

**WCDRR Second Preparatory Committee**

**Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America**

**As Prepared for Delivery by Head of Delegation**

**Geneva, Switzerland  
November 17-18, 2014**

Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman, Fellow Delegates,

On behalf of the U.S. government, I want to thank the United Nations and the Government of Switzerland for hosting the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee on the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. I am pleased and honored to lead the U.S. delegation at this important meeting and to join everyone here in contributing to this worthy cause.

Under the leadership of President Obama, the U.S. government remains committed to strengthening its role in disaster risk reduction both at home and abroad. Like the rest of the world, the United States struggles with perennial risks as

well as new challenges to reducing vulnerability. To address these challenges, the U.S. continues to make significant investments in the natural and social sciences, in technology, infrastructure, and communities to inform decision-making for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Recent examples include the:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency’s “Whole Community” planning initiative;
- Our National Climate Action Plan; and
- President Obama’s recent announcement at the G20 of our \$3 billion pledge to the UN-backed Green Climate Fund.

At the international level, the United States continues to support DRR programs to save lives and to protect livelihoods,

assets, and infrastructure before, during, and after disasters while increasing communities' resilience to natural hazards. In this regard, we are pleased to see increased attention to integrating the whole community into disaster risk reduction frameworks, including individuals who may experience a disproportionate impact during and after a disaster – such as women, persons with disabilities, children and youth, displaced persons, older persons and indigenous groups.

The United States supports the HFA as a strong basis for the HFA2, and recognizes that the follow-on framework must reflect increasingly prevalent challenges and trends, such as climate change. DRR and climate change adaptation share a common purpose of reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate extremes. To assist developing countries to adapt to climate change, we have increased our international assistance eightfold since 2009. Furthermore, in September 2014, at the UN Climate Change Summit, President Obama announced an

executive order mandating all federal agencies to integrate climate change considerations into their international development efforts. We believe that this is a vital step towards ensuring that our broader development funds address the impacts of climate change. Under this executive order, the US government will also provide scientific and technical assistance to developing countries.

DRR, climate adaptation, and wider development efforts are mutually reinforcing and should be approached in an integrated manner. The United States is actively participating in the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development and climate change processes. While we support discussions in the context of the post-Hyogo framework regarding the vital role of DRR in these processes, the framework itself should not seek to prejudge the ultimate agenda on sustainable development goals or climate change discussions, which will be decided in ongoing intergovernmental negotiations that will continue over the next year.

While we recognize that monitoring progress towards reducing disaster risk is an important means of promoting action, we continue to believe that it will be difficult to adopt a set of universal indicators and targets that are meaningful for every country or region participating in the HFA2.

The tenth anniversary of the Indian Ocean tsunami reminds us that disasters do not recognize national boundaries. The U.S. government continues to support activities to promote transboundary cooperation on DRR, especially for hazard early warning systems. At home, the United States has forged new partnerships to that end. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Mexican Civil Protection Agency work together on a catastrophic hurricane scenario exercise to strengthen community preparedness and enhance resiliency.

More globally, USAID, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the UN World Meteorological Organization are cooperating in the implementation of flash flood guidance systems in eight regions, including the Mekong River basin, and in parts of Africa, Central America, and the Middle East, where flash floods are the leading weather-related disasters.

While the challenges of DRR may seem daunting, the opportunities for collaboration are numerous. The new proposed framework before us represents an opportunity to strengthen our national and global commitments to work together in common cause to reduce disaster risk. We look forward to this week's discussion and to a successful outcome in Sendai in 2015.

Thank you, Chair.

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