



**Statement by**

**Mr. Hannu Kyröläinen**

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**Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

**at the**

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

**Risk Reduction**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate the organizers of this first Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for the excellent preparations, and let me express the wish that our discussions during these days will be pragmatic and result-oriented. We have come here to share our own experiences, to learn from others, and to discuss on how best to move forward in our common endeavour to prepare ourselves for natural disasters and to minimize their negative consequences.

Let me express Finland's strong overall support to the concept of disaster risk reduction and to the strengthening of the ISDR system. This first Global Platform meeting presents us with a unique opportunity to reaffirm our commitment and to move the global agenda on these issues forward. We welcome the invitation to governments to take a more prominent role in this process, while at the same time ensuring that all relevant stakeholders stay onboard. I believe we can all agree that the global efforts to reduce disaster risks should remain non-politicized in nature and that the process should be inclusive; all partners with a role or an interest in disaster risk reduction should be welcome to this forum. I hope that the Global Forum will expand the political space dedicated by governments to disaster risk reduction, in all sectors, and contribute to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals particularly in respect of poverty reduction and environmental sustainability

One of the key issues in disaster risk reduction is to ensure that the political commitment translates into concrete action in a way that is coherent and sustainable. For sustainability we need better long term strategical planning and budgeting both at the national, regional and the global levels. To convince ourselves of this, Mr Chairman, we welcome your suggestion to prepare a study on the return ratio of investing in disaster risk reduction, while recognizing the fact that you can never put a price on human life.

We would also welcome more discussion on the possibilities to increase the sustainability of funding for the ISDR as the co-ordinating agency of disaster risk reduction. As the role and the mandate of the ISDR develops and increases, it would be natural that the budget of the ISDR should not depend only on voluntary contributions. Finland made a voluntary contribution to the ISDR in 2006, and a decision for a slight increase in our funding in 2007 has been made. Finland stands ready to discuss the possibility of core funding of the ISDR via the regular UN budget.

On the issue of coherence, the responsibility lays both on the international agencies themselves, but also on the government representatives who are involved in assessing the past activities and in formulating the future of these agencies. We welcome the matrix of commitments and initiatives which describes what the different UN agencies and other entities are doing in supporting the implementation of the Hyogo framework. Perhaps this helps us also in identifying the possible gaps and overlaps in the implementation. On the other hand, it is important that different expertise is involved in the implementation and that the ISDR networks and co-operates with other relevant UN agencies, such as the WMO, and other relevant stake-holders, such as the World Bank.

With regard to Finland's implementation of the Hyogo framework a Strategy for Securing the Functions Vital to Security has been adopted. Within this Strategy, nine threat scenarios - such as major accidents and natural disasters have been defined. For each scenario, a competent ministry or

governmental body has been assigned to each situation for the purposes of preparedness and situation control. In Finland the national disaster reduction plans and necessary measures have been built inside the whole system as an extension to normal function of organizations. The Finnish delegation is prepared to elaborate more in detail about the Finnish implementation of the Hyogo recommendations later on during this meeting.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by once more highlighting how important the challenge is we are facing now during these days in Geneva. The need for strengthening our efforts is strongly underlined as extreme meteorological and hydrological conditions are becoming more common. We are here to discuss and to listen, but we are also here to improve global preparedness for disaster reduction in order to reduce human suffering. It is evident that the most important efforts in disaster risk reduction have to be made at the national and regional levels, but these levels need as their support a strong, well-functioning and efficient global framework.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.