

**STATEMENT BY  
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**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- 1. First and foremost, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR) for the convocation of the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The convening of this prestigious biennial platform reflects the unwavering commitment of the international community to disaster risk reduction, especially in the light of recent disasters that has befallen Myanmar, Japan, Bolivia, New Zealand, Brazil and Australia.**
  
- 2. Disaster risk is of global concern. With the increased vulnerabilities stemming from population growth, unplanned urbanisation, environmental degradation, climate change, combined with geological, hydro-meteorological and man-made hazards, it has increased the frequency and impact of disaster itself. The Asia-Pacific region, home to 61 percent of the world population remain by far the region most affected by disasters in terms of human and economic impact, and also in occurrence. The increased occurrence of disasters in the region not only threatens to roll back hard earned development gains but the achievement of the millennium Development Goals in the region.**
  
- 3. Till a few decades ago, disasters are viewed as one-off events and responded by Governments and relief agencies without taking into account the socio-economic implications and causes of these disasters. Fortunately, the evolution of approach from relief and response to enhancing preparedness and mitigating the impact of**

disasters has begun to influence the way disaster management programmes are now being planned and financed. It is both tragic and futile to see benefit of years, even decades of development washed away by disasters when marginal investment in incorporating hazard resistance could have protected these assets.

4. However, it is also an undeniable fact that when catastrophic events occur, response and recovery efforts more often than not appears to be disorganised and leads to wastage of valuable funds and resources due to lack of institutional capacity, coherent planning and coordination between stakeholders. Thus the theme to be tackled and discussed at this year's conference: "Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow – Increased Investment in local Action".
5. In every disaster it is the communities that are on the receiving end and those who suffer the most. It is realised that disaster management is most effective at the local level where the needs of the communities and risks can be adequately assessed and managed. The Third Session has set new milestones for the international community in terms of increased commitment towards local action. For the first time, the Global Platform will also host the World Reconstruction Conference; the first large scale global event focused on disaster recovery and reconstruction.

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6. One of the main important components of disaster risk reduction which is also noted in the Hyogo Framework for Action is the effective involvement of communities and local authorities in disaster management. Thus, the main objective for this year's session is to encourage stronger political commitment to local action.
7. The Government of Malaysia is indeed committed to disaster risk reduction and will continue its efforts towards implementing the priority areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action both at national and international levels and welcomes and acknowledge the ongoing efforts by the UN-ISDR to promote and accelerate the

implementation of the HFA.

8. Disaster risk reduction should not be viewed as the sole responsibility of the Government. Partnerships with all stakeholders at every level are important. 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 roles and functions 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 factors and promote sustainable development in the nation's primary development plan – the "Five Year Malaysia Plan".

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9. Geographically, Malaysia is located just outside the 'Pacific Rim of Fire' and is generally free from severe natural disasters such as earthquake, volcanic eruption and typhoon unlike its close neighbours. Nevertheless, the country is not immune to disasters like monsoonal floods, landslides and strong storm surges as well as man-made disasters. In light of this, Malaysia continues to strengthen its disaster management system.
10. With flood being the most significant hazard in Malaysia, the Government since 1972 had spent billions of dollars through the 'Five Year Malaysia Plan' in flood mitigation projects aiming to reduce risk of floods. Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), the allocation for structural flood control works has escalated exponentially from RM1.79 billion in the previous Five Year Malaysia Plan to RM5.81 billion. This includes the construction of the dual purpose Stormwater management and Road Tunnel (SMART) project that had successfully alleviated the problems of both flash floods and heavy traffic in Kuala Lumpur.
11. The Government has also focused on the development of operational information

systems to strengthen disaster risk reduction in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action. Completed in 2009, the Public Works Department's study on National Slope Master Plan provides a comprehensive documentation for slope management and disaster risk reduction for landslides. 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) in which all local authorities and developers have to adhere to.

12. In order to establish a sustainable and resilient environment for the local community, the Government encourages the participation and involvement of civil societies to play an important role in disaster risk reduction by enhancing public awareness in disaster risk prevention, mitigation and preparedness. In recent years, these non-state actors with their well organised set-up and overreaching influence have achieved much in propagating the spirit of voluntarism among Malaysians. One such example is the role played by MERCY Malaysia through its community based disaster awareness programmes.
13. Building on the experience of the widespread monsoon flood in 2006, the Government has introduced, through the Central bank of Malaysia, RM500 million (USD140 million) in the form of micro credits distributed through local commercial banks aimed at recovering businesses and rebuilding damaged infrastructure in areas affected by disasters. The establishment of a cooperative in the form of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia in 1987 has helped to a certain extent to enhance the resilience of those vulnerable to disasters. Currently, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia provides service to more than 180,000 families throughout Malaysia. Services provided include micro-financing, compulsory savings and welfare funds targeting the poor and marginalised.
14. The Government of Malaysia also established the National Disaster Relief Fund to provide financial assistance to those affected by disasters. The corporate sector and communities have responded positively to this initiative by contributing an average

of RM20 million (USD5.7million) annually to the fund.

15. In terms of capacity development, Government-linked companies such as Telekom Malaysia has developed a Business Continuity management System consisting of crisis management, business continuity and disaster recovery plan for their critical networks and services.

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16. Recognising the importance of scientific research, the Ministry of Higher Education has established the Southeast Asia Disaster Prevention Research Institute to address knowledge gaps and education as well as policy-relevant solutions to reduce underlying risk factors at all levels of planning.
17. In line with our common interest to make sure schools and hospitals are safe during disasters, several activities have been undertaken by the Government. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with other civil societies and UNICEF has put forward initiatives such as the School Watching Programme and SMART Support Team in Schools. The Ministry of Health celebrated the National Health Day by adopting the theme of the World Health Day on “Save Lives – Make Hospitals Safe in Emergencies”.
18. Recently in February, Malaysia also held the national launching of the ‘One Million Safe Schools and Hospitals Campaign’ and the ‘Making Cities Resilient – My City is Getting Ready Campaign’. Malaysia’s participation in both campaigns organised by UN-ISDR portrays the Government’s commitment towards the safety of its people. It will also help to improve the nation’s preparedness in facing disasters especially in the context of increasing public awareness and involvement at all levels in disaster risk reduction. The launching of these campaigns at the national level as well as recognition given to leaders at the Federal, State and Local Authority level is seen as an incentive to ensure that elements of disaster risk reduction is widely applied at all levels throughout the country.

**19. Malaysia hopes this conference will be able to come out with new ideas to ensure the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action and achieve consensus on how local, national, regional and international stakeholders can meet new challenges brought about by disasters and climate change.**

**Thank you.**