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**Opening Remarks by Mr. Ade Petranto
Charge d'Affaires
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**At a Panel Discussion on
"Resilient Cities: Disaster Risk Reduction in an Urbanizing
World"**

Side Event of the Humanitarian Segment at ECOSOC

**Co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Japan and
the Permanent Mission of Indonesia
in collaboration with
UN-HABITAT, UNISDR, and IFRC**

New York, 13 July 2010

Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,

I would like to begin by thanking our co-sponsor Ambassador Okuda for his kind words.

I am also grateful to Ms. Margaretha Wahlström, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction for joining us at this event.

The focus of this event, jointly organized by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), UN-Habitat and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), brings to our attention the issue of disaster reduction in a world that is increasingly becoming more urban.

We have with us today three speakers that will be shortly introduced by Ms. Wahlström, to share their perspectives and shed insight on the urban dimension of natural disasters. I look forward to hearing from them and I am sure that we can all gain from their experiences.

As with Japan, Indonesia is no stranger to natural disasters. Being situated on one of the most active disaster regions we have also gained some insight in this area.

A year ago, Indonesia took part along with India, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand in the launching of a report on global lessons learned from the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

The lessons contained in the report can be useful for our discussion today. I would like to therefore take some of the lessons of the report as a point of reference.

One of the lessons that I think is important is that it is very costly to recover from such a natural disaster. Therefore one of the lessons highlighted in the report was the need for prevention.

Prevention by being proactive rather than reactive is important.

Prevention by way of disaster risk reduction is a key factor in reducing the human and physical cost.

This is not discounting the need for immediate emergency relief mobilized by humanitarian efforts. However, humanitarian efforts should invest more in prevention and go beyond the distribution of food, medicine and others.

I am pleased in this connection to inform you that Indonesia and Australia, with support of OCHA will organize a humanitarian partnership workshop for Asia and the Pacific Region in Jakarta, 5-6 August, 2010 in which disaster risk reduction will be one of the important elements to be discussed.

For developing countries, disaster risk reduction is a major undertaking due to lack of capacity. We need to build and strengthen our institutional, technical and human capacity. Without them, it is challenging to defend against natural disasters.

However, notwithstanding the importance of building technical capacity, there is also the preservation of local indigenous knowledge and community participation as an important way of developing disaster risk reduction.

But while we are discussing this issue in the context of the Humanitarian Segment, I would like to emphasize how important disaster risk reduction is in the wider development agenda.

As Ambassador Okuda rightly emphasized that reducing the risks of disasters is a long term effort.

Cities cannot grow in a sustainable manner unless proper disaster risk reduction ensures that they are resilient to natural hazards.

None of the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved or sustained unless we incorporate risk reduction into long term development planning and policies, in all sectors of development.

The United Nations should continue to play a major role in bringing together the knowledge, expertise and experience on development and disaster.

On that note, I now wish to give the floor back to Ms. Wahlstrom to introduce the speakers for today.

Thank you.