

**First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
Geneva: 05 June 2007**

Oral Statement by the Head of Delegation, Bangladesh

Honorable Chairperson, distinguished guests, country delegates,
ladies and gentleman

Good morning – my name is Dhiraj Malakar, Head of Bangladesh
Delegation

It is my pleasure to speak at this conference.

As many people know Bangladesh is a low-lying deltaic country in South Asia formed by the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna rivers. It is a land of about 140 million people within its 148,000 sq. km territory. About one-fifth of the population lives within 19 coastal districts, in zones of multiple vulnerabilities and fragile ecosystem with distinctive development opportunities. More than 310 rivers and tributaries have made this country a land of rivers. The geographical location, land characteristics, multiplicity of rivers and the monsoon climate render Bangladesh highly vulnerable to natural hazards.

The traditional disaster management model focusing on disaster relief and recovery has done little to redress the rising levels of risk. In relation to the Hyogo framework for Action, Bangladesh has taken a holistic approach and set the following vision and mission:

Government Vision for Disaster Management is to reduce the vulnerability of the poor to the effects of natural, environmental and human induced hazards to a manageable and acceptable humanitarian level. The Mission of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM) is to bring a paradigm shift in disaster management from conventional response and relief practice to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture.

Bangladesh Disaster Risk Reduction has been included in the Bangladesh Poverty Reduction Strategy. On a regional basis, Bangladesh is taking a leadership role in the establishment of the SAARC Regional Framework for Comprehensive Disaster Management. This framework provides the opportunity for consistency across and within SAARC member countries while also enabling country reporting against the HFA priority action areas. The Allocation of Business of MoFDM and its agencies is revised incorporating the Disaster Risk Reduction issues. This document outlines the functions of my Ministry and following revision enables me to look critically at our structure and business strategies for more effective service delivery. In consultation with national level stakeholders my Ministry led the formulation of the National Plan for Disaster Management 2007-2015. This is a strategic visioning plan which provides the national priorities for national disaster

management for the next 8 – 10 years. It also serves as an overall guideline how to ensure mainstreaming DRR across hazards and sectors at all levels.

Bangladesh is moving forward in its pursuit of comprehensive risk reduction based on all hazards and all sectors approach. In this regard, we have established a Climate Change Cell to analyse the micro impacts of climate change and this information will lead to sectoral and cross sectoral analysis of risks which will then inform our community risk assessment processes.

Bangladesh has over the years gained significant experience to deal with flood and cyclones. In fact Bangladesh is often used as a global model for cyclone awareness. We have however, not accumulated the same degree of experience to deal with large scale crisis events like earthquake and tsunami. In this regard Bangladesh has launched a range of initiatives to improve the existing emergency response capacity. This includes:

- Launched the procurement of search and rescue equipment amounting approximately US\$ 10 million.**
- Formulated a National Tsunami Risk Reduction Action Plan**
- Lunched the earthquake and tsunami preparedness programme under CDMP which will prepared earthquake risk and vulnerability maps for 3 mega cities (Dhaka, Chittagong and**

Sylhet) and contingency plans for tsunami preparedness for 10 coastal districts.

- **Launched the initiatives to strengthen Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence**
- **Launched initiatives to strengthen Bangladesh Meteorological Department and the Cyclone Preparedness Programme for improved early warning information and its early disseminations**

These initiatives are being undertaken in a collaborative partnership arrangement between the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP, DFID, EC and the Government of Japan.

Mr Chairperson

Make I take the opportunity of this conference to offer the following comments:

- 1. Congratulations to the United Nations system for demonstrating strong leadership globally on such an important issue as risk reduction.**
- 2. Congratulations to the donor community for their continued and sustained commitment to addressing community risk**
- 3. I call on the United Nations and donors alike to ensure that global and regional strategies are designed around clearly**

defined national priorities. Establishing a demand driven programme of support will be a major challenge.

- 4. Bangladesh advocates for the ownership of HFA to progressively move from the ISDR system toward regional bodies such as SAARC, ASEAN AND SOPAC and then ultimately the countries.**

Mr Chairperson

Thank you very much.