

Republic of Mauritius

Official Statement for 2017 Global Platform

For Disaster Risk Reduction

Your Excellency the Prime Minister of the United Mexican States

Your Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to address this plenary session of the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction on behalf of the Government of Mauritius and I would like at the outset to express the deep appreciation of the Government of Mauritius to the United Nations for organising this Global event, the first one after

the Sendai Summit and the Government of the United Mexican States for hosting it.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mauritius is classified according to the World Risk Report 2016 as the 13th country with the highest disaster risk and the 7th most exposed to natural hazards. In reality, Mauritius is already experiencing extreme weather events that could severely impact on the livelihood of our nation. In March 2013, Mauritius was badly hit by a flash flood in its capital city which unfortunately took the lives of 11 of our citizens. Recently in 2016, the passage of the Very Intense Tropical Cyclone Fantala with gust of the order of 280km/hr was a real threat to Agalega and St Brandon, which are both outer low-lying islands of Mauritius. More recently, the passage of Intense Tropical Cyclone Enawo

with gusts of the order of 250km/h in March 2017 in the Southern Indian Ocean region posed a threat to main island of Mauritius.

Mauritius is also prone to other disasters such as tsunamis, landslides, torrential rain among others. Heavy rainfall bringing in its wake flooding of unprecedented scale is a challenging threat to our country. Mauritius is also at the mercy of heavy swells during the cyclonic season and high latitude deep lows during winter which can pose serious threat to our vulnerable coastal population. With such potential threats of unprecedented scale looming large on the horizon, I would like to highlight that our Government has recently in March 2017 once more demonstrated its firm commitment in strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Management governance by asking for a review of our present disaster management plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Keeping in line with our Government's vision to enhance the safety of citizens, the setting up of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) and Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committees represent the cross-cutting institutional instruments to integrate disaster risk reduction management in all planning processes across all levels and sectors in the Republic of Mauritius. This would help to achieve sustainable development through resilient disaster risk reduction and management.

The Republic of Mauritius is also amongst the first Small Island Development State (SIDS) to have a disaster risk reduction and management legislation in place and which was promulgated as from July 2016.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our country is endeavouring to develop a strategic framework, policy and action plan on DRR which will articulate the national vision for disaster risk reduction and management and ensure that the approach of Mauritius in national disaster risk reduction and management is aligned with the Sendai Framework.

Our country is also implementing several DRR related projects with a view to increase the safety of our citizens. Some of the key projects are:-

- (i) Implementation of an Early Warning and Emergency Alert System.
- (ii) Setting up of a Land Drainage Authority which will play a leading and coordinating role to quickly start long-term activities ensuring flood prevention, better drainage design and maintenance, and better urban planning.
- (iii) Setting up of the early warning system for storm surges.

- (iv) Setting up a Doppler radar system to provide more accurate forecast for heavy rainfall.
- (v) Implementation of the Monitoring of Environment and Security in Africa (MESA) SADC Flood service system.
- (vi) To put into place a financial risk transfer mechanism.
- (vii) Setting up of a flood monitoring system for rivers and canals.
- (viii) Integrating DRRM in school curriculum at primary and secondary school levels and promoting DRRM through public awareness programmes.
- (ix) Community Disaster Response Programme to increase the resilience of communities in vulnerable areas.
- (x) Regular conduct of disaster response simulation exercises at national and local levels.
- (xi) A protocol for heavy rainfall that aims at ensuring the safety of public sector employees and service continuity.

A similar protocol is also being developed for the Private Sector.

- (xii) Involvement of the private sector in the implementation of the Sendai Framework.
- (xiii) Women empowerment programmes on disaster risk reduction.
- (xiv) Coastal protection works to render our coastal areas safer.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In our endeavour to promote regional cooperation which is the only way to create the synergy and impetus in the face of these unprecedented challenges, it is worth mentioning that in November 2016, the Republic of Mauritius had the rare privilege to host the Sixth Africa Regional Platform and Fifth High Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction with the support from the African Union Commission, the Southern African Development Community and the UNISDR Regional Office of Africa. Some

750 delegates from 47 African countries, including 19 ministers attended this event. The outcomes of this regional event were the ‘Programme of Action’ for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030’ and the ‘Mauritius Declaration’ on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa which form the basis for the drafting of the Africa Position on DRR which will be presented in this forum. Also at the level of the Indian Ocean Commission, a number of laudable initiatives are being taken to address these topical issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mauritius as a SIDS is leaving no stones unturned to live up to these challenges. Yet we cannot succeed without the financial, technological transfer and capacity building supports of the international community, our donor partners, regional and sub-regional partners and the developed countries.

Thank you.