

**FIRST SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK
REDUCTION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 5 – 7 JUNE 2007**

**INTERVENTION NOTES
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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen.

1. Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Malaysia delegation, to express my utmost gratitude and appreciation to the Chairman and the secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, for organizing this important session and for the warm hospitality extended to our delegation. We believe that the convening of this session marks another crucial step in the follow-up measures undertaken by the international community to address the common concerns and needs of all member countries in their efforts to build resilience to and reduce the risk of disaster as envisaged by **Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters**.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Malaysia has been participating in disaster related forums irrespective of whether it is organized by international bodies such as the United Nations or regional bodies such as **Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)**. It shows our commitment and willingness to share experiences and good practices for the realization of any resolution including the Hyogo Framework for Action. During these engagements, Malaysia has demonstrated her willingness to adopt the final resolution as

part of the pillars in disaster management within Malaysia. In this context, I am proud to report that Malaysia has adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) not long after its formulation. This was decided by the National Disaster Management and Relief Committee chaired by H.E. Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in November 2005.

3. The Malaysian Government has also decided in 2005 to declare 26th December as the **National Disaster Awareness Day**. To commemorate this day last year, a seminar dedicated towards mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policy, planning and implementation was held in Kuala Lumpur. The participation of representatives from several international and regional bodies such as ITIC, ADRC and ADPC has allowed us to tap their expert views on the subject. It is Malaysia's contention that disaster management cannot be continued to be implemented sectorally. We feel that there is an urgent need for an integrated planning and implementation in order to achieve the maximum benefit in the optimization of asset, manpower and funding.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Disaster is undeniably complex in nature while the impact could sometimes be appalling and horrific. Such was the effect of the 2004 tsunami tragedy. The impact of any major disaster is not confined only to the loss of lives or number of casualties but from a macro perspective, it is detrimental to the whole nation especially in terms of economic losses and development funding that has to be reallocated for the recovery and rehabilitation efforts. In this sense, disaster should be tackled as an integral part in the national security and development system. In ensuring the way forward in managing disaster, the Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), private sectors, civil society and the public as a whole must work in tandem to overcome the horrendous effect of any disaster. Admittedly, it is always a difficult task to get all the relevant parties to work together despite the general perception that handling disaster is the sole responsibility of the government.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Though the Government has a greater role and responsibility in assisting the public during disasters, there is no denying that the society too needs to be involved in the disaster management system. In fact, it is the life and livelihood of the society that the government is trying to protect against the wrath of natural disasters. Sometimes even the early warning provided by the government is not sufficient particularly when the public has not been prepared for such eventualities. In order to attract the involvement of the public, we need to create public awareness through both formal and non-formal education. The effort of instilling disaster awareness to the public must start as early as possible, preferably at childhood level. The effort must be taken up through short term programme enabling the public to understand the nature of disasters and precautionary measures needed in facing them. In the long run, we need to establish a formal educational methodology with regard to disaster awareness.

Mr. Chairman,

6. In the aftermath of the tsunami in 2004, much attention and resources has been contributed by the international body to assist the situation at the affected areas. An integrated tsunami early warning system has already been set up near the worst affected area. Malaysia as one of the countries affected by the killer wave is also not lagging behind in developing a tsunami early warning system of our own. I believe that our tsunami early warning system is able to forewarn us of any imminent tsunami that might threaten the country. However, I would like to remind all delegates that the tsunami early warning system could only caution us against the threat of tsunami. We still need to be vigilant and prepared against other potential disasters such as typhoon, earthquake, volcanic eruption, flood and drought. Therefore, Malaysia feels the need for an integrated early warning system for other disasters so that we do not fall inside the trap of unorganized planning by sector. We request this forum to look into the possibility of an integrated approach for all early warning systems subject to prevailing disaster in each country.

Mr. Chairman,

7. When a devastating disaster struck a nation, the assistance from the international community is overwhelming and mostly concentrated on the immediate response and recovery of the victims. Unfortunately the impact of a disaster toward the community and the government might take months and even years to heal. Malaysia has the experience in assisting the community that was affected by the tsunami in 2004. Until now, the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction is still being undertaken in helping the victims for economic recovery and reallocating them to a safer area. In cases where the traditional fishermen lost their income due to monsoonal season and rough wave, the government has given assistance by providing basic necessities such as food to the families as a one off programme. But the question before us is it sufficient if the fishermen have to endure 3-4 months without any income? I strongly believe that the international community should provide an insight to addressing this issue for the benefit of the victim. I therefore seek this forum to ask the relevant international organisation to specialize in providing alternative programme for economic recovery to the possible victim and any victims of any disaster. My insight is based on the observation that most of international and regional forum are focussing on early warning and public awareness programme. UNESCAP and APEC can take the lead in providing substantive economic programme of this nature.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Malaysia has put in a great deal of efforts to ensure the safety of its people in facing the threat of disasters. The efforts include all four elements of disaster management namely, **prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery/rehabilitation** through actions taken by various agencies. HFA in a way promotes risk management in facing a possible disaster. The risk must be identified and appropriate action must be taken to address the risk before it becomes a crisis. As the saying goes “prevention is better than cure”. Studies have shown that government can save money by investing in disaster prevention and

preparedness measures rather than focusing entirely on response and recovery measures.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Despite all efforts put forward through national, regional and international initiatives, I strongly believe there is still a need for a comprehensive disaster management approach to address the challenges of:

- i. Integrating cross cutting issues either at national, regional or international level;
- ii. Using science and technology in disaster management and the questions of financial assistance and national commitment;
- iii. Providing platform for economic sustainability to both victims and nations;
- iv. Creating effective public awareness and participation programmes;
- v. Calling for coordination of national, regional and international organization to lead in their respective field of specialization; and
- vi. Calling for developed countries to provide assistance in technologies, expertise, training and capacity building to developing and third world countries especially to those countries which are prone to disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Malaysia hopes that this international forum can be utilised as an effective platform whereby these issues can be discussed and new ideas will be formulated to ensure the continuity of the HFA. We also hope that these issues and ideas will be addressed and translated into work plan and will receive political support from all of the countries involved.

Thank you.