

## Statement of Arab Youth for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arab Preparatory Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction

We, the Arab Youth at the Arab Preparatory Conference, would like to thank the Arab League and the UNISDR for their efforts on making this conference happen, and the State of Qatar for their kind hospitality. We are grateful for the support and opportunity to contribute toward the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arab Preparatory Conference on DRR and we can assure you of our commitment to engage to our fullest capacity. We have been with you in every step of the way since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arab Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction, and we commit to continue with you on every step of the way moving forward.

Never before has the region had such a large share of youth, with young people between the ages of 15–29 making up around 30 percent of the population - or some 105 million people - in a region in which 60 percent of the population has not yet reached the age of 30. In addition, the proportion of Arab youth (aged 15-24 years) is increasing significantly in comparison to other age groups. To this end, we recognize the weight that youth bear in making the implementation process a successful one. We as well recognize the importance of support and endorsement of youth programs and the role of youth by national governments, local governments, and international partners. We know that we can be the change, but we realize how urgently we need support.

### Arab Youth Priorities

As we are gathered here to work on the Arab Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction, we wish to communicate with you the priorities of Arab Youth – we firmly believe that those priorities, if taken into account, will only help to make the Strategy a successful one. To that end, our priorities are as follows:

Priority 1: Emphasis on Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Action, Urbanization and Sustainable Development synergy efforts in order to ensure that targets and indicators are met efficiently and effectively. An informed holistic approach is the only way forward if we are to achieve our goals.

Priority 2: Investment in education, health, healthcare and social services as a means of achieving strong, resilient communities. No framework or strategy can be successful if the communities it is applied onto are not resilient.

Priority 3: Empowerment of young people with the knowledge, know-how and the support that will enable them to better apply their skillsets and innovation in supporting Disaster Risk Reduction efforts. Youth are a part of every segment of society, and addressing them as partners rather than beneficiaries opens up numerous avenues for innovative development.

Priority 4: Engagement of different stakeholders, especially youth, women and academia in planning, implementing and reviewing processes of local, national and regional disaster risk reduction frameworks. Those stakeholders usually form a significant part of early responses to disasters and mitigation efforts, and their integration into all steps of the DRR process can only make it more efficient.

Priority 5: Championing human rights, humanity and safety as important aspects of any effective disaster risk reduction effort.

### Arab Youth Commitments

To this end, we are not only here to voice our concerns and our priorities, but we are here to let you know, that we, the youth, are ready to commit to action – to help achieve a resilient society and a resilient future.

It is our pleasure to announce our new initiative, the Arab Youth in Resilience campaign. An initiative where youth come hand in hand, utilizing their unique skillsets, innovation and drive to mobilize, create and sustain change. We commit to resilience, and we hope you do too.