Statement of The

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING**

**at The**

**Thirds Session of The GLOBAL PLATFORM For DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

GENEVA, 12 May 2011

The International Association for Earthquake Engineering (IAEE) is a non-profit organization that includes representation from the world's earthquake engineering societies, each national society sending one delegate to the IAEE General Assembly. The IAEE's fundamental goal is worldwide seismic safety that is achieved through interchange of knowledge, ideas and results of research and practical experience among scientists and engineers who are active in the diverse disciplines of the field. The IAEE is responsible for selecting the venue and local organizing society for each of the World Conferences on Earthquake Engineering. It compiles and updates Regulations for Seismic Design: A World List, as well as other publications. Its flagship periodical, the journal titled *Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics*, has been a leading publication in the field since 1972.

During the last months, the world has witnessed through vivid images provided by the global news media the terrible human loss and material destruction that two closely spaced earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan have caused. The International Association for Earthquake Engineering, representing the global community of earthquake scientists and practitioners in the world, expresses its deep sorrow for the unparalleled scale of loss of lives that New Zealand and Japan have suffered. We are once again humbled by the distance that must be covered before seismic safety is achieved on a global scale.

Just as we were attempting to understand the implications of the recurring earthquake in Christchurch, a gigantic M9.0 earthquake has struck off the coast of Japan, some 125 km away from the city of Sendai on Honshu Island. Shortly after the occurrence of the earthquake itself a series of very high tsunami waves have struck various coastal towns and settlements, reducing to nonexistence many lives and societal assets. The effects of this earthquake have unfortunately transcended all superlatives that describe the scale of natural disasters. Its destructive power has far eclipsed those of many previous earthquakes. The technological disaster triggered by earthquake effects at the Fukushima nuclear plant has added a terrible new dimension to the deep turmoil created by the earthquake. The true scale of the scientific, technological and economic implications of the earthquake and its outcome will become better understood over time through the collective work of many individuals. We express our solidarity with our colleagues in both countries as they attempt to help their respective societies return to normalcy. We are aware that all disasters are really a series of chained events that trigger the next. While we all learn through our collective experiences, the sequence in Japan of earthquake followed by tsunami followed by nuclear disaster followed by mass-scale health implications of involuntarily released radioactive material is truly a sobering experience.

The IAEE urges the global community of earthquake scientists and engineers to pursue with perseverance their mission for a world that is more resilient against earthquakes. It also calls upon all governments to confirm their commitment to the outline for action defined by the Hyogo Framework for Action, and to support by all appropriate measures for its realization.