

**ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

November 02-05, 2016

DELHI, INDIA

Closing Ceremony Remarks

Mr. Robert Glasser

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General for Disaster Risk Reduction and head
of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction**

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Ministers, ambassadors, distinguished delegates and conference participants,

On behalf of the UN Secretary General and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction I would like to extend a sincere thanks to the Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, the Home Minister, Mr. Rajnath Singh, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Kiren Rijiju, the Home Secretary, Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi, and all colleagues at the National Disaster Management Authority, for their gracious hospitality and kind collaboration in making these last three days so memorable and rewarding.

Prime Minister Modi set the tone for this Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction when he urged us all to embrace wholeheartedly the spirit of the Sendai Framework.

Today when I see the outcomes from the Conference and the scale of your ambition over the next 14 years for implementing the Sendai Framework, I think the Prime Minister can rest assured that his appeal did not fall on deaf ears.

There have been many outstanding elements in this Conference.

I was very struck by the level of participation from civil society and this came through in many ways

from the high level of private sector engagement to the launch of the Local Leaders Forum.

There was an emphasis in many sessions and discussions on the importance of engaging with local actors and empowering groups which are sometimes mistakenly thought of as only vulnerable when really they bring strength and insights into the business of disaster risk management which are not available from other sections of the population.

The Sendai Framework clearly acknowledges the primary responsibility of Government in reducing risk and disaster losses but real success in achieving that depends on an inclusive, all of society approach which gives pride of place to leadership at community level.

Reflecting on how we engage with local groups including women and girls, people living with disabilities, elderly persons, children and youth is important as we prepare to meet the 2020 deadline for a substantial increase in national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction.

An important caveat was highlighted yesterday during the technical session on review and monitoring implementation of the Sendai Framework. And it is that we must also ensure that

resources are made available at the local level to enable the implementation of those strategies. There is little point in having a strategy if there is not means and the political will to implement it.

The debate and discussions we have had here on the indicators for measuring progress on achieving the seven targets of the Sendai Framework will enrich the final session of the intergovernmental working group which will meet in Geneva in two weeks from now to decide on a final set of global indicators.

We expect their recommendation will be adopted by the UN General Assembly in early 2017.

This will be followed by a readiness review at national level in time for the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction next May in Mexico.

We aim to have full monitoring of the implementation of the Sendai Framework underway by 2020, three short years from now.

It is good to note that several of the Sendai Framework indicators will also serve as indicators for achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Similarly, I am confident that there will be significant complementarity between those national disaster risk reduction plans and the national plans for climate change adaptation which will be developed now that the Paris Agreement has been ratified.

Coherence between DRR, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement has been a strong theme running through this Conference.

The DRR community realises more than any other how much climate change is affecting disasters and that we will be dealing with the consequences for many years to come given existing levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

This region now has a road map which is ambitious and completely aligned with the Sendai seven targets and the priorities for action.

The milestones until 2030 are clear; from the early establishment of national disaster loss data bases to achievements in the reduction of mortality, numbers of people affected, economic losses and damage to critical infrastructure.

And the region has already a great well of expertise to draw on when it comes to further

improvements in access to multi-hazard early warning systems.

In this regard, it was encouraging to hear of India's offer to make its new satellite available for the purposes of improving disaster risk management across the region. I am sure there is plenty more scope for such sharing of technology and expertise.

There is clear recognition in this hazard-prone region of the fact that disasters know no borders and therefore require strong regional cooperation and collaboration such as we have seen here over the last three days. This is the true spirit of Sendai in action.

This region also knows to its cost that some disasters have no season. Today we are commemorating World Tsunami Awareness Day for the first time and we are reminded that no other single disaster over the last twenty years has caused as much grief and suffering as the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 which cost 230,000 lives in countries across the region including those of thousands of visitors.

Japan has done much to make World Tsunami Awareness Day a reality and we have been honoured this week to have so many distinguished

guests from Japan here with us to share their experience, knowledge and understanding of this rare but deadly threat.

A report just released by Tohoku University examines 400 years of tsunami data which demonstrates that the historical record shows that few regions of the world have not experienced this phenomenon.

The worst disasters that could happen have not happened yet. Reducing the risk of them happening is more important in Asia than any other region of the world given the high levels of exposure to disaster risk.

The three outcome documents of this Conference are vital to that effort and build on the guidance to be found in the Sendai Framework. They are

- The Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework,
- The Delhi Declaration that reiterates the commitment of governments to disaster risk reduction; and

- Stakeholder Action Statements containing various initiatives to reduce disaster risk

They capture perfectly the spirit of Sendai and provide a major stimulus to achieving not just the targets set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction but the overall 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Disaster risk reduction plays an important role in eradicating poverty and empowering disaster-affected communities.

In two years we will have another opportunity to discuss progress at regional level, hosted by the Government of Mongolia. The road to resilience has taken us from Sendai to New Delhi and the next stop is Ulan Bator.

I hope to see you all there, alive and well and bursting with the same kind of enthusiasm for this important work as was shown by the Indian Prime Minister in his rousing speech on the opening day of this Conference.

I thank you all for your participation and wish you safe travel home.