**Republic of The Gambia**

**Statement By: Hon. Lamin B. Dibba**

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**During the Sixth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

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Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of the Gambia, I take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of Switzerland for the warm welcome to the Gambian delegation. Let me also thank the UNISDR for the excellent organization of the conference.

The adoption of the Sendai Framework marks a new era in global efforts to reduce disaster risk reduction. I have the firm conviction that the theme for this year **“Resilience Dividend: *towards a sustainable and inclusive world*”** will significantly contribute to achieving the objectives and targets of the Sendai Framework.

**Chairperson**

Allow me to talk a bit about my country. The Gambia is the smallest country in mainland Africa with an economy highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture, which is highly climate sensitive. The Gambia is also highly vulnerable to sea level rise. A 1-meter sea-level rise will cover over 8.7% of the total land area, including the port and the capital city of Banjul, 25.5km of paved roadway, and all the harbors and ferry landings along the Gambia River. The combined effect of sea-level rise and changes in upstream river discharge, erosion of coastal embankments and changes to natural sediment dynamics, pose a serious threat to the natural resource base and livelihood opportunities of coastal communities. Hence, predictions are very clear as to what will happen to my country with regards to food security and community livelihood in years to come.

Since the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, The Gambia has committed itself to invest in risk reduction through the improvement of government sectorial policies, enforcement and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that our national policy is supportive to the Sendai agenda. As a result, the current National Development Plan (2018-2021), has prioritized disaster risk reduction through a series of consultations with citizens, including vulnerable groups.

It is important to mention that the government is strengthening the DRR agenda and has prioritized the allocation of more resources to the country’s resiliency programmes, such as increasing budgetary allocations to DRR. This move intends to increase more community participation in awareness raising, simulation exercises, timely and easy dissemination of early warning information, building youths in disaster management and environmental sustainability. Through partnership with several groups such as the UN System, the government of the Gambia is supported in several areas that improve our capacity to reduce disaster.

In 2017, 2018 & 2019, the UNISDR rolled out capacity development to NDMA by introducing Desinventar for tracking disaster loss, risk profile training on flood and drought (Target C – Economic Losses) and urban risk reduction and making cities resilient. In addition, The Gambia is also leading in the reporting of the Sendai Framework Monitoring. The government is also supporting this team to execute all relevant assignments to fulfill our reporting obligation. The African Union, ECOWAS, World Bank and the EU have also provided support in knowledge generation and dissemination.

**Chairperson**

With emerging hazards on a rise; the Gambia has been faced with numerous capacity challenges to overcome the situation. This also is closely related with clash of interest over resources, weakened social cohesion, a lack of interest in environmental issues, the lack of alignment of the national policy, law and strategy with the Sendai Framework and a serious resource gap for institutions that should support the national disaster reduction program.

Furthermore, for the Gambia to effectively deal with DRR issues and climate change, accelerated financial, capacity building and technological support is urgently needed to enhance our mitigation and adaptation efforts. These challenges have also complicated the way we generate and process early warning information and disseminate it in the most feasible form due to climate change denial, traditional beliefs and practices, and inadequate technology in most parts of the country. We are determined to surmount these challenges by strengthening the national coordination mechanism for disaster management, supporting both academic and professional growth in disaster management.

**Chairperson**

I am glad to inform this gathering that through the public sector reform agenda that promotes economic growth within a realistic context of environmental sustainability, the National Disaster Management Policy and Strategy are both approved for review to match them with the Sendai Framework and other continental/regional programs.

Furthermore, the Gambia is improving on its overall risk governance and management structures through the finalization of a national emergency operations plan with combined standard operations. Reducing risks and vulnerabilities, making new development programmes as risk informed as possible and the use of insurance products such as the African Risk Capacity drought insurance product for disaster preparedness and resilience building will build our capacity as a country. In all these processes, the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change and other national multi-sectorial teams assist the NDMA to promote disaster preparedness and mitigation.

The Gambia is also committed to climate investment, thus, we developed a Strategic Programme for Climate Resilience (SPCR), which aims to build resilience both at national and sub national levels across the economy with particular emphasis on main drivers of climate change and related disasters.

**Chairperson**

In conclusion, at the end of this meeting my delegation expects concrete out comes that will support all of us in furthering the agenda of DRR in our various countries and by extension on the continent. This requires global partnership to galvanize support to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and its related disaster risks.

Thank you for your attention.