

Speech by SRSG Margareta Wahlström
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***The Global State of Play of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
and concepts for the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2)***

- Check against delivery -

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to be invited to contribute to this Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Manila Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, titled “Post- Haiyan – A Way Forward”.

Your presence here today illustrates the importance and timeliness to understand and learn from the experiences of the Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda). This will be an important contribution to the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction being held in Sendai, Japan on 14 -18 March 2015.

I visited Tacloban and Cebu last March and noted that the Post Yolanda rehabilitation progressing. In Tacloban city, sites have been cleaned up and people are moving from tents to temporary houses while a master plan is being developed for reconstruction. In Cebu, extensive consultations have led to the development on reconstruction plans, which provincial government, municipality mayors and private sector are committed to work together for implementation.

*I noted at that time that opportunities exist now to address the underlying risks to ensure that the next disaster will not cause similar devastation, in line with the President's policy to "Build back better." I further noted that it is important to ensure that *medium and longer-term disaster risk reduction and resilience building be made a strong component of the rehabilitation process* and embedded in the needs assessment and implementation plans.*

These lessons are key to note as we prepare for to the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

As specified in the 2013 UN General Assembly Resolution, the objectives of the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction include:

- To complete assessment and review of the implementation of the HFA.
- *To consider the experience gained through the regional and national strategies and plans for disaster risk reduction and their recommendations as well as relevant regional agreements under the implementation of the HFA.*
- To adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.
- *To identify modalities of cooperation based on commitments to implement a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.*
- To determine modalities for periodic review of the implementation of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

In preparation for the World Conference, Regional Platforms for DRR have already been held in Abuja, Nigeria; Guayaquil, Ecuador, and this week in Suva, Fiji. Still to come are Regional Platforms in Bangkok, Thailand; Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, and a Europe Ministerial meeting in Milan, Italy.

The Open-ended Inter Governmental process preparing for the Sendai Conference is meeting in its first –of two – Precom in Geneva this July and November this year. Hosted by the Government of Switzerland, the Precom 1 will see Governments bringing their positions and experiences to the table and prepare for the discussions on a draft for the World Conference Outcome that will follow the precom.

The Regional Platforms and conferences have all served to establish the priorities and positions of the various regions. So far, we have three strong and focused outcome documents from Africa, Americas and the Pacific. They have much in common with the focus on disaster risk and national development planning, need for indicators and monitoring, need for focus and action and need for international, and regional cooperation for resilience of people and economies.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me now talk to you about the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

The biennial countries' self-assessments using the HFA Monitor show that there has been in all regions a gradual progress across all the Priorities for Action of the HFA, in particular in strengthening countries' institutional, legislative and policy frameworks, early warning, disaster preparedness for response as well as in risk assessment, education, research, and in fostering public awareness and a common understanding of disaster risk.

Together with progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this has contributed to decreasing mortality risk, particularly in the case of floods, droughts and tropical storms.

Countries report a lesser progress in Priority for Action 4 on reducing the underlying risk factors and tackling the causes of risk creation. It is important to understand what the underlying risk drivers are: it is about unequal economic development, badly planned and managed urban and regional development; the decline of regulatory ecosystem services; poverty and inequality; weak governance; and climate change.

Existing patterns indicate that exposure of people and assets in both higher and lower-income countries has increased faster than vulnerability has decreased, thus generating new risk and a steadily increase in socio-economic losses. The on-going creation of new risk coupled with the existing risk, requires continued efforts in reducing vulnerability. Many governments are now faced with increasing levels of contingent liability and sovereign risk.

This vicious cycle can be interrupted with a combined approach aiming to prevent future risk creation, reduce existing levels of risk, and strengthen socio and economic resilience, targeting both the public and private sectors. In summary, the next “Plan of Action” will therefore require three mutually-supportive goals:

- I. Preventing the creation of new risk by the adoption of risk-informed growth and development pathways
- II. Reducing existing risk
- III. Strengthen resilience by socio and economic measures that enable countries and people to absorb loss, minimize impact and recover.

Based on the above, it is now clear that the post-2015 framework for DRR needs to:

- Incorporate the prevention of new risk creation and reduction of existing risk as a component of sustainable development and integrate this in governance.
- Promote the full engagement and empowerment of local communities, leaders, and administrators and the respect of local and indigenous knowledge with the understanding that while the causes and consequences of risk may be national, trans-boundary or global in scope, disaster risks have local and specific characteristics
- Promote all-of-society engagement and empowerment, effective equality, inclusion and non-discriminatory participation, and assumption of responsibility by all stakeholders for preventing new risk creation and reducing existing risk
- Promote aligned and clear responsibilities and action across private stakeholders and all public institutions, including the executive and legislative branches, at local and central level are indispensable for effective disaster risk management, and to coherently monitor and review progress.
- Promote the development of freely available, publicly accessible science-based risk information, to promote risk informed decision-making.
- Realize that preventing new and reducing existing risk of disaster constitute an international legal duty aimed at protecting persons, their livelihoods and property, while respecting their human rights.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that just as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami transformed how affected countries committed themselves to disaster risk reduction, so too the concrete lessons and experiences from Typhoon Yolanda may lead to positive changes for the benefit of present and future generations.

Filipinos are resilient in the face of multiple calamities. What is needed now is the embodiment of much of what is already there: a shift from intent to action. This will not only change the Philippines but the whole world as it addresses new thresholds of danger and calamity propelled by environmental degradation, poor land use and urban planning, fast growing urban population and poverty.

The lessons to be learned from Typhoon Yolanda will have wider application across the world and must be incorporated into the new 2015 global agreement on disaster risk reduction, which will succeed the current Hyogo Framework for Action.

Thank you for your attention.