

Introduction

Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, distinguished guests and participants; Australia is pleased to be a part of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Australia would like to commend the committee co-chairs for their efforts thus far in the development of the new international agreement for disaster risk reduction and believes that the current draft provides a balanced, action oriented framework for nations to follow. We would also like to thank Japan for developing the draft elements of the 'Sendai Declaration' (the Declaration) and make the following comments in relation to those suggested elements.

Australia's views on the Declaration

Australia is pleased to see that the Declaration recognises the important role played by the Hyogo Framework for Action (the HFA). Australia believes that the Declaration should make a strong statement that urges nations to adopt a new framework that builds on, rather than replaces the HFA, and encourages nations to bridge that gap between disaster risk reduction policy and practice.

Like many nations across the world, extreme weather is a fact of life in Australia and our risk exposure continues to be a consequence of many drivers, ranging from urbanisation, accelerated economic growth, and demographic changes, to changing climate patterns. While climate change will be a driver of increasing extreme weather events, disaster resilience must focus on a broader range of factors that increase our exposure to disaster risk. Throughout consultations to date, we have highlighted that building resilience to all types of natural disasters involves adopting a multi-hazard approach that addresses all risks including (but not limited to) those associated with climate change. The next framework should take into account the challenges posed by all types of natural disasters, while seeking to complement and support – but not duplicate – other negotiations already underway internationally. International action on climate change should continue under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Australia believes therefore that the

Declaration should call on nations to strengthen disaster risk reduction measures to adapt to the many risks we are exposed to. The Declaration should call on nations to mitigate these existing risks, prevent the creation of new risks and build economic and social resilience to disasters in order to foster sustainable economic development, and protect our communities from harm.

Australia is supportive of the Declaration acknowledging the need to take an inclusive and people-centred approach to strengthening disaster resilience and the need to mainstream disaster risk reduction within all national development policies as well as within the post-2015 development agenda. Australia believes that creating a sense of shared responsibility across all sectors of government and society is the key to effective disaster risk reduction as resilience can only be achieved if we all work together to understand the risks we face, and work together to manage these risks and take joint ownership of the disaster risk reduction agenda. This approach is enshrined in our *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*. It is also an important element of the Australian Aid Program where we are working to mainstream disaster risk reduction into the development and humanitarian assistance of the Australian Aid Program.

Further, Australia is pleased to see that the Declaration will stress the effectiveness of investing in disaster prevention and risk reduction. It is essential that the post-2015 framework encourages nations to recognise disaster risk reduction is an investment in development and prosperity, and not an unintended cost. The need for appropriate investment in disaster risk reduction is currently a major focus in Australia, with the Australian Government recently commissioning an independent inquiry into natural disaster funding arrangements to identify ways to address current funding imbalances and identifying options that support mitigation and recovery in a sustainable way.

Australia looks forward to working with Japan to further refine the text of the Sendai Declaration, as well as working with the co-Chairs to further refine the text of the post-2015 framework.