

Permanent Mission of India
Geneva

PrepCom1 of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
[14-15 July 2014]

Statement by Delegation of India

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

1. Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on assuming the co-Chairpersonship of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) of the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. We are confident that under your sagacious leadership, the deliberations of this first PrepCom will be rewarding for all. We would like to assure you of our support to the consultation process, which culminates in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015.
2. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) of 2005 provided a blueprint for disaster risk reduction activities, including promotion of a culture of prevention, mitigation, preparedness and resilience at all levels. India greatly benefitted from the HFA.
3. India too is vulnerable to natural hazards particularly earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones and landslides and a number of human-made disasters. To cope with these challenges, India shifted its approach to disaster management, including disaster risk reduction, from a relief-centric one to a more holistic approach, encompassing capacity building, early warning, community preparedness, response as well as post-disaster reconstruction.
4. India established the necessary institutional framework for disaster management beginning with Parliament's enactment of the Disaster Management Act in 2005. Apart from establishing a National Disaster Management Authority under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister, the National Disaster Response Force and National Institute of Disaster Management were set up. A National Disaster Management Policy was

also announced in 2009. The Disaster Management Authorities were established at the state and district levels.

5. Based on wide ranging consultations, the National Disaster Management Plan was prepared to cover disaster mitigation, capacity building and disaster response. In addition, sector-specific disaster management plans were drawn up by ministries of the Government of India and state governments.
6. A National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was set up in 2013 for intensive consultations and sharing of experiences by various stakeholders and disaster managers. We have also developed community-based programmes for sectors such as education, health, livelihood, employment, housing, food security, agriculture and drinking water to increase the capacity of the community to deal with disasters effectively.
7. We are making efforts to mainstream disaster reduction measures in development programmes. Recently, we have taken a significant step by earmarking 10% funds in all our development schemes to be used for innovation, disaster mitigation and restoration. In addition, the private sector is also playing an important role through corporate social responsibility.
8. Coming to scientific and technological advancement for better forecasting capabilities, we have come a long way by preparing a vulnerability atlas and setting up the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services. We have community hubs of the Indian Space Research Organization for early warning. There is also the Central Water Commission to provide flood monitoring and flood forecast reviews.
9. India experienced 'Phailin', the second strongest tropical cyclone ever recorded in India, in October 2013. Over 1.2 million people were evacuated and brought to safety before 'Phailin' made landfall. As a result of the DRR measures taken at all levels in the country, the resultant death losses have been minimized to 45 casualties as compared to a few thousand in a similar cyclone in 1998.

Chairperson,

10. As we deliberate on the framework for post-2015 disaster risk reduction it would be useful to remind ourselves that the priority areas of Hyogo Framework of Action are a work in progress and its successor framework should be a continuum rather than a departure from it. HFA's implementation has been uneven. This is a reflection of the broad economic and institutional differences among countries and geographical regions. The gaps in implementation need to be addressed.

11. From our perspective, all priority areas of HFA deserve equal importance in the post-2015 DRR framework. We feel that undue emphasis has been laid on Priority 4 of HFA, dealing with reducing the underlying risk factors. The four other Priorities dealing with the establishment of institutional frameworks, early warning systems, safety and resilience and strengthening disaster-preparedness, remain relevant and deserve equal emphasis in the post-2015 period.

12. My delegation has also noted the high degree of emphasis on integrating DRR into development policies. We agree that development should take into account vulnerability to disasters. Solutions, though, should be found, through better planning and technology, rather than by holding up development. Development is the best antidote to disasters. Creating better infrastructure in disaster-prone areas, promoting development, especially eradicating poverty, build resilience to disasters.

Chairperson,

13. We note that there is considerable emphasis on establishing coherence and mutual reinforcement in the international discussions on various post-2015 frameworks, such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Development Agenda and climate change. While there are cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed in a coherent manner, specific issues should be left to their specialised bodies and not jumbled

into the future framework for disaster risk reduction. Discussions in one forum should not impede another. It is also essential not to prejudge the outcomes of other platforms dealing with SDGs and climate change.

14. We feel that to be successful the post-2015 DRR framework should avoid an overly prescriptive international framework, especially setting targets and indicators, howsoever voluntary or best endeavour-oriented. Since states have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens, it is essential to preserve their national policy space.

15. We note that the documentation presented so far envisages international cooperation only from the prism of monitoring and reviewing activities. We would like the focus of international cooperation to be on capacity building and technology transfer and on identifying the means of implementation. The international community, in particular the developed countries, should demonstrate its commitment by augmenting their ODA. In the absence of suitable external financing support, it is unrealistic to expect many developing countries, in particular the Least Developing Countries, to take full advantage of the post-2015 DRR framework.

16. We hope that the future DRR framework will address these issues and thus be a worthy successor of the Hyogo Framework.

I thank you Chair.
