

Statement by
The Permanent Representative of Denmark,
Ambassador Marie-Louise Overvad
at the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
in Geneva, Switzerland 5 – 7 June 2007

Excellencies, Under-Secretary-General, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, let me thank the organisers of this first meeting of the Global Platform. The Global Platform is a forum of great importance bringing together key stakeholders: UN agencies, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, the scientific and academic communities and Governments - including representatives from the most disaster prone countries.

I am especially happy to see so many participants from the developing countries. It is estimated that the developing world bears 95% of the human losses caused by natural disasters. Poverty is at the core, as an underlying cause to the exposure. When disasters happen poverty is also deepened. While very little can be done to remove the hazards, much can be done to reduce the risk of disasters by addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability i.e. the unsafe conditions and the root causes that make populations vulnerable. Therefore, the disaster risk reduction agenda is of utmost importance to developing countries and their populations.

The Global Platform is an opportunity to take stock of how far we have come in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action and achieving substantial

reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets.

Mr. Chairman,

Denmark has initiated a number of actions to fulfil our commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action. Danish actions on Disaster Risk Reduction are closely linked to our Action Plan on Climate Change Adaption.

Poverty reduction is the overriding objective of Danish development policy. Denmark contributes to reducing poverty through long-term and binding partnerships with developing countries. The overall objective for the integration of disaster risk reduction in Danish development aid and humanitarian assistance is to reduce the vulnerability of people in disaster prone areas to the effects of natural and man-made disasters.

Danish actions are aligned with the international developments within disaster risk reduction, enabling Denmark to play a proactive role in multilateral and bilateral efforts for reducing impact of disasters on vulnerable people and societies.

In 2006 Denmark initiated a study on lessons learned from Danish and international experiences with disaster risk reduction. Based on the lessons learned Denmark has developed guidelines, tools and activity plans in order to strengthen the integration of disaster risk reduction in Danish Development aid and humanitarian assistance.

Multilateral actions include support to the ISDR secretariat and support to the new World Bank Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery – the GFDRR that will work in close partnership with the ISDR to strengthen national level planning, coordination and implementation mechanisms at national and sub-national level in high risk countries.

In the bilateral assistance, Denmark will mainstream disaster risk reduction in relevant sector programme support – such as environment, energy, forestry and fisheries, transport, education, and water and sanitation. The dialogue with decision makers in our main development partner countries will incorporate disaster risk reduction elements to be incorporated into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and other national development planning frameworks.

Danish actions will also include support to NGO's, humanitarian agencies and think tanks in their efforts to reduce the risk of disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express Denmark's full support to ISDR, recognising its key role as a vehicle for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and coordinator on behalf of the international community. It is our hope that the Global platform will provide for increased attention and action on disaster risk reduction, as well as valuable exchange of experience amongst stakeholders.

Let me finish my speech by quoting a World Bank study on disaster risk reduction: "One dollar invested in prevention of disasters reduces the cost seven times on rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.