

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Geneva, 5-7 June

Australian Oral Statement

- Under-Secretary General, Excellencies and delegates, the Australian Government is pleased to be participating in the inaugural session of the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction.
- It is important that we match efforts on disaster response with considered and focused work on disaster risk reduction. We thank the ISDR for their ongoing commitment in this regard.
- For Australia, disaster risk reduction is both a key domestic issues as well as an important theme of our international engagement. Australia has been subject to a number of damaging natural disasters including tropical cyclones, widespread bushfires, flood, severe storms and earthquakes. These have caused loss of life and significantly affected communities, livelihoods and local economies. With an awareness of the potential effects of natural disasters, all levels of government in Australia, in partnership with communities and business, are committed to reducing the risk from natural hazards and disasters.
- The Australian Government is a strong supporter of the *Hyogo Framework for Action*. Since 2005, the Australian Government has made significant progress in implementing the five action areas identified in the *Framework*. These activities and programs focus on a multi-hazard approach to reducing disaster risk, and build on a strong existing governance structure and culture of emergency response in the broader Australian community.

- I would like to outline two key approaches that the Australian Government has taken to support disaster risk reduction.
 1. In support of building greater community preparedness and developing a culture of disaster resilience, all levels of government in Australia are involved in undertaking risk assessments and supporting early warning systems. Our national meteorological and geoscience agencies maintain systems that facilitate early warnings for tropical cyclones, tsunamis, severe storms and bushfire. The Australian Government works closely with emergency services and State and Local Governments to issue nationally consistent warnings aimed at community understanding and response. Through an integrated system of monitoring and early warning across all levels of government, Australian communities have a greater capacity to recognise potential disasters and work with government to manage their safety.
 2. The Australian Government also supports the strengthening of community resilience to natural disasters in developing countries in the Asia Pacific region through the aid program. Australian support for disaster risk management in the Asia Pacific region is provided at several levels:
 - At the national and community level - through bilateral programs we work to improve the capacity of National Disaster Management Offices and develop community-based initiatives aimed at developing emergency response capacity and fostering indigenous disaster mitigation and preparedness in the Asia Pacific region.

- At the regional level – through support to the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), the Australian Red Cross (ARC) and Pacific regional projects, we promote community based disaster management, support cyclone warning and weather services, and foster research on the economic impact of natural disasters in the Pacific. We especially commend SOPAC and its partners for progressing the Hyogo Framework for Action in the Pacific through their Madang Framework for Action.
- At the international level – we participate in the ISDR support group meetings, and we support the work of OCHA, the World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.
- In summary, Australia is committed to supporting the ongoing implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, both nationally and internationally, as a key mechanism for reducing the risk faced by disasters. We welcome the ISDR’s ongoing support for the implementation of the Framework, especially in the Asia Pacific region, and recognise that many Asia partner governments view the ISDR as a regional leader and coordinator of disaster risk reduction. As such, we encourage the ISDR to continue fostering this role and furthering their capacity to support disaster risk reduction in the Asia and also Pacific Regions.