

**Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the World  
Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, 14 – 18 March 2015,  
Sendai, Japan**

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the important work of the government of Japan hosting this conference. It is of special significance that we are here in Sendai in the Tohoku area, which was the closest major city to the epicenter of the earthquake of March 11, 2011. I visited this morning the city surroundings and I was deeply impressed, firstly by the enormous impact of the Tsunami, but more over seeing how Sendai is an admirable example of resilience on how to recover from such a horrendous disaster. Just days ago the island nation of Vanuatu was hit by cyclone Pam. The latest information indicates that 40% of the population has been displaced. We extend our deepest condolences to the people of Vanuatu in this very difficult time.

This underlines that this conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is taking place at an important moment. There are several reasons why we urgently need to cooperate and strengthen our efforts in this area. At the moment there are no fewer than four L3 emergencies in the world: the

UN classification for the biggest and most serious humanitarian crises. All four of them, unfortunately, are conflict-related disasters of human origin. There are more refugees now than at any time since the Second World War. Many of them depend on emergency aid to survive. But there is a serious shortage of funds to help them – a shortage that has tripled in the last decade. That is why the Netherlands recently decided to donate an extra 570 million euros to relief efforts up to 2017. This makes us one of the world's top ten humanitarian donors.

But humanitarian assistance is not enough. The only real solution is a long-term perspective, and a focus on disaster prevention. Of recent calamities, 70% are water-related and one-third are natural disasters. Only by cutting these risks can we substantially reduce human suffering in the coming years.

The Hyogo Framework for Action has done a great deal to raise awareness about Disaster Risk Reduction. The focus has shifted from disaster response to disaster prevention, and it is now widely recognised that investing in DRR pays off. DRR is not a cost, but an opportunity. Every euro invested in prevention yields many euros in savings: savings on humanitarian aid and on rebuilding after earlier investments are destroyed. But above all, saving human lives! So we are doing important work here together by agreeing a new, post-2015 framework for DRR.

The negotiations so far have produced the outline of an innovative, ambitious Sendai Framework of Action. The Netherlands supports the text as it stands. At the same time, I would like to make three observations:

First, governance, transparency and accountability are cornerstones of a good Disaster Risk Reduction policy. These are key priorities, and we strongly urge keeping them in the text. We underline the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships that include the private sector and local communities. Without these actors, it will be very difficult to implement measures on the ground. After all, these are the people most affected by disasters. I would also like to emphasise the importance of making disaster risk management more inclusive, by having the Sendai framework incorporate vulnerable groups like women, old people, young people and people with disabilities. Civil society is essential here.

Second, DRR is especially important for the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. They are in the front line, facing the reality of frequent disasters. My country's experience in delta and water management shows that building with nature, spatial planning and land management, and an ecosystem approach are essential tools in addressing the underlying risk factors for disasters. We are more than willing to share our experience with these vulnerable countries. Together with Japan and Colombia, I will be co-chairing a side event here in Sendai

where we will explore building an international coalition for integrated delta management and resilience. This coalition would provide a framework for learning from each other about best practices.

Third, as mentioned in the European Union statement, mobilising resources is vital in implementing the framework. So are partnerships, domestic resource deployment and the use of innovative financing from public, private, national and international sources. We share responsibility for implementing this framework. This requires action by every country and by all the stakeholders involved. The Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa in July will be the moment to resolve these issues.

In conclusion, let's not forget that 2015 is a special year for our planet, with several milestone events taking place in the coming months. We should make sure these events get off to a positive start here in Sendai. So let's work together to agree a coherent framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for the coming 15 years!

Thank you.