

New Zealand Statement
Preparatory Committee 1: Third World Conference on DRR: July 2014

Natural hazards, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, storms and floods are part of life in New Zealand. We share these with many of you. Some occur with disappointing regularity, such as floods, while the impacts of others, like the 2011 earthquake that devastated parts of New Zealand's second largest city, Christchurch, will be felt keenly for many years to come. Learning from the response to, and recovery from, those earthquakes provides opportunities to reduce risk even further. We want to share what we have learnt with other countries as part of our contribution to enhancing risk reduction.

Our approach to managing risk is to ensure that communities are resilient - ensuring that New Zealanders understand and know how to manage the risks they face and are able to respond, recover and adapt. In New Zealand we do this through a balance of activities and investments that we call the 4 'R's (Risk reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery).

New Zealand supports UNISDR's commitment for the Post-2015 Hyogo Framework for Action to be practical, action-oriented and far-reaching. We will, wherever we can, highlight the message that investing in risk reduction makes sound economic, social and environmental sense and that our experience from Christchurch has reinforced the notion that no one sector can reduce risks on its own.

Strong partnerships where knowledge and experience are shared between national and local government, scientists, the private sector, academia and civil society, are crucial if communities are to become resilient. Engaging local leaders and affected communities, including women, children and those with disabilities, is essential if impacts are to be managed. The message of an integrated and collaborative approach to building resilience is one we will continue to push.

New Zealand is also keen to push the notion of **adaptive resilience**. The number of impacts and losses as a result of the 2010/11 earthquakes that devastated Christchurch were not as high as might have been expected - for example things should have happened that didn't. Part of the reason for this less than expected impact was the presence of well-enshrined legislative frameworks, strong institutional arrangements for

disaster preparedness, earthquake engineering, the presence of building codes and their enforcement and a history of investing in lifelines.

A focus on and investment in **community and household preparedness** builds resilience and saves lives. New Zealand has much to be proud of in its domestic disaster preparedness actions which include early warning and public awareness programmes and we support a strong emphasis on this in HFA2.

Strong **business resilience**, especially for small and medium enterprises, was another reason why Christchurch was able to get back on its feet relatively quickly, and we therefore support an enhanced role of the private sector in reducing risk.

Culturally relevant and context specific **education** is absolutely critical in raising awareness and changing perceptions, values and attitudes towards DRR. Children are agents of change and DRR education should be seen as a life-long process. New Zealand has a proud history of integrating DRR into the school curricular – and this is something that we are keen to share.

Science and technical research must underpin all we are doing in this sector. Long-term research in seismology, volcanology, meteorology, engineering and the social sciences contributes to stronger legislative frameworks and informs risk management. If risks are to be addressed and mitigated, reliable, up to date, relevant and accessible scientific information is required, with different levels of government, civil society and the private sector working in partnership and drawing on comparative advantages.

We also consider that integrating **climate change adaptation** and **disaster risk reduction** is sensible. The Pacific is a global leader in this integration, as articulated in the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP). Integrating DRR and CCA requires strong coordination across public, private and not-for-profit sectors to ensure sound investment, decision making and planning.

We take the opportunity of participating in this first preparatory committee very seriously and while New Zealand is committed to sharing our lessons and experiences on the global stage, we are also here to listen and learn. The New Zealand Government firmly supports the United Nations' initiatives for DRR and we hope our contribution will add value to the work we are all engaged in.