

**STATEMENT BY ESRA BUTTANRI**  
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We are honoured to take part in the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Japan for their warm hospitality and our thanks to the UNISDR for successful organization of this Conference.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with its 57 participating States in North America, Europe and Asia, is the world's largest regional security organization, working to ensure peace, democracy and stability for more than a billion people.

Within its comprehensive security mandate, the OSCE addresses disaster risks from different perspectives and at different levels – from the regional to the national and community levels. As we emphasized in our earlier contributions to the preparatory process for this Conference, there is ample room for deepening the understanding of the complex linkages between security and disasters, including disasters prompted by climate change.

In December last year, at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel, the 57 OSCE participating States unanimously adopted a Ministerial Decision on *Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction*. This result was based on OSCE's experience in the area of disaster risk reduction and on the deliberations throughout the process of the 2014 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which focussed on *"Responding to environmental challenges with a view to promoting co-operation and security in the OSCE area"*. With the dedicated support of the Swiss 2014 OSCE Chairmanship, last year's Forum process ensured an in-depth discussion on how the OSCE participating States can cope with disaster-related challenges to their security.

Let me outline the most significant conclusions and commitments of this Ministerial Decision:

- The OSCE participating States acknowledged that environmental degradation, including disasters, could be a potential additional contributor to conflict and that conflicts, poor governance, mismanagement and degradation of natural resources as well as migratory pressures can affect the vulnerability of society to disasters.
- They emphasized the importance of co-operation among participating States in disaster risk management, in order to diminish tensions as part of a broader effort to prevent conflict and where appropriate, to build mutual confidence and promote good neighbourly relations.
- The Ministerial Council Decision also noted the exacerbating effect climate change may have on the frequency and magnitude of disasters, as well as the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation to effectively reducing disaster risk, and the importance of the ongoing global negotiations on climate change in the context of the UNFCCC.
- It also noted the significance of the Hyogo Framework for Action and encouraged the OSCE participating States to actively engage in the preparations for the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

With this Ministerial Council Decision, the OSCE executive structures, have also received a reinforced mandate to support the participating States in strengthening disaster risk reduction at all levels and to facilitate co-operation, in particular with regard to:

- Exchange of knowledge and experience,
- Assistance to the implementation of increased preparedness for cross-border implications of disasters,
- Raising disaster risk awareness at the local level, and
- Promotion of community-based and gender/age/disability-sensitive disaster risk reduction.

This decision guides our further contributions to increased resilience in the OSCE region. It will facilitate our work towards translating the global commitments into concrete actions at the regional level, also with the continued support of the Government of Switzerland.

We will do this by, inter alia, making use of the Environment and Security - ENVSEC - Initiative where the OSCE effectively partners with UNEP, UNDP, UNECE, the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) and NATO as an associate partner. The OSCE's established track record in mitigating wildfire and flood risks in several sub-regions of the OSCE area will also contribute to this endeavour. The network of OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres / Public Environmental Information Centres will continue to provide the platforms for public outreach on DRR.

Let me conclude by mentioning that this year's Economic and Environmental Forum under the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship is dedicated to the topic "*Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through co-operation*". The upcoming Forum preparatory meeting in May in Belgrade will focus on water governance within the context of disaster risk reduction and will also provide an opportunity to initiate the discussion on how to incorporate and follow-up to the outcomes of this World Conference on DRR within the OSCE framework.

Thank you.