

***Statement by Director General, Department of Disaster Management,
Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan
at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk
Reduction in Geneva, 19-23 May 2103.***

**Hon'ble Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my honour and privilege to attend this ***Fourth Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction.***

I bring to this august gathering, the Warmest Greetings and Best Wishes from His Majesty the King, the People and the Royal Government of Bhutan for the success of this important Conference.

Mr. Chairman

The Fourth Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction provides an important Forum in bringing the World Communities together in creating a “**Momentum**” towards greater heights in Disaster Risk Reduction.

Recent disasters events across the Globe have alarmed all Nations and thus, this Conference provides a useful Platform to engage among ourselves, share experiences, forge partnerships and strengthen cooperations in our common endeavor to implement the ***Five Priorities of Hyogo Framework for Action***.

Most importantly, it facilitates the discussion on ***Post 2015 Development agenda***.

The Theme of the Global Platform - ***“Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow: Increased Investment in Local Action”*** - is indeed very relevant and in line with the principles of Hyogo Framework of Action.

Mr. Chairman

Bhutan has been experiencing frequent hydro-meteorological and geological disasters such as Floods, GLOFs, Earthquakes, Landslides, Windstorms, Fires etc.

Bhutan has made a rapid progress in strengthening our disaster management and risk reduction capacities.

Our Development Policy guided by the concept of **Gross National Happiness** with its *Four main pillars* - which are **Equitable and sustainable Socio-Economic Development/ Environmental Protection /Cultural promotion and Good Governance**, have been complimentary to these efforts.

In line with the GNH concept, we are required by our **Constitution** to maintain at least **60%** of our total geographical land area under forest cover at all times to come.

Bhutan has pledged our sincere commitment to the **Hyogo Framework for Action** and I am honored to highlight some of the **key Achievements** made under the **HFA- Five Priorities for Action:-**

- 1) To create an enabling environment for Bhutan to be a disaster resilient country, the Bhutanese Parliament had **enacted the Disaster Management Act 2013** in February this year. The **Act** provides the establishment and strengthening of Institutional capacity for disaster risk management, mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and empowering the local communities in disaster management.

- 2) I am also pleased to report here that in Bhutan, mainstreaming of DRR has been included as one of the 16 National Key Result Areas in our 11th FY Planning Guidelines. DRR has been reflected as an important crosscutting issue in the Local Development Planning Framework, as well.

- 3) There is a genuine Political Will and Commitment by our leaders in Bhutan and we have provisioned necessary budget in the **DM Act – 2013** and also in the National and Local Development Plans for the purpose of implementing DRR activities.

- 4) Bhutan has also implemented the first ***National Adaptation Program for Action (NAPA)*** Project in the Region funded by the LDC Fund on Climate Change Adaptation to enhance the adaptive capacity in preventing climate change-induced GLOF disaster in Bhutan.

- 5) For Integration of culture, heritage and indigenous values and practices into the overall Disaster Management Framework; a set of *Guiding Principles and Recommendations* have been formulated during the

“International Conference on Disaster Management and Cultural Heritage”, organized by Bhutan in December 2010 with active participation from several renowned experts and scholars from around the world.

The key Recommendations are focused on:-

- Having a strong Institutional basis for disaster management and cultural heritage;
- Establishing an inventory of cultural heritage and including it in the multi-hazard risk and vulnerability assessment;
- Post-Disaster Recovery of Cultural Heritage;
- Traditional values and practices for Disaster Risk Reduction ;

An **Action Plan** is being formulated to engage relevant Agencies in Bhutan in the implementation of these *Recommendations*.

Mr. Chairman

Now, as we head towards the end of implementation of the current HFA, we have witnessed some concrete and notable efforts, being made by various countries.

We now need to seriously identify *Issues, Gaps, Opportunities and Recommendations*, that would be carried forward into the **Post-2015 Development agenda**.

Bhutan strongly aspires for the **post 2015** with stand alone Goals and Indicators for the disaster risk management under the overall Framework of **HFA -2**.

Bhutan would like to flag the following **Issues** for inclusion in the **Post-2015 Development agenda:-**

- 1) Disaster Risk Reduction should be clearly identified as a Priority Activity by the Funding Agencies and Development partners and needs to be integrated into Economic development projects.
- 2) There should be institutionalized Platform/Forum for collection, analysis and sharing of information, data and knowledge among Stakeholders in the area of disaster risk management.

- 3) It is important to build up the capacities of the least developed and land locked developing countries, to assess their hazards and vulnerabilities and carry out risk reduction and mitigation measures.

- 4) We need to promote and sensitize stakeholders on various Public Insurance schemes, by way of ***Disaster Risk Transfer Mechanisms***.

Finally, to reiterate the theme of the Platform – let us all ***“Invest today for a safer tomorrow – now is the time to invest in local action and build safer communities for all times to come”***.

With this, I would like to thank Mr. Chairman and all the distinguished participants for your kind attention and Wish the Platform every success!!

Thank You and “Tashi Delek”!!!