

**GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
2ND SESSION OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY
16 JUNE 2009, GENEVA**

OPENING STATEMENT

by

Hon. Mr. Liew Vui Keong

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department,
MALAYSIA

Honourable Ministers

Your Excellency Mr. Hans-Rudolf Merz

President of the Swiss Confederation

Mr. John Holmes

Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and
Chair of the Global Platform For Disaster Risk Reduction

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, my congratulations to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN-ISDR), for convening this Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. It gives me great pleasure to be among you, representing Malaysia at the opening of this important global platform. With the increasing magnitude and regularity of disasters in almost all parts of the world, taking lives and posing enormous challenges to survivors, communities and nations alike, this issue of enormous proportion demands urgent, concerted and cohesive resolution at every level, unilaterally and collectively.

2. As such, in December 2008, Malaysia hosted the *Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction* in Kuala Lumpur, to address the important role of various stakeholders, with emphasis on public-private-partnership and community-based disaster risk reduction actions, and to take stock of the initiatives to promote cooperation and build partnerships among nations; both within and outside the governments.

3. Whilst governments must take leading roles, disaster risk reduction should not be viewed as the sole responsibility of governments, for it is clear that governments alone will not be able to reduce the risk of disasters. Enhanced public-private-partnerships are important to raise awareness and advocacy, increase social investment and philanthropy activities, contribute to sustainable economic growth and income generation, as well as promote capacity building and scientific research. We call on the international community to support and promote fiscal policies that enhance disaster risk management including those involving micro-credit and micro-finance schemes; and foster an environment for the development of catastrophe risk insurance markets.

4. In this age of information, the media plays a pivotal role in disaster risk reduction. Members of the media fraternity need to be well informed and prepared, so that they could become effective medium in educating and raising public awareness towards risk reduction and disaster preparedness measures.

Esteemed Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

5. Although disasters have catastrophic impact on everyone directly or indirectly, it is the poor who is hardest hit, as disasters rob the poor of their meagre possessions, their homes and more importantly, their livelihoods. Their capacities to cope with disasters and recover from the effects are constrained by their lack of resources. The international donor community therefore, should increase its funding support for regional and national activities for disaster risk reduction that will also help to build the resilience of the poor to disasters.

6. The importance of assimilating a culture of prevention, in our strategies and plans, including in the mobilization of adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, is imperative as investment for a safer future, and cheaper insurance against colossal losses. It makes sense that risk assessment and early warning systems, be accorded priorities as indispensable investments, to protect and save lives, properties and livelihoods which are far more cost-effective than post-disaster response and recovery.

7. The transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise to enhance capacity building for disaster risk reduction is another significant consideration which needs to be addressed. It must be acknowledged that some countries may not have the resources to acquire the technology required, to help them mitigate against disasters. In this regard, Malaysia urge countries to work closely in developing affordable and practical technology for disaster risk reduction, and for developed countries to provide comprehensive post-purchase package, within the context of social investment and philanthropic approach. We should also recognise the value of indigenous knowledge and practices for technological development.

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

8. On the regional front, Malaysia is part of the ASEAN initiative to institute regional mechanism in our disaster risk reduction efforts through the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). In Myanmar, following Cyclone Nargis, ASEAN maintains a permanent presence in the form of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force (AHTF) which continues to support recovery process and long term post-Nargis reconstruction. The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is further testament of ASEAN's commitment to systematically address and develop formal legal and logistical arrangements to respond to disasters in the region.

9. I am also pleased to inform that earlier this year, Malaysia has been chosen to chair the United Nations Economic and Social Commission (ESCAP) Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction. It is our hope that this Committee will complement other agencies including the ISDR and regional organisations in the implementation of disaster risk reduction plans and programmes.

10. With that I conclude my remarks and I look forward to the discussions over the next few days which I hope will result in expeditious initiatives, especially in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Thank you.