

UNISDR Statement at the Second Prepcom of UNCSW 7-8 March 2011, New York

Agenda Item 3: Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving the opportunity for UNISDR to take the floor.

Reducing disaster risk is both an emerging issue and disasters are a major factor that is contributing to the gaps in implementation of sustainable development.

It is increasingly recognized that the green economy movement is an important opportunity to ensure that both international aid and national and local budgetary spending effectively address the risk of disasters. We chose to intervene under this session as gaps in the institutional framework remain the main obstacle for effectively addressing disaster risk reduction in sustainable development plans and strategies.

This intervention is set against the background of growing risk of economic loss from such hazards as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and drought. The increase in disaster risk is primarily driven by the growing exposure of people and economic assets to natural hazards – the vulnerability being higher in least developed countries and small island developing states.

Many Governments have learned the hard way that decades of sustainable development achievements can be lost in a matter of seconds when disaster strikes. Unless urgent action is taken to reduce risk, this pattern will continue, as extreme events become more frequent and intense.

Some figures to reflect the scale of the challenge:

- 85% of people exposed to earthquakes, cyclones, floods and droughts live in developing countries.
- Direct disaster damage costs alone have increased from US\$ 75.5 billion in the 1960s to nearly US\$ 1 trillion in the past 10 years.

In order to strengthen the institutional frameworks for sustainable development, we believe that ensuring synergies between CSD and other relevant existing inter-governmental processes and instruments – such as the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* – is crucial.

Governments have already recognized that reducing disaster risk is an important element for climate change adaptation as well as for accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Better communication, links and synergies among these different frameworks and agendas can have multiple benefits for achieving sustainable development.

Enhanced synergies between sustainable development and disaster risk reduction agendas can result in a number of benefits:

- 1) The integration of disaster risk reduction into socio-economic development planning can have multiplier effects in all areas of sustainable development by protecting development achievements from the impact of natural hazards.
- 2) Key sectors of development, such education and health as well as water and sanitation, need to ensure that their infrastructure is disaster-resilient.
- 3) Positioning disaster risk reduction as an essential element of poverty reduction strategies and programmes, with particular attention to vulnerable communities, will help reduce the poverty in the long term.
- 4) Empowering women in disaster risk reduction to accelerate achievements in sustainable development is also important as women are key to making communities and nations better prepared and more resilient to natural hazards; women in developing countries are still largely responsible for securing food, water and energy in homes.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we would like to emphasize the importance of enhancing synergies and strengthening coordination among different existing international frameworks as this will help address many of the gaps and challenges in achieving sustainable development.

For delegations that are interested in this issue, you can visit the UNISDR website (www.unisdr.org).

I would also like to remind you that the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is an important milestone on the sustainable development agenda, will take place from 8-13 May 2011, Geneva Switzerland.

Thank you for your attention.