

## **Written statement by the government of the Netherlands**

Dear Mr chair,

In relation to the Netherlands position on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) we would like to refer to earlier statements made by the Netherlands during the global platform last year and still available on the UNISDR website. We also refer to the declaration of the European ministerial meeting on disaster risk reduction held in Milan, Italy the 8<sup>th</sup> of July.

For now we would like to make some short comments in an effort to answer some of your guiding questions and give an example of our experience in risk prevention within integrated water management.

The Netherlands underlines the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction and the work done by the HFA which has done much to raise awareness about disaster management. The focus has shifted from disaster response to disaster prevention, and it is now widely recognised that investing in disaster risk reduction not only avoids human suffering but that it also pays. DRR should be seen not as a cost, but as an opportunity. Every euro invested in prevention generates many euros in savings, in humanitarian aid and in earlier investments that have been safeguarded.

This been said and taken in account the importance of establishing an HFA-II we hope a zero draft of the HFA-II text will be available as soon as possible. Sendai is around the corner, there is not much time until March 2015 and with only 2 preparatory meetings to go we are running late without a draft text. We consider that the consultations have been organized carefully and with due time and attention between March 2012 and May 2014 and provided us with all the necessary elements to draft an excellent and complete framework for action the world is waiting for.

Nevertheless we noticed as well that the paper on suggested elements leaves out some of the important issues mentioned during the consultations by a considerable number of parties and member states. We highlight some of those issues and urge the chairs to take in account the consultations:

1. The importance of every-day disasters: we need to acknowledge that it is not only large-scale, headline-grabbing disasters that pose a threat. It is the shocks and stresses of everyday life that particularly need tackling. These include climate-related

disasters: a broad-based approach is necessary. In light of this, the involvement of local communities in formulating national policy is highly necessary. After all, these are the people whom it affects most. Civil society is an essential link here.

2. To make significant progress by 2015, we believe it is necessary for HFA-II to be integrated into other international agreements like the post-2015 development agenda. At this moment the zero draft framework of the open working group on sustainable development goals counts 6 different DRR targets under goals on poverty reduction, food security, water, infrastructure, sustainable cities and climate change adaptation. To our view, HFA-II would be ideally placed to serve as implementing framework for all those targets.
3. The Netherlands commits to strengthen its capacity for disaster risk reduction by increasing the involvement of the private sector and fostering public-private partnerships (PPPs) for resilience. Furthermore, we commit to emphasizing the role of innovation in disaster risk reduction by encouraging dedicated research on disaster resilience and exploring ways to make risk information available to all stakeholders. Public-private cooperation should be therefore an integral part of the HFA when it comes to resource mobilisation.

In response on the guiding questions we would like to make the following comments:

4. We believe disaster risk reduction is delivered through sustainable development and that the HFA-II should enhance disaster risk reduction by transforming development process in the field of infrastructure, agriculture, urban planning, water management amongst others so that current and emerging risks inherent to development are addressed by building a comprehensive resilience to disasters.
5. Since 2007 the Netherlands has had a national safety and security strategy, involving annual nationwide risk analyses. Since 2012 year the Dutch steering committee for national safety and security has acted as the national platform for DRR. Results are positive; the most important results are the increased understanding of national risks, the specific enhancement of capacities and the realization of a stronger (intergovernmental and public-private) network for disaster risk reduction.
6. We would like to underline the importance to focus on prevention in the next HFA to understand trends in disaster impacts and to be able to make informed decisions as to investments in disaster risk mitigation and preparedness. We should be aware of the impact of disaster to vulnerable groups and of the need to tailor policies to improves people's resilience, as well as major local concerns.

In this context, allow me to elaborate on the Netherlands experience in prevention of underlying risks in water management. The Netherlands itself is located in a delta, and much of the country lies below sea level. Over the centuries, our struggle against the water has shaped our mindset and given us considerable expertise. The Dutch Water Act offers facilities at three levels: prevention, spatial planning and crisis management. Our Delta Programme aims to protect the Netherlands from floods for the next 100 years through measures jointly developed with, and appealing to, the riparians.

Such as the dike relocation at Lent in an urban environment: a new channel being dug in the bend of a major waterway, providing additional capacity for water discharge during high water periods, and at the same time creating an island laid out like a unique river park with possibilities for recreation and nature.

The Netherlands also established a DRR Team, which makes it possible to share our expertise on prevention of flood-risks internationally. Already this facility, with leading Dutch water experts, is deployed to other countries at the latter's request, to help develop disaster risk management plans.