



## Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe

Vilsonovo šetalište 10  
71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Phone/fax: + 387 33 614 865 /+ 387 33 615 016  
<http://www.dppi.info>

### DPPI SEE Secretariat

Sarajevo, 17 June 2009

Your Excellencies,

Dear Honorable Representatives and Esteem Colleagues.

Today, it is a great honour and privilege for me to address this exceptional audience. Exceptional, because, this enthusiastic and outstanding group, possible is the most unknown and maybe the most indefinite group of people for many living in this era of the world, but certainly this exceptional audience is shaping up the future of our societies. A future for resilient societies, a future of societies which are more stronger and more prepared for disasters and maybe the societies that can keep up their sustainable, uninterrupted development processes despite the devastating results of the natural and man made catastrophes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there had been marvelous speeches before me, please let me to express my humble appreciation for those wonderful and excellent speakers who had made undeniable remarks on the issue of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

In relation to those, there are few points that I would like to take your attention as well. The South East Europe (SEE) is not only very rich when it comes to a great culture and wonderful nature, unfortunately the region is also very well known and very rich with its natural and man made hazards. Moreover, I also would like to stress out one point which is very crucial for the success of our endless efforts, a point highly specific to the region; most of the time the

impacts of those hazards are subject to cross border issues and most of the time those impacts and results are far beyond the response and recovery capacity of one country thus requires a multi-level and multi-dimensional cooperation between regional countries on every stage of the risk/crisis management. It is obvious that there is a certain necessity for regional cooperation at every level of disaster risk reduction and response phases for creating our future resilient societies. The DPPI SEE has just been established to fill in this gap and recently converted itself into a fully regionally owned initiative in order to serve as a regional platform for disaster related activities, where all regional countries, international organizations and donors can take part in. The last but not the least point is the most unfortunate fact of the disasters, the disasters and catastrophes do not select people according to their gender, age, religious or ethnic background. They simply hit anyone and everyone with their severe demolishing powers. We might segregate ourselves with our political borders, we might even imply custom procedures for others to follow up but those devastating hazards will certainly do not follow those formalities at all. They do not only treat our lives and livelihoods, they also endanger our futures as well.

Disasters as results of natural and man made hazards, are extremely complex and sophisticated events. In order to cope with their complexity, there is a certain need for a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approach on every level of our social fabrics of today; including our educational, financial, health, etc systems and with all other means of current systems that we participate in, in a shorter terminology, every individual within all dimensions of the social structure should be a part of the challenges that we are facing today and tomorrow.

This difficult and complex conceptual approach can be best identified with in the Hyogo Action Framework and I think, can be only embodied with the enormous and great work of UNISDR secretariat. Please, also allow me to express my gratitude to UNISDR Secretariat and co-workers whom DPPI SEE (Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe) always enjoyed their great support in many occasions.

Ladies and gentlemen, The DPPI SEE has been achieved a lot of success in the field of

Disaster Preparedness and Prevention in South Eastern Europe with in its half decade successful history. The DPPI SEE has recently reached almost a full regional coverage with its eleven member countries and candidate countries and already been engaged for many projects for South Eastern Europe together with many leading international organizations and donors. This success is not only just because what DPPI SEE has been achieved so far, it is mainly how DPPI SEE converted itself into a Regionally Owned Initiative with its new cooperation capabilities. Today DPPI SEE is the most mature and the only regionally owned capable initiative in South Eastern Europa related with Disaster Risk Reduction issues with its unique administrative structure composed of Chair in Office, Trio Mechanism and Advisory Board where donors and partners can take part in for defining the future strategies of Working Groups which are combined for specific projects from DPPI Member countries.

Today, it is a great pleasure for me to publicly mention almost in every occasion that DPPI SEE is more and more becoming a focal point for the DRR activities in the region. Please, let me briefly name some of them in a few words;

The UNDP and DPPI SEE is launching a Human Capital Development Project for the region besides that, together with CADRI, DPPI SEE is trying to build up some regional expertise knowledge for DRR for the region as well. In addition to that, DPPI SEE is receiving a great support from UNISDR to create national platforms in the region. When we speak about region, I can not omit to say that The Regional Cooperation Council is also providing an undeniable support to DPPI SEE as well. I also feel obliged to mention the greatest support that we are receiving from our partners and donors: The USA, The Danish Emergency Management Agency, The MSB Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (SRSA), and so many that cannot be mentioned such in a short time that I have here. It is so obvious that DRR activities can not achieve to the desired level with out the support of our donor countries and partners in the region. Please also allow me to express my gratitude here once more, not only to our partners and donors, I think the biggest to thank you should go to DPPI SEE Member countries, because they are putting their utmost energy and greatest support while fulfilling their responsibilities towards DPPI despite all difficulties they are facing, and their good will

and professional spirit giving this positive creative shape and a great momentum to DRR activities in the region through DPPI SEE.

I would like to end my words, with the words of two important characters of the world history. Albert Einstein, with his famous outstay that you can easily notice on our we site [www.dppi.info](http://www.dppi.info) "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

As Neil Armstrong said "[That's one small step for \(a\) man, one giant leap for mankind.](#)"

Today DRR activities can be counted as small steps but those are first steps for the dwellers of the region and I strongly believe in that those small steps, one day will save lives, protect and shape up our future.

Thank you.



Orhan TOPCU

Head of Secretariat DPPI SEE