

Summary Statement

Thank you Chair

I am pleased to be able to present the report of the Asia and Pacific Region to this meeting.

By way of **Background** Asia and the Pacific is the world's most disaster-prone region. In the period from 1996 to 2005 alone the region reached, in comparison to global statistics, peak figures in terms of the total number of reported disasters, people killed, people affected, and the total amount of estimated damage.

There are a number of disaster risk hotspots¹ in Asia with major concentrations of hazard exposure and locations with high relative vulnerability in the Pacific for earthquakes, floods, cyclones and drought hazards.

It is expected that existing risk patterns in the region will continue to intensify in view of such processes as climate change, urbanization, economic globalization, poverty and environmental degradation.

In respect of Progress to date Chair, over the last two years regional ISDR system partners have taken concrete steps towards

¹ They are locations where large scale disasters involve significant mortality, economic loss or both and have a great potential to occur in the future unless risk levels are drastically reduced.

supporting these national implementation processes and are directly responding to the expectations and directions of the HFA.

Some countries, such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cook Islands, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vanuatu, Vietnam and others, are currently in the process of developing and implementing national action plans and strategies in line with the HFA, aiming to make the shift from disaster preparedness and response towards risk reduction. Increasingly, these are also being implemented at the local level, with Indonesia being the most recent such initiative.

The work undertaken by ***sub-regional intergovernmental partners*** such as ASEAN, SAARC, and SOPAC has facilitated enhanced government commitment to disaster risk reduction and promoted sharing of best practices between countries.

- In the Pacific, the Leaders adopted a regional Pacific Framework for Action for DRM in 2005 which constitutes a well developed policy framework for disaster risk reduction that is in line with the HFA and links DRR to development.
- In South Asia, the creation of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre in 2006 and the SAARC strategic framework on disaster reduction build on progress already

made at the national level to provide additional support for the cross-fertilization of national efforts.

- In Southeast Asia, a strengthened political commitment for disaster reduction resulted in the inclusion of disaster risk reduction as part of the priorities of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (ADMER) in 2005 and the ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management.

As well in the past two years we have seen the creation of new **DRR networks and partnerships**, such as the Pacific Regional DRM Partnership Network, and the informal ISDR Asia Partnership, as well as the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). These have been instrumental in forging technical and financial assistance in support of regional mechanisms and national level implementation of the HFA. Also civil society networks and initiatives – too numerous to mention but extremely critical to achieving DRR - are committed to foster HFA implementation at the local level.

The region also has a number of excellent **Regional Programmes** targeting community resilience, risk-knowledge and institutional capacity building are being implemented by UN bodies such as UNESCAP, UNDP, UNOCHA and UNESCO-IOC as well as other regional ISDR system partners, such as ADPC, ADRC, SOPAC, the Mekong River Commission, ICIMOD, IFRC. These partners and programmes have provided technical cooperation, developed tools

for common risk and vulnerability assessments, mainstreaming of disaster reduction into development, and helped adapt methods for evaluating social-economic impacts of disasters in Asia and the Pacific.

In respect of the Obstacles that we face and the needs that will be required to address these, Chair, the Region will need to:

1. Hold additional consultations to discuss the establishment of a regional platform by building on existing intergovernmental mechanisms for accelerating cross-regional synergies, coherence and exchange through dialogue, networks, and partnerships.
2. Continue integrating the HFA into ongoing and new disaster reduction strategies, plans and programmes - not only at the national level, but also at the local level, thus moving towards a whole-of-country approach to disaster reduction.
3. Support regional and sub-regional organizations with the necessary resources and capacities to ensure that their heightened commitment to disaster risks reduction can translate itself into concrete action for more effective support to countries in Asia and Pacific.
4. Integrate the TEWS for the Indian and the Pacific Ocean into multi-hazard frameworks to ensure the long-term sustainability of the existing regional TEWS efforts, both financially and operationally.

Further to this, trans-boundary hazard end-to-end early warning systems should be considered as a priority under existing sub-regional cooperation frameworks.

5. Sustain the progress achieved with legislative frameworks and institutional mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and expand it to other disaster risk hotspots in the region by strengthening capacities and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms and comprehensive governance systems for disaster risk reduction at national and local levels to implement the HFA.
6. Integrate disaster risk reduction in MDG-based National Sustainable Development Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategic Plans, with a set of indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
7. Develop and introduce adaptation strategies which integrate climate change and disaster risk management strategies for maximum impact at the community level.
8. Clarify and systematize the roles of regional and sub-regional organizations in the monitoring and reporting processes under the HFA.
9. Agree at the regional level on a set of basic indicators and benchmarks which could serve as reference points for monitoring medium to long-term regional progress in disaster risk reduction.

Chair, the information expressed in this summary of the Asia and the Pacific Report does not necessarily reflect the opinions of all disaster risk reduction stakeholders operating in the Region.

This ends the statement for the Asia and the Pacific Region - I thank you for your attention Sir.