



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

---

56 Rue de Moillebeau, 1211 Geneva Tel: (4122) 749.1930 Fax: (4122) 734.8085

---

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement**

**By**

**Lt. General (Retd) Farooq Ahmad Khan  
Chairman National Disaster Management Authority  
of Pakistan**

**at the**

**First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster  
Risk Reduction**

**Geneva,  
5 June 2007**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to participate in this First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to share our experiences and contribute in a concrete manner towards global efforts in reducing the impact of disasters—both natural and human-made. Our collective endeavour at this platform should be to develop strategies that would help reduce risks faced especially by the poor and the most vulnerable, from the effects of natural, environmental and human induced disasters, to a manageable and acceptable humanitarian level.

Mr. Chairman,

Those who prepare in advance, suffer less in emergencies. The scale of damage in emergencies is inversely proportional to the preventive measures taken to deal with them. It takes decades to build, but it takes seconds to destroy. We need to work together to reduce the impact of disasters. This has been made possible through effective planning and considerable resources in some countries that are disaster prone.

The number and scale of natural disasters, in developing countries in particular, over the past decade, are on an alarming increase. While we cannot control the overpowering strength of natural disasters, we can reduce its impact and the devastation it causes.

For this, we need to have in place an efficient emergency response system capable of handling large scale disasters and to mitigate the negative impact of such disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

Vulnerabilities are accentuated in most developing countries. The poverty-disaster interface has the potential for immense suffering and loss. In the long term, disasters have an adverse impact on the economic and social development of the vulnerable, especially the poor.

Natural disasters severely impede progress towards goals set by the international community, including the Millennium Development Goals and the SAARC Framework for Action and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

First, we promulgated the National Disaster Management Ordinance in December 2006 and subsequently established the National Disaster Management Commission (NDMC) and Authority. The Prime Minister of Pakistan heads the National Disaster Management Commission and its members include senior representatives from all provinces, leaders of the opposition in the upper and lower houses of the Parliament, representatives of the armed forces, civil society and NGOs.

Second, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework was approved by the NDMC in March this year. We are working towards the implementation of priorities identified in the National Disaster Risk Management Framework. This requires aligning Federal and Provincial coordination structures, capabilities, and resources into a unified, all-discipline, and all-hazards approach to domestic disaster management.

For the first time, it brings together a complete spectrum of disaster risk management activities to include prevention, preparedness and response to disasters. The system would cover all sectors as well as all administrative levels of the government.

Mr. Chairman,

From our experience in the post-earthquake phase, we learnt the following lessons:

- i. Integration of disaster risk reduction into all sectoral and national development policies and practices is necessary for achieving sustainable social, economic and environmental development.
- ii. Importance of developing and strengthening institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level that can systematically contribute to building resilience against natural disasters. In most disasters, Provincial, District and local resources normally provide the first line of emergency response and management support.
- iii. Communities play a critical role in disaster management and disaster risk reduction. Community-based approaches offer viable solutions for managing and reducing risks and ensuring sustainable development.
- iv. Importance of building on people's local knowledge, coping mechanisms and cultural practices. We are convinced that top-down disaster reduction interventions alone are insufficient.

First, we promulgated the National Disaster Management Ordinance in December 2006 and subsequently established the National Disaster Management Commission (NDMC) and Authority. The Prime Minister of Pakistan heads the National Disaster Management Commission and its members include senior representatives from all provinces, leaders of the opposition in the upper and lower houses of the Parliament, representatives of the armed forces, civil society and NGOs.

Second, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework was approved by the NDMC in March this year. We are working towards the implementation of priorities identified in the National Disaster Risk Management Framework. This requires aligning Federal and Provincial coordination structures, capabilities, and resources into a unified, all-discipline, and all-hazards approach to domestic disaster management.

For the first time, it brings together a complete spectrum of disaster risk management activities to include prevention, preparedness and response to disasters. The system would cover all sectors as well as all administrative levels of the government.

Mr. Chairman,

From our experience in the post-earthquake phase, we learnt the following lessons:

- i. Integration of disaster risk reduction into all sectoral and national development policies and practices is necessary for achieving sustainable social, economic and environmental development.
- ii. Importance of developing and strengthening institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level that can systematically contribute to building resilience against natural disasters. In most disasters, Provincial, District and local resources normally provide the first line of emergency response and management support.
- iii. Communities play a critical role in disaster management and disaster risk reduction. Community-based approaches offer viable solutions for managing and reducing risks and ensuring sustainable development.
- iv. Importance of building on people's local knowledge, coping mechanisms and cultural practices. We are convinced that top-down disaster reduction interventions alone are insufficient.

- v. Need for the systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programs in the reconstruction of the affected areas.
- vi. NGOs and the Civil Society have an extremely important role to play and their involvement in DRR activities proved extremely useful because of their ability to operate at grassroots level with communities and local organizations. NGOs must be included in the planning stage since they have higher operational flexibility, and often work with and on behalf of the poorest and the most vulnerable. We have included civil society at all levels of planning and operation- from NDMC to local level by law.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is committed to the goals the international community had set for itself in 2005. The UN/ISDR system has a challenging task ahead to assist governments in achieving these goals, at Global, Regional and National levels in all sectors. I wish them success in their efforts.

Thank you