



Check against delivery

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Official Statement by Switzerland

Mister Secretary-General,
Madam Deputy Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Esteemed Colleagues,

Switzerland is a **committed supporter of the ISDR System since its very beginning** and it's our pleasure to be again host country of the Global Platform. We thank ISDR for the excellent preparation and would like to emphasize again the importance of ISDR's mandate, in particular for coordination, advocacy and building more awareness for DRR. Switzerland is also very honoured to host the World's first Reconstruction Conference which is an integral part of this year's Global Platform.

I come from the humanitarian side and for years, I have been fighting to get prevention and preparedness high on the international agenda. For

Switzerland, one thing is very clear: Disaster Risk Reduction is a development issue which has to become an integral part of the development agenda. And unfortunately, it is not yet the case.

Switzerland very much welcomes the UN **Secretary General's essential role in promoting DRR** and defining it as one of his core area of responsibility. It is our firm conviction that DRR needs to be discussed on a high level to create growing awareness and political will for it, as it has happened successfully at **the UN General Assembly Informal Thematic Debate on DRR in New York** last February.

One of the challenges faced by DRR is its non spectacular nature. The media reporting often focuses on the immediate effects and response after disasters. We therefore urgently call upon the international community to increase the funding for prevention and preparedness efforts. Our recently conducted study on the **effectiveness of Switzerland's disaster risk activities** has shown that it is definitely worth investing in DRR. Cost-benefit estimations revealed reduced risks 4-7 higher than initial investments. It is also necessary to shift the focus away from merely responding to disasters to local pre-disaster prevention and preparedness activities.

The main theme of our session is: **"Invest today for a safer tomorrow: Increase local investment in local action"**. We could not agree more with this motto. In the past 20 years, Switzerland has been supporting national and local authorities in strengthening their response capacities, in particular urban search and rescue (USAR) capacities. We are convinced that such contributions to preparedness will be rewarded greatly.

Madame Chair,

Switzerland would like to raise awareness for the connectivity between climate change, natural disasters and environmental emergencies. It is crucial, and urgent, in our view, to strengthen the International Environmental Emergency Response System. In that sense, Switzerland welcomes the recently taken decision by the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi to fill the gaps in the international response system to address environmental emergencies. It has become clear that further concerted efforts between response capacities and recipient countries have to be undertaken in preventing, preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies.

Another key approach for Switzerland is **'build back better'** after disasters. And I recently added to that approach another element: In many cases, it is safer and more productive to build somewhere else.

The Global Platform always offers a good opportunity to check where we stand in the implementation of the HFA. With regard to the HFA national implementation in Switzerland, the **"Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards" (PLANAT)**, has identified in 2011 **four priority action areas** for prevention work against natural hazards, the so called 'Hot spots'. These hot spots are: Adaptation to climate change and natural hazards, Risk dialogue, Residual risk and Land use. These four action areas do represent the key elements of future work in the Alpine region.

A lot of effort and expertise have been put into **the HFA Midterm Review**. Switzerland is highly committed to contribute to a more coherent and integrated approach to support the HFA implementation beyond 2015. In view of 2015, Switzerland supports the idea to set up clear and joint targets, as well as a series of regional-level discussions at inter-agency and inter-ministerial levels to forge policies, awareness and the consensus required to push the HFA implementation process further.

We are now at a turning point. DRR has become a critical agenda for any country in the world. What we need beyond 2015 is a Common Action Plan at global level that involves all stakeholders, donors as well as so-called recipient countries. Switzerland is ready to commit important resources to the establishment of such a Plan.

Finally, let me conclude, by expressing my very appreciative thanks to the UN Secretary General for his leadership. Particular thanks also are due to the Head of ISDR, ASG Margareta Wahlström, for her commitment, dedication and vision for ISDR. I thank you for your attention today. I look forward to the forthcoming discussions and I want these to contribute to the quality and relevance of the Global Platform and World Reconstruction Conference and to the ISDR system.

Many thanks.