

Preparatory Committee (PrepCom1) of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 14-15 July 2014

Statement by FINLAND, Mr Taito Vainio, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of the Interior

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

We thank the UNISDR Secretariat for preparing the guiding questions for the Preparatory Committee and wish to reflect on some of those as follows.

[What is your vision for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction?]

In our vision for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, disaster risk reduction is **integrated** in all development policies, national development strategies and relevant legislations with multi-hazard, multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without managing disaster risk and taking measures to adapt to climate change. The need to bring disaster risk reduction, climate change and sustainable development agendas more closely together is well recognised. The post 2015 development agenda has to prioritize the building of resilience among people and societies at risk, especially in fragile and highly vulnerable settings.

[There are strong expectations that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction continue to have clear priorities for action. What should those be?]

In terms of priorities for action, the future international framework for Disaster Risk Reduction should highlight **action at local level** and target and empower the most vulnerable communities. It should take better into account the rights, needs and capacities of children, women, elderly, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Safety nets and social protection for the most vulnerable should be an integral part of the new framework.

Finland calls for greater attention on the importance of inclusion of **gender** equality and women's empowerment issues in the post-2015 framework.

National multi-hazard **risk assessment** should be the starting point in developing the necessary actions on prevention, preparedness, early warning, effective response and recovery at different levels. Risk assessments should be followed up by the assessment of national risk management capabilities and risk management **plans** and strategy on adaptation to climate change, ensuring their coherence. The planning process should involve all the key stakeholders and right mixture of legislative, technical and educational means should be used.

Development planning must be smart and ensure sustainability of investments during disasters. Disaster risk must be addressed in critical **public policies**, relevant **legislations** and **regulations** and provide incentives and opportunities for actions by households, communities and private sector.

While focussing on sustainable development, also the need for more anticipatory and preventative approach to humanitarian action must be recognised. Not only development, but also **humanitarian action must be risk-informed**. Early warning systems, improved preparedness for response, and early recovery are key opportunities to invest in risk reduction and build resilience for future.

Addressing of **environmental** degradation and environmental risks as part of effective disaster risk reduction needs more attention. Environment, development and disasters are interconnected. Protecting ecosystems can both save lives and livelihoods. Addressing underlying environmental issues reduces the vulnerability and thus may prevent a natural hazard from turning into a disaster – or in worst situations to conflicts.

Governments play an important role together with other relevant actors in ensuring support to scientific and technological advances. **Scientific evidence** base in support of the implementation and monitoring of the Hyogo Framework, better understanding of risk patterns and trends, and the causes and effects of disaster risk in society; and availability and application of science to decision-making, open data policies, networking and effective knowledge management are very important.

[Are the proposed system and menu of targets and indicators sufficiently robust to ensure accountability in the reduction of risk?]

The future **accountability** and governance mechanisms related to the DRR architecture should be very strong. Clear division of roles, responsibilities and institutional mandates should be ensured between different actors, both globally and nationally.

Clear targets and timeframes must be set for national and local plans to prevent the creation of new risk, reduce existing risk and strengthen resilience. We consider that setting of a manageable number of measurable **impact indicators** and mechanisms to monitor, periodically assess and report on the achievement of objectives with full engagement of all legislative and executive institutions and stakeholders will be very helpful to ensure effective and efficient implementation with high degree of transparency.

We commend the work done in developing the **monitoring system** and indicators. We advise you to ensure a balance between the indicators critically important to measure progress at different levels and those indicators that can be complementary. The monitoring and reporting system should be designed to be as simple and easy to use as possible and it should give valid, statistical information about the effectiveness of the disaster risk reduction system.

Based on our experience in the **peer review**, we encourage the continuation of voluntary national peer review process as part of progress reporting and mutual learning and self-assessments.

[Risks in conflict prevention]

Building disaster resilience in a **conflict context** is an important part of long-term stability and national security and any opportunities for co-benefits for peace building and state building should be taken. Investments in disaster risk reduction and management should be sensitive towards complex contexts and consider the relationship between natural hazards, climate change, conflict and fragility in risk and vulnerability assessments and risk management.

[As a national government, how will you support implementation of voluntary, concrete commitments in your country? What types of mechanisms will help in the design and implementation of those commitments?]

Real preparedness can only be achieved if it is **everybody's business**. This means that

in addition to national and local level government actions organisations, enterprises and individuals have to understand their role in reducing possible damage of the disasters in the society. People must know the risks and what they can do themselves in order to minimize the damage. This calls for **cooperation** among national and local governments and voluntary organisations. This also calls for **education and information sharing**. Security can only be achieved by common actions.

[There is longstanding recognition of the importance of having national strategies for disaster risk reduction. Why have so few countries developed such strategies? Can regional strategies developed by intergovernmental organizations help to accelerate and promote implementation of national strategies?]

Regional strategies can help in order to establish and develop national strategies if the goals of regional strategies are clear. This means that regional as well as national strategies should be understood by the general public. Only by making strategies understandable we can engage the general public to build safer societies.

Finland looks forward to engaging actively in the **preparatory process** through the World Conference Bureau membership and as a co-chair of the Preparatory Committee. President Tarja Halonen continues her commitment to support the *Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools* and promote the inclusion of a gender perspective in disaster risk reduction and risk management.

Thank you.