STATEMENT

**Republic of Austria**

**4th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

**22 May 2013, Geneva, Switzerland**

delivered by HFA Focal Point Dr Michael Staudinger on behalf of the Austrian Federal Government

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Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Austria would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for convening the 4thSession of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Republic of Austria welcomes and appreciates the efforts undertaken by UNISDR and the entire UN system to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), facilitate the consultations on the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction as well as foster and nurture collaborations between all stakeholders involved in the important process of reducing risk in a sustainable manner.

Austria has built and maintained a ‘culture of risk’ at all levels– from national to local - over the course of many years. We strongly believe in integrated disaster risk reduction approaches, multi-risk management and forward-looking prevention. In Austria, the responsibility of managing and reducing risks, saving lives and livelihoods is not confined to the national, state and local governments and administrations. Instead, it is a shared responsibility with other important and indispensable actors, such as the private sector, academia and civil society. We have built strong public-private partnerships and count on our innumerable volunteers in the field of disaster risk reduction and civil protection – the Austrians are among the nations with the highest percentages of voluntary work the world over. Acting locally is of utmost concern – as the local level is in the frontline of every disaster, boosting capacities and creating a sense of risk owner- and stewardship is one *the* priorities. Let me just mention that two of our Federal Provinces have already succeeded in having complete and consistent risk mapping and community-based DRR concepts at the municipal and district levels in place. Words and legislation have been put into action.

The nexus between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is indisputable and we have been working hard on the convergence between these two concepts and communities. Disaster risk reduction is key to adaptation. Just recently, the Austrian government has adopted its National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which acknowledges this fact and all of our state governments are either in the process of developing adaptation plans or have already done so.

Over the past two years since the last Global Platform Austria’s level of engagement: with regard to the ISDR has significantly increased. What has been achieved, which measures have been taken? Given the scope of this statement, I would like to highlight just two.

One of our federal provinces – the Tyrol together with its 279 municipalities– has become a main partner of the “Making Cities Resilient” Campaign together with alpS, one of Austria’s dedicated institutions for risk management and climate change adaptation. For their efforts in community-based risk assessment, management and reduction, the City of Lienz and the Province itself have been awarded role-model status. We are very proud of this recognition by UNISDR. As convinced advocates of the Ten Essentials and the Five Priorities of Action, the Tyrol and Lienz have participated in numerous events including post-HFA consultations and the launch of the Handbook for Local Government Leaders. They even co-organized a two-way EU Exchange of Experts with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency MSB and the Role Model City of Jönköping.

At the national level, the appointment of a Hyogo Framework for Action Focal Point – and it is me, who has been assigned this honorable and challenging function – has marked another important step towards stronger cooperation with UNISDR on the one hand and increased national coordination on the other hand. A multi-stakeholder workshop series has been initiated with the goal of developing a tailored roadmap and framework for establishing a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the near future. We shall keep you updated on the latest developments. With the aim of contributing to shaping the HFA2, Austria will also pro-actively engage in the next rounds of Post-2015 consultations that commence at this very moment.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Republic of Austria is committed to sharing its know-how and forging new partnerships in order to advance the global goals of the current and new Hyogo Frameworks for Action and the “Making Cities Resilient” Campaign. We have a lot to give and a lot to learn – and regard pro-active information and knowledge transfer at all levels as *the* indispensable means to successfully reduce risk and build resilience. We shall look forward to cooperating with many of you and to the exciting prospect of mutual learning.

Thank you.