

# "First Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction"

## Organized by UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

4-7 June 2007

Geneva, Switzerland

---

**Statement by**  
**Umesh Prasad Mainali**  
*Secretary*  
**Ministry of Home Affairs**  
**Government of Nepal**

Honourable Chairperson of the Session  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Experts,  
Media personalities,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be the part of this august and meaningful gathering devoted to achieving excellence and synergy in disaster risk reduction. I deem it a great honour for me to deliver the country remarks on behalf of Nepal Delegation in the **First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**. Such platform which has the driving intent of carrying out participatory process to monitor progress and identify gaps in the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action, sharing and exchanging information and experiences and strategizing issues and prioritizing actions to move forward. Such forward moving endeavour drives the shift from conventional intellectuality to actuality, from thinking to preparedness and from preparedness to action, from individuality to collectivity, and from reaction to persuasion in disaster risk reduction.

It is a matter of great inspiration for the Government of Nepal that all partners including the national and international development agencies have been persuasive towards realizing the mission persuading for an action-oriented and highly-representative and performing Global Platform. I express my words of respect and appreciation to UN ISDR, the institution that advocated for a multi-stakeholder collaborative process during WCDR, and continuously moving forward for reinventing the UN ISDR system for ensuring a socially, professionally and technically legitimate Global platform on such issue of human interest.

I regard it a special event for Nepal with the realization that she belongs to most at-risk from earthquakes and hot-spot for geo-physical and climatic hazards. This international consultation methodized by the esteemed institution of UN ISDR, is bestowed for a strategic transformation with the aim of creating an integrated, multi-sectoral, multicultural and a high-performing global platform on disaster reduction. This is an altruistic exercise accelerated to build a synergic platform comprised of devoted, committed and enlightened communities from the agencies of state and the social space with humanized mission of building blocks to enhance the global, regional and national capacities for managing disaster risk.

*Respected Colleagues,*

As we all know that a disaster is a severe disruption to a community's survival and livelihood. In response to realization of the fact that disasters constitute the growing burden on the world's poor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the international community in 2000 as the global framework for development stressed the need to take into account vulnerability, disaster management and risk assessment. Disasters can wipe out years of development outcomes. Large-scale disasters destroy livelihoods in a matter of minutes while smaller recurrent disasters wear down resources and resilience, exposing people at margin to greater risks of extreme poverty, disease and poor health.

At macro-economic level, disasters force to impact adversely against economic development through extensive damage of infrastructures as well as a significant loss of productive human resources. At micro level, disasters result in the loss of scarce employment opportunities for poor and the marginalized, break the service linkages, disable the local capacity and in turn, jeopardize sustainable livelihood options. Such setbacks seriously limit the ability of nations to make the investments in social development needed to achieve the MDGs. Disasters also threat human security which can only be ensured through safe environment, fulfilment of basic needs, dignified life for all, equity and justice and a better protected life for all. While natural disasters cannot be avoided, adopting adequate risk reduction approaches can considerably reduce the scale of damage and protect prior development gains.

As I draw inference from the experience, disaster risk reduction is beyond the capacity of each sector if limit in isolation. A multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships is a must that provides each performing group an enabling environment for translating knowledge, technology, experience and willingness into wisdom in favour of the best interest of the human and nature. For translating the strategic intent of the global consultation into technically and socially legitimate outcomes, the only need is that the three-day deliberations should come out with a logical agreement that the conventional best practice model should be replaced by the best fit model that lead to desired result-orientation. For strategic positioning of the intervention approaches, I also stress the need to change the tendencies of classic populism, lipservicing, rentseeking and buckpassing in designing and operationalizing the national platform. The desired option would be to reinforce moving forward with rational-logical incrementalism rather the so-called comprehensive rationality. This should be the platform for action motivated with

the critical social theory rather carrying out the classical administrative-technical legitimacy principle.

*Distinguished friends,*

I am inspired by the innovative move generated by Hyogo Framework for Action that sets the point of departure in building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters calling all nations to create national platforms as the structural reinforcement of this international momentum. I am enthusiastic in regarding this global consultation as the timely developmental intervention when the present democratic polity of Nepal is moving forward to meet the challenges of people-centered development. Government of Nepal, after the restoration of pro-people democratic polity, has been more strategic to reform disaster management system in Nepal.

With the inspiring support from national and international partners, the Government of Nepal is working to enhance disaster preparedness and mitigation capabilities in a collaborative framework. As a persuasive partnership move to strategic positioning of disaster risk reduction, Nepal is in the process of formulating national strategic plan to effectively implement Hyogo Framework for Action at national level with the required internalization of multi-sectoral participation as the integral mode of realizing disaster-development dynamics. In pursuit of developing a nationally owned legitimate document, cross-sectional consultative process and the consultation with international development partners are likely to conclude.

As the core need for the implementing instrument, legal reform initiatives have been on going with the active participation of the independent expert institution from private sector. The legal instrument that Nepal is going to put into action has been the departure from the conventional rescue and relief focus and destined to covering all components of a total quality disaster risk reduction.

As inspired by the strategic move of the Hyogo Framework for Action that defined development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to disaster hazards, Nepal has already initiated the processes at policy, expertise and community action levels in a fully persuasive partnership approach to constitute a National Platform in full compliance with the guidelines forwarded by the UN ISDR. As the persuasive move, all the key stakeholders of Nepal have agreed upon reinforcing a high-performing national platform with the guiding values of a visionary direction, a strong team to lead, the ability to attract and retain quality people and principles, a performing culture, a disciplined approach to service, an ability to strategically use technology and the wise use of trusted outside providers. Many external and the native partners of progress have been enthusiastically involved in the participatory process to reach at the optimal point of success. The National Platform represents the constructive and collaborative approach to implement and follow up HFA. It is based on the organizational development model to intervene that asks for a national ownership with a participatory mode.

The key lessons learnt from our actions and experiences regarding the realization of HFA include strong need of a collaborative framework of action in disaster risk reduction; promoting the community action through decentralized governance; developing the capacity of institutions, government and non-government, national and local capacities to respond and mitigate; preparedness to disaster through information, education and communication; massive public awareness and advocacy campaigns; promoting sub-regional, regional and global cooperation; mainstreaming disaster into development systems and process; proper management of information, knowledge, technologies in national and community decision making; sustainable recovery measures for livelihood of disaster affected community; and relocation of at-risk community settlements vulnerable to hazards of landslides.

The major challenges faced by Nepal in implementing HFA fall under several categories ranging from strategic level to behavioural, from structural challenges to methodological and the challenges posed by the environmental equilibrium. It is the bare reality that disaster reduction efforts always face both the restraining and driving forces. The challenge is to acquire adequate capacity to utilize driving forces and divert or prepare to face the restraining ones.

One of the positive challenges before us is that the national platform on disaster risk reduction that is going to be institutionalized should be embedded in the broader national system for disaster reduction and development. The effectiveness of national platform is the resultant of its appropriate integration into the existing framework of national development.

The challenges also bring us to think seriously that disaster mitigation using government and institutional interventions alone is insufficient because they pay little attention to addressing the community dynamics, perceptions, or priorities. At the same time, local communities are often either unaware of these formal disaster management interventions or they find the interventions inappropriate due to the lack of recognition of community's vulnerabilities and capacities, or they lack the external resources or technical support to supplement their own initiatives and capacity. The consultation as it has internalized the theme of community-based disaster risk management at its focus will be a competent forum in better reinforcing the paradigm shift and thereby utilize the community dynamics with effective social marketing.

### ***Distinguished delegates,***

The Global Platform as the manifestation of persuasive partnership, has been expected to focus primarily on the need for reducing risk by devising strategies and policies to reduce disaster risk, monitoring progress and identifying gaps at strategic, structural, methodological and behavioural levels and thereby recommending actions to move forward. The expected role-behaviour of this platform that I conceive comprises of a facilitative, enabling and promotive attributes. This could be the strategic and virtual alliance for constructive social dialogue. The platform should be positioned strategically so as to make the

platform capable to generate entrepreneurial spirit and transform into the disaster risk reduction mechanism. While strategic positioning of the global platform we all must be conscious of the fact that it should steer rather than row, should empower rather than provide welfare, should promote self-management and team culture rather than bureaucratic and should innovate rather to content. Likewise, it should collaborate rather than compete, drive with mission rather driving with rule, be self-reliant rather a dependent, meet the needs of the community not the institution itself, fund outcomes rather to inputs.

As this consultation is expected to add value to the process of reengineering and reinventing disaster response towards reinforcing structural excellence, I regard it a valuable opportunity for myself in taking note of this significant consultation as the source of inspiration for all partners and catalyst agencies involved in disaster risk management for added persuasion and effective response to ever challenging risk of disaster in a collaborative framework. The deliberations that come out of the three-day long collaborative exercises will be instrumental in resulting the institutionalization of national platforms with the required level of capacities and willingness. I am fully confident that the exercise will gain height of openness, proactivity, result-orientation, devotion and destiny. I wish you all every success in this momentum of achieving a high-performing global platform for disaster risk reduction in the world of humanity.

Finally, it gives me pleasure and pride in expressing my words of appreciation to the altruistic role and contribution of UN ISDR for motivating the national forces, encouraging the national processes at political, technical, social and financial levels for planning, designing, activating and reinforcing the national system on disaster reduction in Nepal. It is the high level of manifestation from UN ISDR that whole team of this esteemed institution is with us to add inspirational values to this participatory process. I take note of this valuable opportunity to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the esteemed team of UN ISDR for efficient management of the conference added with warm hospitality. As the matter of great value, I wish prosperity for all associated with the movement of disaster risk reduction. Let we all synergize a memorable and highly productive stay in the city of Geneva which has the enchanting beauty and is the source of motivation for all of us to move forward for the humanly noble cause.

Thank you all.

