

4th Session Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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**National Statement by Mrs. Ina Lepel, Deputy Director General for Global Affairs,
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On behalf of the Federal Government of Germany, I would like to thank the ISDR Secretariat for convening the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Third Global Platform in 2011 was an excellently organized conference with a very valuable and operational Chair's Summary as its outcome, and I am confident that under the guidance of Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, the Fourth Global Platform will also be highly successful and further the cause of disaster risk reduction worldwide.

This Fourth Global Platform 2013 is particularly important because it is the largest gathering on DRR before the World Conference for DRR in Japan takes place in early 2015 and because it is designed to contribute significantly to a post-Hyogo framework in 2015. Germany thanks the ISDR Secretariat for efficiently coordinating the preparatory activities for the post 2015 framework and for having already undertaken several rounds of consultations. We found the Synthesis Report on these consultations as well as the findings of the Global Assessment for Disaster Risk Reduction 2013 particularly helpful for identifying potential priorities for the successor framework; our thanks go equally to the Secretariat for the timely submission of these reports.

Germany of course remains strongly committed to strengthening disaster risk reduction strategies at the international level through both humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The Federal Government is convinced that the current Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) is still highly valuable and that its core elements have to be preserved and reinforced. Therefore, Germany also firmly believes that we should jointly strive towards a post-2015 framework that builds upon the achievements of the current 2005-2015 HFA. However, the post-Hyogo framework should in our view not only update the HFA – for example, paying special attention to areas with least progress – but also be more ambitious and bring it to a new qualitative level.

A lot of sensible ideas have been brought forward during the consultation process so far. Let me touch upon five of them that appear of particular importance to us. However, before elaborating on these points, I would like to stress that it is of critical importance for the Federal Government that in times of climate change, disaster risk reduction measures are adapted to the respective climatic projections. Closely linking disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts is the underlying mantra of the all five aspects identified:

Firstly Germany believes that private sector investment and the commitment of local and national governments for the implementation of the HFA and of an action agenda in a post 2015 successor framework - deserve particular attention and would contribute to raising the future framework to a higher qualitative level. In this regard, the idea of introducing goals, baselines, targets, indicators and associated monitoring to measure future progress seems to be conducive to progress; it should be thoroughly examined and implemented where possible. Germany believes that this could enhance accountability as well as strengthen international cooperation and exchange of best practices - both of which should also be core elements of an HFA2.

Secondly and as for Germany's current activities and priorities in disaster risk reduction, I would like to point out that **preparedness** is at the forefront of our national and international endeavours. On the national level, we have recently laid the focus on informing the citizens on potential risks and on providing the necessary instructions for action and for individual preparedness. On the international level, in late 2011 in Geneva we have started together with our partners from Poland an initiative that sets fostering preparedness in the centre.

In a series of meetings in 2011, 2012 and 2013 we rallied stakeholders from disaster prone countries, donors, UN and other international organizations and NGOs engaged in preparedness with the aim to identify challenges and opportunities for a coherent approach to emergency preparedness. Through these meetings and workshops the latest of which has taken place as a Consultative Event in the margins of this Global Platform on 20 May we intended to elaborate a set of principles on preparedness, based on the best practices collected so far. Taking into account individual situations, these principles will mainly be guided by and built on lessons learnt, available studies and recommendations as well as discussions within existing fora. A document called "Principles and Recommendations on Preparedness" will be presented at the Conference

on Preparedness on 11 June in Berlin. The principles will address the actors' individual roles and responsibilities, serve as a reference and guiding tool for their respective work in the field of preparedness and are intended to support the implementation of the necessary measures. Even though we are just about to finalize the Principles and Recommendations, some major elements for achieving better preparedness have crystallized out of all the discussions:

- Disaster risk reduction, risk management and preparedness measures have to be made a priority in disaster prone countries and should be integrated in all development planning processes.
- States, national and local authorities and affected populations in disaster prone countries have to take ownership for building resilience through enhanced disaster risk reduction and preparedness.
- High level political buy in by all stakeholders – be they disaster prone countries, international organisations, NGOs or donors, is essential and needs to be enhanced. More awareness-raising has to be done vis à vis the public and the media.
- Early warning has to be followed by early action.

Even though the major elements may not appear very surprising, they nevertheless constitute what has been distilled out of the practical experience of a wide range of various stakeholders. They should therefore be tackled first when trying to achieve better preparedness. I am firmly convinced: Preparedness being already a priority under the current HFA, it will equally have to play a prominent role in the forthcoming HFA2 to continue this important progress

In my last three points, I would now like to focus on areas where less progress has been achieved and which therefore are of particular relevance for shaping HFA2 priorities.

Thirdly, disasters affect entire populations – but how do our risk management as well as rescue systems respond? Not all sections of the population are equally badly affected – some are more at-risk than others. For example, disaster victims still too often include a very high number of children, elderly people and persons with disabilities. I strongly believe that a new framework has to recognise the different levels of vulnerability amongst society resulting in a stronger focus on **inclusive disaster risk reduction**. The overall aim is to make it possible for

all groups within society to participate equally in disaster risk reduction measures and processes, irrespective of their opportunities and limitations.

Fourthly, both Global Assessment Reports – 2011 and 2013 – highlight the importance of addressing **extensive risks**, often resulting in under-reported small-scale recurrent disasters. These risks are on the rise and require more attention. Closely related is the role of **local governance** in disaster risk reduction, which is now acknowledged by most countries. However, the gap between rhetoric and reality needs to be closed. Effective local risk governance requires accountable local governments, working closely with affected communities, the private sector, civil society and the media. We believe that building resilience at the local level, with a particular focus on strengthening human and institutional capacities, is critical for sustainable development.

Finally, one of the major strengths of the current HFA is the firm conceptual connection of disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. Unfortunately, finding appropriate institutional arrangements to ease the incorporation of disaster risk management into development planning and public investment remains a challenge. This is why HFA priority area 4 on reducing the **underlying risk drivers** – drivers such as unplanned urbanization or environmental degradation – has seen least progress. However, if we are aiming for more resilient nations, greater efforts need to be undertaken to make disaster risk reduction “everyone’s business” rather than a stand-alone topic. As an important immediate step, I believe that the post-Hyogo process has to be closely connected to the discussions on other post-2015 frameworks and ensure that its goals become integrated.

For the German Government, supporting disaster risk reduction is and will remain an important topic, particularly in times of climate change. It is a sustainable and economically sound investment on the pathway to resilience, which is why we like to reaffirm our fullest commitment to the post-Hyogo process.

Thank you very much for your attention.

