

## BHUTAN'S STATEMENT FOR THE 2<sup>ND</sup>. PREP. MEETING TO THE WCDRR.

**Distinguished co-chairs**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Bhutan would like to firstly thank the UNISDR Secretariat for convening the preparatory meetings, which will give all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute towards the desired outcomes of the Third World conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). We would also like to thank the Co- chairs for preparing the zero draft presented in front of us today.

**Chairperson,**

Bhutan is prone to multiple natural hazards. Geographically, Bhutan lies in the eastern Himalayas, one of the most seismically active zones of the world and two recent earthquakes of 2009 and 2011 caused damages throughout the country. More pertinent to the issue of Climate Change is the presence of 2674 glacial lakes, of which 25 are supposedly potentially dangerous with the impending risk of generating Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF). Bhutan is also vulnerable to recurrent and seasonal hazards such as landslides, flash floods, wind storms and forest fires, which account to huge damage and loss on a continuing basis. Climate Change further impacts seasonal hazards and Bhutan has witnessed more extreme events in the recent years like the Cyclone Aila and Cyclone Phailin precipitated floods and damages.

The Five Priorities of Action outlined in the HFA1 have guided DRR initiatives in Bhutan and much have been achieved during its implementation.

While Bhutan has achieved significantly during the HFA1, there also has been numerous challenges such as limited financial and human resources and the lack of technical skills on DRR at all levels and across sectors. Though the Disaster Management Act envisions a more proactive and risk reduction approach, due to budgetary constraints, funding for risk reduction is difficult.

## **Chairperson**

Bhutan too, like other countries, is committed to HFA 2. We have chosen to focus on the four key areas as priorities for Bhutan;

1. Key Area 1 – Building community resilience – turning vulnerability into Resilience
2. Key Area 2 – Sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction integration
3. Key Area 3 – Local level action
4. Key Area 4- Reducing exposure/ underlying risk factors

Bhutan places great emphasis on building community resilience and believes in having communities participate as equal partners in risk reduction. In terms of resilient public investments, Bhutan has been advocating the linkages between sustainable development and disaster risk reduction and the need to integrate Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and DRR. The recently enacted, Disaster Management Act calls for the mainstreaming of DRR initiatives into all development plans and programs and recognizes the importance of integrating DRR and CCA. During the HFA 2 period it would be important to synchronize sustainable development, CCA and DRR into a common framework and efforts should be made for risk management to be part of sustainable development policies to ensure we not only reduce, but prevent the accumulation of new risks.

## **Chairperson**

On behalf of the Royal Government of Bhutan, I would like to offer our commitment to the adoption and implementation of the post-2015 DRR framework. We see this framework as a continuation of our work and building on efforts and achievements made during the HFA 1 implementation. We hope that the HFA 2 period will see stronger political commitment and result in effective regional strategies and partnerships and ultimately resilient public investments.

In this regard, Bhutan would like to support calls made by speakers before me for greater international cooperation and global partnership, without which, this

framework will not have meaningful and desired results. It is only with joint efforts that we can aspire to achieve peace, health and well-being in the world.

Finally, we would like to thank the Government of Japan for sharing with us, the Sendai political declaration and we are happy to note that the declaration contains important elements such as people centered approach to DRR and strengthening resilience.

Thank You and Tashi Delek!!

Mr. Chhador Wangdi

Director

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Royal Government of Bhutan