**Disaster Risk Reduction of the Dis-Advantaged Communities in the Developing Countries**

We dream and we struggle to achieve a disaster free world.

Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) is a non-profit specialised agency working for and with the vulnerable communities in their efforts to establish their rights to reduce their risks to disaster.

While BDPC has its institutional existence only for the last 16 years, the organisation is enshrined with the long experience of over 40 years and valuable insights of individuals who earned recognition at home and abroad for their professional excellences and contribution to disaster risk management.

The Global Community has rightly appreciated that the developing regions are more vulnerable to disasters and the impact is disproportionately high compared to that in the Western World. A concrete example is the cyclone of 1991 with wind speed of 225 km per hour that killed over 138,000 people in Bangladesh, whereas a year later Hurricane Andrew with even higher wind velocity (285 km/h) left a causality of only 18 in the United States of America. So, it is not only the fury of any hazard which is responsible for the loss of life and property, but there are other factors such as poor physical infrastructure, high vulnerability, low capacity etc. Again, in a developing country, it is the poor and the disadvantaged who are always affected by any disaster, but not the rich and the powerful.

Today, even after the adaptation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) held in Kobe in 2005 and the declaration made at the Second Session at Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) here in this city in 2009, large sums of money are spent on post-disaster emergency relief and rehabilitation operations, physical infrastructural developments, procurement of equipments and machineries, and also on highly paid consultants. Insignificant investments are made for the reduction of the risks of the poor and the disadvantaged communities.

I am very encouraged that the Third Session of GPDRR advocates for increased investment for Local Action. But the question is how the investment is going to be made? We Must understand that the Trick down Theory does not work. In which the programme sector are we contemplating to make the investment? There is an urgent need to appreciate that the poor have no other option but forced to live in high disaster risk areas only to earn a living. They are exploited economically, socially and even politically.

So, disasters should not be seen in isolation. Any effort aiming at disaster risk management should address the root causes of the problems and contribute to the establishment of good governance in social, cultural and public spheres. The focus should be on the empowerment of the communities at risk so that they can identify and prioritize their risks, plan for mitigation and treat the risk factors. Ultimately they should have direct access to and control over the public resources allocated for them and establish their rights to reduce their risks, be it social, cultural or political. This is the only solution for breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and disaster, and bring order in this unjust world.

Deep in our hearts, we cherish the dream that the collective actions of the global leaders of disaster risk management who have gathered today in Geneva will one-day take us to a level where communities are capacitated and empowered to reduce their own risk. Till we make our dream into reality, BDPC is determined to struggle everyday for a Safer Tomorrow for disaster vulnerable communities in Bangladesh and other countries in the world.