

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA: COUNTRY STATEMENT

3rd GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

11 MAY 2011

Chairperson

Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like to congratulate the organisers of the 3rd Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for facilitating an intensive, yet excellent forum to share experiences and lessons on disaster risk reduction.

In 2010, SA hosted a very successful FIFA World Cup which drew directly on many lessons and practices from disaster management and disaster risk reduction. One of the key lessons that we implemented was close collaboration and planning between all levels of government and learning appropriate lessons from countries that have successfully managed similar events.

Since we last met here in Geneva during the 2nd Global Platform, the world has witnessed the occurrence of a variety of serious natural disasters.

We extend our condolences to those countries that have suffered severe losses to human life and infrastructure damage, in particular our brothers and sisters in Haiti, Japan, China and Brazil amongst others.

It is within this context that my Government would like to express its support to the Global Platform as a multi-stakeholder mechanism to get role-players together where, among others, best practises can be shared and awareness raised, particularly on the importance of effectively implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. We fully support the need to promote partnerships and international cooperation in reducing disaster risks, and particularly the building of capacity in those developing countries that need to be assisted to better mitigate and manage disaster risks.

Over the period December 2010 to February 2011, South Africa experienced above normal rainfall, storms and lightning activity. These incidents occurred alongside a drought that is affecting parts of our country.

All of this has resulted in the unfortunate loss of life and millions of Rands in damage to crops and basic infrastructure. We subsequently declared a national disaster covering eight of our 9 provinces. This Global Platform will enable us to sharpen and improve our disaster risk reduction measures.

Chairperson,

We re-commit ourselves to the UN General Assembly resolutions on disaster risk reduction that reaffirm the role of the Hyogo Framework for Action that clearly attest to the relationship between sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals, poverty eradication, climate change and disaster risk reduction, response and recovery.

South Africa is making great strides in implementing the Priorities for Action of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015.

We have a Disaster Management Act (Act 57 0f 2002) and National Disaster Management Policy Framework, (NDMF).

It also specifically calls for the subsequent development and implementation of sectoral disaster management plans as well as provincial and municipal disaster risk management frameworks and plans, thereby recognising the importance of local action. The NDMF 2005 also describes processes and mechanisms to establish co-operative mechanisms with international role-players and countries within and beyond Southern Africa.

In this context, we are proud to say that South Africa is a primary partner within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and actively contributes to discussions on the region’s strategic framework policies to address disaster risk reduction.

Chairperson

South Africa is addressing the Hyogo Priorities of Action through a range of measures, including:

* Promoting and supporting the establishment of Disaster Management Centres for implementing disaster risk reduction at all levels ranging from national, provincial and municipal levels.
* The South African National Disaster Management Advisory Forum (NDMAF) convened by the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) serves as a National Focal Point for DRR in South Africa.
* Reviewing funding mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and reconstruction projects. Our national budget for 2011/12 and beyond has made clear commitments in this regard.
* Undertaking ongoing hazards and vulnerability monitoring to inform planning, service delivery and development programmes.
* Rolling out of on-going all hazards awareness programmes and the implementation of education and training programmes supported by scientific research.
* Strengthening of preparedness for effective response at all levels. These measures revolve around both seasonal and on-going preparedness measures.

In conclusion, South Africa wishes to express its commitment to continue to participate in discussions on global thinking and lessons on disaster risk reduction. Forums such as these remain critical to advocate the importance of disaster risk reduction, and the need to build resilience amongst and within communities. This will ultimately create a better world for all.

South Africa would like to state its commitment to investing in local action and protecting the most vulnerable by implementing strategies to strengthen local capacity.

We therefore fully support the approach that says:

“Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow;

Increase Investment in Local Action.”

We thank you.