

**STATEMENT BY THE GAMBIAN DELEGATION AT THE FIRST WCDRR 2015
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN GENEVA FROM 14 – 15 JULY
2014**

UN Special Representative for Disaster risk reduction, Madam Wolstrom

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen

All protocols duly and respectfully observed

The Gambian delegation wishes to congratulate Finland and Thailand for their appointments as Co-Chairs of this occasion and Japan and Switzerland for their invaluable contribution to this auspicious occasion.

Madam Chair, The Gambia wish to associate itself with the statements read on behalf of The ECOWAS Commission, THE AU, Group of 77 and China as well as LDCs in this meeting.

Africa, Madam Chair is one of the most vulnerable continents to disasters due to climate change variability and the extreme weather conditions exacerbated by the lack of progress in cutting emission of greenhouse gases. The Gambia is no exception to this menace which threatens our ecosystems, biodiversity and human survival.

In this respect, the government continues to accord high priority to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. We would continue to show commitment and resolve in the implementation of future framework in line with our development priorities and plans.

In her remarkable shift from provision of humanitarian aid in disasters to comprehensive management of disasters through disaster risk reduction, The Gambia had elaborated a comprehensive policy, institutional and legislative framework on disaster risk reduction in line with the tenets of the Hyogo framework for Action.

In the implementation of the framework on disaster risk reduction, a number of milestones have been achieved amidst challenges of financial, human and material resources and they include: increased awareness on DRR and its inextricable linkage with the economic development process; building the resilience of the communities on DRR, investing in human, financial and material support leading to increased capacity of the rapid Response Team; demonstrable political will and support given the Disaster Management is placed under the highest office and its Council is chaired by the President of the Gambia. Integrating DRR in national policies and plans, adaptation/DRR strategies on infrastructure, agriculture and tourism among other; early warning systems, contingency plans at national and regional levels, risk assessment and others.

Chair

As we approach the finish line of the Hygo Framework for Action 1 and anticipating a new framework for DRR, The Gambia would like to make the following proposals to be included in the post 2015 DRR framework.

1. In view of the fact that many of the least developed countries rely heavily on agriculture which continues to be seriously affected by climate change and variability and extreme weather conditions, the future HFA should prioritise DRR adaptation in agriculture and food production including research and appropriate technology.
2. Strengthen capacity building of Rapid Response Team at national, communities and regional levels.
3. Interface DRR/CCA and create synergies and harmonise efforts especially in the implementation of the new framework with resources and transfer of technology based on common but different responsibilities.
4. More attention to be given to addressing the risk factors and vulnerabilities through the interventions such as poverty alleviation activities of vulnerable communities, and capacity building among others.

5. Enhance participation of the private sector including insurance schemes on disaster management.
6. Gender equity, equality and the empowerment of women to be an integral part of the disaster management at all levels given the fact that women and children continue to suffer the most in the event of disaster. Hence the participation of women in disaster Management from prevention to recovery is crucial.
7. Mechanisms to strengthen research, early warning and data collection on DRR and climate change adaptation.
8. Strengthened or encourage the integration of DRR/CCA in school curriculum.
9. Commitments in addressing climate change as pre-requisite to address disasters. The global community in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility have to meet the reduction targets. Efforts in Disaster Risk Reduction will be seriously undermined if the world could not reach global consensus on the emission reduction targets leading to the unenviable rise in temperatures. We may continue to find ourselves in a vicious circle in managing disasters.

Whilst recognising the support given by the Japanese and UNISDR and other partners in DRR, special attention needs to be paid to the LDCs in the new framework in the meeting milestones of the post 2015 DRR agenda.

Thank you for your attention.