



Statement by Sri Lanka

First Preparatory Committee of the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 14-15 July 2014

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

At the outset let me congratulate on your appointment as the co-chairs of the preparatory committee of the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and congratulate Madam Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction in her office.

Sri Lanka has successfully launched its disaster risk management programme. Over the last 10 years, since the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the government of Sri Lanka has invested more than 500 million US dollars to implement local level risk reduction activities, which we believe is a key on our journey towards a safer Sri Lanka.

As in many parts of the world Sri Lanka is also experiencing natural disasters with increased frequency and severity and the government has taken a number of initiatives to promote and strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in the country, in line with the HFA (Hyogo Framework of Action).

We have started a programme to ensure the safety of the existing education and health facilities and completed vulnerability assessments in districts highly prone to tsunami. We have been able to incorporate disaster risk reduction in school curricula and develop a series of supplementary reading material on reducing the risk of different hazards, first aid etc. We are also in the process of integrating “Disaster Resistant Construction” in the civil engineering curricula of Technical Colleges and the Universities.

The Ministry of Disaster Management conducted initial awareness raising on “City Resilience” for officials of all municipal councils and urban councils in Sri Lanka and a programme was recently conducted for the newly elected Mayors and Chairpersons of the Urban Councils on City Resilience in order to get their commitment to reduce disaster risks in their cities. As the next step, they will be engaged in a comprehensive “City Resilience Programme”.

When it comes to National Level Risk Assessments, Sri Lanka has successfully undertaken the development of risk profiles for major natural hazards, and landslide and drought hazard assessments have already been completed. Hazard profiles of Coastal Hazards, Cyclones and Floods will be completed by the end of the year.

The Ministry of Disaster Management has taken a number of other initiatives to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development sectors such as housing, road development, health, education etc. from planning to the implementation and maintenance stages in the country. The Disaster Management Centre under Ministry of Disaster Management is working very closely with the Ministry of Environment and has incorporated Disaster Risk Reduction components in the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environment Assessment process.

The National Disaster Management Coordinating Committee which functions as the National Platform in Sri Lanka has more than 80 partner organizations. The committee meets once a month under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management. This has been a very useful exercise particularly in the emergency management phase as all partner agencies come together to support the affected and assistance is channelled through the Disaster Management Centre.

These are only some of the key risk reduction initiatives by Sri Lanka. It needs to be emphasized that the government is committed to disaster risk reduction and has achieved much progress in implementing the DRR Priorities under the Hyogo Framework of Action.

Sri Lanka has contributed to the HFA 2 Asia Pacific document on Learning from HFA 1, integrating sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change, prioritizing risk prevention and risk reduction, partnership with the private sector, promoting local level action, strengthening resilience to disasters, ensure social inclusion, strengthening the role of women and enhancing risk governance and accountability based on the national priorities. We believe that in the post 2015 DRR framework more emphasis is needs to be placed on emergency response and preparedness which are essential to the effective and efficient disaster management.

Sri Lanka looks forward to the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan.

Thank you.