



**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA TO THE 1st PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING TO THE 3<sup>RD</sup>  
UN CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION,  
14-15 JULY 2014, GENEVA**

Chairperson,

My delegation wishes to extend to you and the Bureau our best wishes and cooperation, as we commence the Intergovernmental process for the Post-2015 Hyogo Framework and upcoming UN Conference on Disaster Risk Management. We also wish to thank the UN Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on this subject matter of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

Our Continent adopted at the 5<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Platform held in Abuja in May 2014, its common position on the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in addition to our national processes. South Africa has developed a legislative framework governing disaster risk reduction in the country, while contributing to the region and global agenda. Like many other developing countries, South Africa, and its neighbours face increasing levels of disaster risks. It is exposed to a wide range of hazards, including drought, fires, cyclones and severe storms that can trigger widespread hardship and devastation.

The negative impact of these disasters leave the country and its neighbours to deal with issues such as loss of lives, damage to infrastructure and the environment, disrupted livelihoods, schooling and social services, which lead to the increased need for humanitarian and financial assistance. We are working on disaster risk reduction mainstreaming policies linked to national service delivery, poverty reduction and sustainable development priorities. Whilst appreciating the progress being made in the implementation of HFA 1 priority actions, we still reiterate the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the impact made thereof. We remain confident that our

disaster risk reduction programs will be in sync with the future Framework post the Hyogo Framework Action 2005-2015.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management challenges facing the global community need innovation. One area of innovation to support preparedness is how earth observations can support sustainable development and disaster risk reduction policies. Satellite and in-situ Earth observations, and related information and technological innovation and services, are essential to informing disaster preparedness and prevention policies, decisions and actions. Such technology provide decision makers with critical and factual data needed to drive investments to reduce underlying disasters risk factors and make society more adaptive to the effects of climate change. It can improve the planning and response of individuals, urban systems and related infrastructures to extreme events.

More timely dissemination and use of geospatial information from globally coordinated systems for monitoring, predicting, risk assessment, integrated planning, and early warning, mitigating and responding to hazards will help to reduce loss of life and property at the local, national and regional level. Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation frameworks and strategies must therefore, include access to, and use of, essential global Earth observation resources, such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), to provide decision makers and citizens the data and information necessary to make informed decisions about preparing for, preventing and recovering from natural and human-induced disasters. African countries acknowledge the value played by technological and scientific partnerships such as Group on Earth Observations (GEO) in coordinating and making accessible earth observations data and information for informing disaster preparedness, prevention and response.

It is our sincere hope that a global agreement on the post-2015 Hyogo Framework of Action would provide adequate and predictable financial resources, more partnerships with business, capacity building, and green technology development and transfer to address adaptation and mitigation needs in Africa.

Chairperson,

My Government would like to express its continued support to the Global Platform as a multi-stakeholder mechanism to share best practises and, particularly on the importance of effectively implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. We fully support the need to promote partnerships and international cooperation in reducing disaster risks, and building of capacity in those developing countries that need to be assisted to better mitigate and manage disaster risks.

South Africa's Disaster Management Centre is actively engaged on policy and legislation implementation to ensure the importance of preventing human, economic, infrastructure, property losses, and avoiding environmental degradation. In line with our Government's priorities, the disaster management approach pays specific attention to the pressing needs of poor communities in relation to both natural and human induced disasters.

Finally, regarding disaster risk reduction, we urge the international community to support developing countries to strengthen their national capacities for disaster relief and reduction, as well as improve their state of preparedness to provide effective responses when these humanitarian emergencies strike. More investment in building early warning systems and the resilience of communities through disaster risk reduction should be prioritized, and the Hyogo Framework for Action, as an international strategy agreed to by member states, remains a critical guide to action in this regard. To this end, transfer of disaster relief and immediate response, linkage between Climate change adaptation strategies and reduction technologies and expertise to developing countries remains of paramount importance.

I thank you