

Statement at the 4th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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It is my great pleasure to deliver a statement at the 4th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

It has been more than two years since the tragic event of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami occurred in Japan. The Pacific Coast of Tohoku area was devastated, but we stood up again firmly, cheered by friends from all over the world. Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank your friendship and solidarity provided to us during the difficult time.

Looking at the history of Japan, we in Japan have been through a number of disasters being located in the mid-latitude and the Pacific Ring of Fire. We have struggled with the impacts of disasters but increased disaster resiliency each time we have encountered and overcome disasters. Some people even say that the Japan's leading science and technology should be somehow associated with the spirit of disaster recovery, indeed.

As you know, we are currently in the middle of recovery phase, and our research institute, IRIDeS was established in April 2012. This, itself, is a proof of ongoing recovery and we did 'build back better'. In our research institute, we now have seven research divisions; Hazard and Risk Evaluation, Human and Social Response, Regional and Urban Reconstruction, Disaster Medical Science, Disaster Science, Disaster Information Management and Public Collaboration, and one Endowed Research on Earthquake Induced Tsunami Evaluation. With more than 100 faculty members, we believe that we are becoming one of the largest and the most comprehensive disaster research institutions in the world.

Our main missions are to conduct research on how better we could prepare even for

low-frequency high-impact disasters and how better we could provide scientific and technical knowledge to disaster-affected communities in Tohoku through multi-disciplinary approaches. Then, we are aiming at providing our research outcomes for policy making both for Japan and other countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We highly appreciate the efforts of the IDNDR and ISDR to emphasize the importance of disaster risk reduction through remarkable achievements in the past, including the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action in 1994 and Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction has been increasingly popular and the implementation of the HFA has been observed in many countries. The number of deaths caused by disasters in recent decades shows a clear decreasing trend thanks to disaster risk reduction efforts, including advanced early warning system and better preparedness.

Yet, vulnerability and exposure to disasters remain large in many countries and urbanization without good planning increases urban disaster risks. Also, we are about to learn new threats caused by the climate change. Investment in disaster risk reduction remains very small in development agenda. While appreciating the outcomes of the World Bank's Sendai Dialogue in the last fall, we might need to set goals and targets in the Post-HFA scheme in 2015.

In order to consider realistic goals and targets, it is mandatory to have a good measure. Sound, accurate and dependable disaster statistics based on official sources is crucial. We think it is the UN task to call for the need and take actions to agree on standard and action plans with financial assistance using its intergovernmental mechanism. Tohoku University is ready to provide any technical assistance in the process.

As the Mayor of Sendai City announced during the meeting, we are very pleased to welcome you to the third World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Sendai in 2015. The Conference will use facilities of Tohoku University, too.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us join hands to make further efforts in disaster risk reduction not to repeat such

tragedies anywhere in the world. We will try our best to generate new scientific and technical knowledge/products as a world center of action-oriented disaster research.

I thank you.