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SPEECH

THE 3RD WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
IN SENDAI CITY, MIYAGI PREFECTURE, JAPAN,

MARCH 14 – 18, 2015.



Mr. Chairman,

I bring you warm greetings from President John Mahama and the people of Ghana.

On behalf of the delegation from Ghana, let me express our appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for the preparations made for this meeting and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded us.

On behalf of the Government and people of Ghana, I also wish to convey deepest sympathies to the entire Japanese people on the fourth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Mr. Chairman,

We extend our congratulations to you on your selection to steer the proceedings of this meeting. We have confidence in your ability to guide our deliberations successfully.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by associating Ghana with the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Over the past ten years, the Hyogo Framework for Action has proved to be an important agreement for building the resilience of nations in handling disasters. The guidelines in the Framework are so far reaching that, in addition to dealing with issues of natural and human-induced disasters, its implementation can contribute to sustainable socio-economic development.



Ghana's implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action has focused on the three strategic goals and the five priority areas. The first strategic goal requires the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction into sustainable development policies and planning, whilst the first priority makes disaster risk reduction a national priority.

In pursuance of this, Ghana has included Disaster Risk Reduction as a pillar in its development agenda. Our medium-term development strategy, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda makes disaster risk reduction one of the pillars of national development. It explains how disaster risk reduction should be carried out to attain socio-economic resilience.

We have also reviewed the legislation on National Disaster Management to increase its focus on risk reduction.

We have established the National Contingency Fund as well as approved the establishment of a National Disaster Fund to facilitate access to resources in times of disaster. Both funds are dedicated to risk reduction and disaster management.

We have also established Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Risk Management at the national and regional levels. We have started the establishment of platforms at the local government level.

Mr. Chairman,

Priority two calls for the enhancement of early warning and so we have equipped the Ghana Meteorological Agency to be able to provide early warnings in the areas of hydro-meteorological hazards.

The use of knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels is captured under priority three. We acknowledge the importance of incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction in the school curricula. We have already conducted an assessment of the extent DRR is



incorporated in the school curricula with a roadmap to ensure impact-oriented instructions in schools. Pilot testing has already been carried out in selected schools.

Disaster Risk Reduction engagement with the media has greatly improved and various training programmes have been carried out with the involvement of the media. This is enhancing public education in Disaster Risk Reduction.

Consistent with Government's determination to boost capacity and enhance risk reduction, a number of tertiary institutions have been encouraged to offer courses in disaster management. Three Universities now offer undergraduate, post-graduate and certificate courses in disaster management.

Mr. Chairman,

Mindful of the need to reduce the underlying risks as specified under priority four, due cognizance has been taken of climate change and its accompanying environmental concerns. The National Climate Change policy has been developed to guide the management of the environment.

Other interventions have come up in the waste management system. This includes recycling of solid waste and the transforming of liquid waste into useful products such as fertilizers.

A National Sanitation Day has been declared and on the first Saturday of every month, all communities undertake a clean up of common areas. This initiative is helping to promote environmental management.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Ghana responded to priority five, which requires the strengthening of disaster preparedness for effective response. In this direction, the critical emergency responders such as National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), Ghana Police Service, Ghana National



Fire Service, National Ambulance Service, Ghana Armed Forces and the Ghana Health Service have been provided with equipment to support the carrying-out of their core functions of saving lives and properties whenever there is an emergency.

Mr. Chairman,

The implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action has not gone without challenges. Poverty levels in developing countries increase vulnerability levels, thus requiring more resources for risk reduction. This makes it difficult to implement an ambitious action plan.

Also, it will be useful if the world body would propose a monitoring system and introduce measuring indicators that recognize the economic strength of individual countries. We also need to adopt a system for states to subject themselves to peer review in the implementation of the agreements that emerge from this Conference.

Thank you for your kind attention.