

**GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
SECOND SESSION
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OFFICIAL STATEMENT

by

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Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department,
MALAYSIA

Mr. Chairman
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR) for convening the Second Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. This meeting is an important follow-up to the Inaugural Global Platform held in 2007 to review the progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework Action (HFA) Plan (2005-2015).

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. The Government of Malaysia has consolidated its disaster management legislative framework, policies and coordination mechanisms over the years to ensure cohesive participation and involvement of various stakeholders from government and non-government sectors in addressing disaster management in accordance with their role and function at national, state and local levels. Disaster risk reduction is also in the mainstream of development policy as manifested by the substantial resources that is provided to reduce underlying risk factors and

promote sustainable development in the nations's primary development plan – the “Five Year Malaysia Plans”.

3. Flooding is the most significant natural hazard in Malaysia. Annually, approximately 29,800 square kilometres of area are flooded; affecting a population of 4.82 million and causing RM 915 million (USD 260 million) in damage. Since 1972, the Government of Malaysia has spent billions of dollars in the “Five Year Malaysia Plans” on flood mitigation projects to reduce the risk of floods. These include the dual-purpose Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART) Project implemented to alleviate problems both flash floods and heavy traffic in the city of Kuala Lumpur.
4. Malaysia continues to strengthen its disaster management system. In the field of communication, Malaysia have made significant achievement, among these are the Malaysia Emergency Response System (MERS) 999 for the public; the Fixed-Line Alert System (FLAS) for the dissemination of disaster alert from the authorities to the public via landline; and the Government Integrated Radio Network (GIRN), which provides radio communication between responders during emergency or disaster. The successful implementation of these measures is made possible through constructive public-private partnerships carried out between the Government and prominent players from the local telecommunications industry.
5. The Government has also focused on the development of operational information systems to strengthen disaster risk reduction in line with the Hyogo Framework Action Plan. Beginning 2006 and completed this year, the Public Work Department's study on National Slope Master Plan provides a comprehensive documentation for slope management and disaster risk reduction for landslides. I am pleased to inform at the First World Landslide Forum in Japan in November 2008, the Department has been chosen as one of ten World Centre of Excellence for disaster risk reduction by the ISDR. The Department of Irrigation and Drainage has developed the Urban Stormwater Management Manual (MSMA) and the Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia has established the Land Use Planning Appraisal for Risk Areas (LUPAr). All local

authorities and developers have to adhere to the Manual and the Planning Appraisal.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. In this age of information, the media plays a crucial role in inculcating a culture of safety and resilience. Members of the press can serve as an effective medium for raising awareness among the public on risk reduction and disaster preparedness measures. Realising the importance of the media in disaster risk reduction, the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture has created a Disaster Unit in the Department of Broadcasting Malaysia, to cover issues on disasters.
7. A number of initiatives too have been undertaken to instill awareness in disaster risk reduction among the government sector, private sector, civil societies and communities. The Government departments and institution of higher learning have organised awareness programs on landslides, tsunami, floods and extreme weather, focusing on local authorities and communities. Malaysia has also declared 26 December as “Disaster Awareness Day” since 2005.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. The Government of Malaysia is also focused on strengthening preparedness to effectively respond to emergencies. For this purpose, the National Disaster Relief Fund has been established to provide financial assistance to those affected by disasters. The corporate sector and communities have responded positively by contributing an average of RM20 million (USD 5.7 million) annually to the Fund.
9. Building on the experience of the widespread monsoon flood in 2006, the Government has introduced, through the Central Bank of Malaysia, RM 500 million (USD 140 million) of special relief guarantee facility (SRGF) to be administered by local commercial banks aimed at recovering businesses and rebuilding damaged infrastructure in areas affected by disasters.

10. The establishment of a cooperative in the form of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (The Endeavor Trust of Malaysia) in 1987 has help to a certain extent enhanced the resilience of these vulnerable to disasters. Currently, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia provides service to more than 180,000 families in Malaysia. Services provided include microfinancing, compulsory savings and welfare funds targeting the poor and marginalized.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Climate change is expected to result in harsher and more frequent disasters and loss of lives and damages are expected to grow exponentially. In terms of climate change adaptation, the Government has put in place measures through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to strengthen capacity and build awareness at all levels. The Government is also preparing the 2nd National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to report the country's progress in addressing climate change. The National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia (NAHRIM), which leads the country on Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation, has carried out a study on the impacts of climate change on the hydrologic regime and water resources of Peninsular Malaysia in 2006. Research is on-going for the region of Sabah and Sarawak, with completion expected in 2010.

At this juncture Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I share with you Malaysia's experiences in regional cooperation.

12. In the context of Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) was established in early 2003 and has since completed a number of initiatives. The most recent initiative of the ACDM is the formation of Tripartite Core Group during the Cyclone Nargis that struck Myanmar in May 2008. The multilateral effort has firmed up the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), which was initiated in 2005. This Agreement is expected to provide a regional framework to reduce risks,

enhance effective response and recovery with development of operational procedures to respond collectively and expeditiously to disasters.

13. In early 2009, Malaysia was entrusted by member states to be the first Chairman of the Subsidiary Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). We aim to ensure that the Committee complements the efforts of other United Nations and regional organisations in terms of helping countries implement measures for disaster risk reduction.

14. Malaysia hosted the Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kuala Lumpur from 2nd to 4th of December 2008. The Ministerial Conference culminated with the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia, 2008. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration is a testament of the new milestones set for the region in terms of increased commitment for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) for Asia and the Pacific and ISDR Asia Partners (IAP) has been requested to lead the efforts in developing a regional action plan and assist in the promotion of the Kuala Lumpur Initiative on public private partnerships for disaster risk reduction, which is supported by the Governments of Malaysia, India and Republic of Korea.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. Malaysia is committed to supporting the ongoing implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action both at national and international levels and welcome and acknowledge the ongoing efforts by the ISDR to promote and accelerate implementation of the HFA.

Thank you.