



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
President

Statement by the
President of the Republic of Macedonia,
H.E. Dr. Gjorge Ivanov,
on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the
Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk
Reduction and the World Reconstruction Conference

Geneva, 10 May 2011

Check against delivery!

**Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Madam Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to share, with all previous speakers, my condolences to the people and government of Japan, and all Nations that have suffered from natural and man-made disasters in this deadly decade.

We are facing a defining moment in history. Moment when the interdependent global risks, from climate change to disaster risk, from unbalanced economic and urban development to ecosystem degradation, require adequate and joint global response.

We recognize that development without resilience to disasters is not sustainable. We are also here to recognize the direct linkage between the human misconduct and the reality of climate change and natural disasters.

For these reasons, I strongly believe that a coordinated approach to Disaster Risk Reduction, to Climate Change Adaptation and to Sustainable Development, through integrated policies and harmonized practical steps, is the most important **investment for a safer tomorrow**. By supporting development based on moral judgment, knowledge, resilience, prevention and adaptation, we are jointly building a future that will not need an Ark to endure the days of the flood. Still, we need to plan ahead. After all, it was not raining when Noah built his Ark.

By planning, supported by the creative guidance of UNISDR, we bring the future into the present so that we now can do something about it. Macedonia, inspired by the general idea of the Hyogo Framework for Action, is committed and active in building resilience and promoting the DRR agenda, on the local, national, regional and today, on the global level.

Distinguished delegates,

Understanding that “*disasters result from the impact of natural hazards on vulnerable individuals and communities*”, the Republic of Macedonia developed its national, multi-sectoral Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Macedonian model, based on a holistic approach, is leading to effective and efficient risk reduction by integrating available and relevant capacities and resources on all administrative levels, allowing us to integrate DRR into our national strategies, policies, plans and legislation. It is a joint effort that brings together all segments of Macedonian society, public and private, academic and business, religious and secular sectors.

Through the Local and Regional Councils for DRR, Macedonia encourages the involvement of local authorities in DRR efforts, thus **increasing public and private investments in local action.**

I find it to be true that resilience evokes responsibility, where individual and institutional commitment, along with inspection and insurance, go hand in hand. Cultivating a culture of shared responsibility is a key precondition for Disaster Risk Reduction. For exactly this reason, by joining the South Eastern Europe Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, the Republic of Macedonia is embracing this important dimension of private - public partnership and also encouraging other nations to follow the suit.

Excellencies,

On the regional, European level, the Republic of Macedonia has accepted, with great enthusiasm and devotion, the obligations deriving from chairing the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2011. Supported by UNISDR Europe Office and EUR-OPA Major Hazard Agreement, the Forum is strongly dedicated to stimulating and facilitating the exchange and sharing of experiences and good practices among European nations. Furthermore, by chairing the Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation within the European Forum, we are especially committed, along with leading European nations in that field, such as France, Germany and Norway, to merging risk reduction and adaptation efforts.

No country can achieve this alone. During the Macedonian Chairmanship with the Southeast European Cooperation Process 2012-2013, I intend to initiate a Southeast European summit, focused on strengthening regional cooperation in this context. I expect that this meeting shall raise regional awareness and responsibility for problems and challenges that recognize no borders, which have implications that more or less are of our common concern. I expect that it shall provide definitive results in the desired direction. I expect that the United Nations through its Secretary-General and appropriate bodies will participate at the summit and contribute to this joint effort.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Disaster risk is a reality of today, and a real threat for tomorrow. A threat that can be solved only by fulfilling the commitments and numerous pledges our governments have taken in past decades. It is the most important responsibility of this generation to hand over a less vulnerable world to generations to come, just as Noah did for mankind on the summit of biblical Mount Ararat.

With this thought in mind, let me recall Einstein's wisdom when he said: "*We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.*" It is up to this generation to adopt a different mindset so we can hand over a safer world to our children.

Thank you.