being, the key conceptual challenge remains to shift from focus on response and preparedness to prevention and mitigation.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Reducing vulnerability in today’s changing global landscape is a cross-cutting and complex development issue requiring an unprecedented effort: scientific knowledge, innovation, public understanding, careful development planning, responsible enforcement of policies and legislation, political and legal commitment, enhanced human and institutional capacity and much more efficient disaster management organization at the country, regional, and international levels. Most importantly, international community needs to renew its commitment and prioritize disaster risk reduction on the global agenda.

As you are aware, the post-Hyogo Framework for Action, the successor to the Millennium Development Goals and a new climate agreement are expected in 2015, which gives us an exceptional opportunity to strengthen disaster risk reduction through new international instruments. Disaster risk reduction needs to be further integrated assured across development strategies, plans and frameworks. We deem the links between relevant international and regional agreements, environmental conventions and post-Hyogo Framework for Action should be further supported.

Kindly let me conclude by expressing my hope that the Fourth Session of Global Platform will go a long way in fostering closer relationships amongst the nations with a renewed commitment to disaster risk reduction and our efforts would be a significant step forward in identification of practical ways for effective implementation of disaster risk reduction activities at all levels.

Thank you for your kind attention!