



**Statement on behalf of G-77 and China by His
Excellency Pravin Gordhan, Minister of Cooperative
Governance and Traditional Affairs of the Republic of
South Africa at the Third UN World Conference on
Disaster Risk Reduction**

Sendai, Japan, 14 March 2015

Chairperson,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset let me express the Group's appreciation for having been given the opportunity to participate in this important Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Allow me to extend the Group's appreciation to the host country, Japan for putting together this important conference pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 68/211 of 2013 initiated by the Group of 77 and China and we wish to thank Japan for its hospitality. We would also like to express our appreciation to the co-chairs of the negotiating process, the Permanent Representatives of Thailand and Finland, respectively, to the Office of the United Nations in Geneva, for their tireless efforts, and our gratitude also goes to Madame Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and through her to UNISDR for their continuous technical support to the process.

The issue of Disaster Risk Reduction is intrinsically linked to the core interests of the Group of 77 and China within the sustainable development domain. Suffice to say that the group is the main sponsor of the “International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction” that is adopted every year by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

This conference is indeed timely, as the international community and local communities have gained experiences during the past ten years guided by the Hyogo Framework for Action and are focused towards its successor framework for the next 15 years. As you might agree the next Disaster Risk Reduction framework needs to be an action-orientated framework for disaster risk reduction in view of the varying disasters that need to be addressed for saving lives, improving resilience, risk management and the reduction of economic losses.

Chairperson

The Group of 77 and China recognizes the progress that was registered since the adoption of the MDGs in the year 2000. This MDG framework has helped mobilize efforts by the international community to address poverty challenges in developing countries. However It is important to mention that realization of the MDGs has been uneven across geographical regions, especially in Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States, and countries under foreign occupation, as well as specific challenges facing Middle Income Countries, as serious development challenges continue to afflict humanity in the developing world. It is therefore

important to highlight that the development of national capacities to address disaster risks are uneven as well. Accordingly, in the implementation of the new framework, it will be important to ensure coherence also with the implementation of the outcomes of the 3rd International Conference on SIDS, the SAMOA Pathway document, as it pertains to Disaster Risk Reduction.

As we formulate the post 2015 development agenda it is important to ensure coherence among goals and targets that the international community has already agreed upon in the Open Working group on Sustainable Development Goals in 2014. We are of the firm view that coherence is important in averting duplication of efforts and expenditure of resources and also not to overburdening developing countries in an unfair manner at the time of the implementation.

Chairperson,

The Group of G77 and China would like to highlight the importance of disaster risk reduction as an element of the Sustainable development agenda as highlighted by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in particular as it has a direct impact on achieving sustainable development, especially in developing countries.

In this regard the group stresses the importance of acknowledging the Rio principles in particular the principles of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, which should be adequately reflected in the document. It acknowledges the differentiation between developed and developing countries and underscores that our approach to disaster risk reduction

should enhance the Right to Development in particular for developing countries.

Consequently, the Group believes that, disaster risk reduction should not exclude the promotion of human rights, in particular the right to development.

We recognize the importance of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Action by the international community would therefore include ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services; and provision of access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all. Furthermore, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons are essential. These elements bear direct impact on the role of infrastructure as elaborated in the new Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

In addition, as a response to natural disasters we must catalyze efforts to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries. Of critical importance is the commitment to ensure that by 2030, the international community significantly reduces the number of deaths and the number of people affected and decrease the economic losses relative to gross domestic product caused by disasters.

This will include all kind of disasters, with a holistic approach of disaster

risk reduction (in the whole cycle of prevention, preparation, management, rehabilitation) and a focus on people in vulnerable situations. In addition, we must reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities, and ensure municipal and other waste management services, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Chairperson,

The Group of 77 and China believes that disaster risks can be reduced by applying the guidelines of the Hyogo Framework of Action; and also through reviewing the progress of the framework, analyzing and managing the root causes of disasters themselves. It is therefore imperative that whilst we acknowledge that developing states are more vulnerable socio-economically to disaster risks, there is a need for strengthened cooperation in order to improve their level of preparedness for response, and local resilience.

The role of international cooperation is crucial in providing additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable means of implementation including finance, technology transfer or capacity enhancement as means to support national efforts and capacities to deal with disaster risks and implement the framework.

The Group believes there is a need to strengthen and support disaster preparedness and response, and “promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective disaster prevention and preparedness, climate change-related planning and management in developing countries in

particular, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, Africa, and the specific challenges facing Middle Income Countries, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.”

Chairperson,

This Conference must be cognizant of the specific challenges faced by the developing countries to achieve sustainable development, and endeavor to address these specific challenges. For instance, human induced climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of natural disasters on developing countries, in particular LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, Africa and the specific challenges facing Middle Income Countries. The losses of lives and economic assets associated to extreme natural disasters have been on the rise in recent years, with earthquakes, tsunamis, drought, floods affecting millions of people in developing countries. We need to ensure that our capacities and resources enable all countries to strengthen their national and local capacities to reduce risk and be resilient.

The post-2015 development agenda should seek to reinvigorate the political will to eradicate poverty afflicting humanity. In this connection effective international cooperation cannot be over-emphasized.

Let me also point to some figures on the economic and human impact of disasters-since 2000 to 2012 alone, the cost of damage of disasters are estimated to be in the mark of 1.7 trillion USD: with 2.9 billion persons affected and more than 1.2 million killed. That is why The Group believes that this Conference should have a strong action-orientated focus on enhancing the global partnership for development,

to tackle among others the root causes of poverty and social inequality, the major risks to which developing countries are exposed, build resilience to contain and reduce negative impacts of future disasters; allow for adaptation to disasters and provide ideas and a roadmap to international development strategies.

Chairperson

The Group of 77 and China emphasizes a need to focus its work on how to enhance the implementation of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies in particular in developing countries. The international community should provide means of implementation regarding finance, technology and capacity building to developing countries. This will be done while acknowledging the existing gaps in capacities between developed and developing countries. In this regard, special attention should be given to developing countries according to the Rio+20 principles, in particular the principle of CBDR.

It is the Group's collective view that the international community should increase dialogue among all stakeholders, to identify, amongst others, barriers and opportunities to build an enabling environment for public-private and other partnerships. We should also further strengthen private sector commitments to integrate risk assessment and use of risk information, decision-making and practices to be able to better manage disaster risk.

The Group is of the view that institutionalization of integrated community resilience approaches into local development planning should be encouraged. At the same time, we should further develop

community based disaster risk reduction at the local level and take advantage of traditional knowledge in this regard. Emergency preparedness through already established institutional mechanisms and frameworks, at national, regional and international levels should serve as a base to build resilience and reduce vulnerability.

Finally Chairperson

We wish to assure you of the commitment of the Group of 77 and China to reaching a meaningful and ambitious outcome by the end of this World Conference. This we believe will provide support and assist in resource mobilization in particular to developing countries, to enhance a truly global partnership.

I thank you