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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

OFFICE OF THE STATE MINISTER FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT
AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

# Speech for the Opening Session of the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Your Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

Afghanistan is one of the most disaster-prone countries not just in Asia but in the world.

A combination of inherent geological instability affecting much of the country, and annual challenges arising from heavy snowfall and limited water storage capacity means that Afghanistan is susceptible to avalanches and flooding in some periods of the year, and sustained drought at others.

Thus disaster risk reduction is very much to the fore in my Government’s thinking about how to prevent disasters in the first place, mitigate them where we can, and manage them as and when they occur to minimise the loss of human life and my country’s limited infrastructure assets.

My role, as State Minister for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, is part of the Afghan Government’s response to this on-going challenge.

The Afghan Government’s final progress report on the Hyogo Framework indicated that we had made good progress in developing new laws and regulations, in planning, capacity building and improved disaster response.

With support from international colleagues, we have made further progress since then in mapping the most disaster-prone areas, in identifying ways of strengthening the country’s institutional response, and improving collaboration and partnership within the Government and between the Government and its civil society and international partners at national, provincial and community level.

Under the Sendai Framework we need to take this further, to build a disaster resilient mind-set in all our institutions, to improve community understanding and participation in preventing and preparing for disasters where they are most likely to occur.

For Afghanistan, for Government and civilians alike, that tasks is made more challenging by the long-running conflicts to which my country has been subject, and more complicated as cope with increased numbers of returnees and internally displaced persons.

For Afghanistan, the particular tasks before us include:

* Creating mass awareness among our people, and an understanding of how men, women and children can contribute to better disaster awareness
* Creating a baseline for disaster loss and damage
* Undertaking a multi-hazard disaster vulnerability and risk assessment (Completed and will be launched in June financed and supported by the World Bank).
* Establishing robust early warning systems and response mechanisms consistent with and operational within our geography and our technical and human resources – underway.
* Mainstreaming DRR into our national and subnational planning, budgeting and programmes, and
* Engaging with our neighbours and regional partners to strengthen coordination for disaster preparedness and strengthening capacity

As a signatory to the Sendai Framework, Afghanistan is committed to working towards achieving the Framework’s goals and targets through a multi-stakeholder and all of society approach.

We have already started preparatory work for developing a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

As we all know, the Sendai Framework is an inclusive platform that promotes regional and international cooperation in order to achieve its priorities.

We look forward to working with partner governments and with UN and multilateral stakeholders to strengthen the Sendai implementation process in Afghanistan.

Our participation in this meeting is part of a continuous learning process and I look forward to our discussions over the next few days.

Thank you.