



SIERRA LEONE

STATEMENT

SECOND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, 17 – 18 NOVEMBER 2014, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

Distinguished Co-Chairs
Distinguished Delegates,

Sierra Leone would like to start by thanking you and your Bureau, as well as the Secretariat of ISDR for organizing this second Preparatory Committee Meeting. Sierra Leone associates itself with the statement of Namibia on behalf of the African Group. The statement by Namibia referred to the need to include health-related disasters in the document and my delegation would first and foremost like to elaborate on that point. My delegation would like primarily to stress the need for biological hazards to be given emphasis in the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework.

As you are aware, Sierra Leone is one of the three West African countries that is currently facing a major disaster as a result of a biological hazard. Ebola is in many ways the worst disaster that our country has ever faced. Many now believe that the negative impacts of this outbreak could be even more serious than the 11 year civil conflict. It is now threatening to reverse the hard-earned progress that Sierra Leone has made, since the war and potentially could result in high casualty.

Pandemics such as Ebola have all the characteristics of any other natural disaster. First and foremost they can strike without warning. In addition, they

result in huge loss of life. Furthermore, response to them can be improved through preparedness and finally, there is a need to build resilience to deadly biological threats.

Biological disasters, such as Ebola, also have more far-reaching implications than other types of natural disasters, as their impacts are not localized but could spread worldwide and, with globalization, no country of the world is exempted from such impacts.

The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is taking place in the wake of the worst Ebola outbreak in history – a stark reminder that the world is threatened by biological hazards that these thus need to be given the attention they deserve in the outcome document.

My delegation will be making suggested amendments to the text of the zero draft of the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction to reflect the need to adequately address biological hazards.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Sierra Leone, like other countries, continues to be increasingly affected by other natural, environmental and human-induced disasters such as floods, drought and landslides, which also have the potentials of undermining the accomplishment of the country's development strides.

Sierra Leone would like to congratulate the drafters of the zero draft for a comprehensive document that would form the basis for the international community to effectively address the challenges posed by natural hazards.

Sierra Leone would like to stress the importance of complementarity between the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction the Sustainable Development Goals and the outcome of the Climate Change Summit. We believe that these three are intrinsically linked and that our outcome from Sendai would serve to reinforce the results of the other fora. Together these would go a long way in relieving human suffering, saving lives and property and ensuring sustainable development for all.

I thank you.