Distinguished guests, dear colleagues,

I am very pleased to attend the Global Platform Conference and see so many colleagues from different countries around the world gathered to find sustainable solutions for reducing disaster risk and strengthening resilience at the global level.

As the task ahead of us is a difficult we need to join forces and build strong and innovative partnerships to achieve the goals set forth in the Sendai Framework. Governance is a key determinant of risk, specifically institutional and legal aspects of it.

As I am sure you are all aware, coordinating the efforts of all the parties and creating an integrated approach is a challenge in its own right. The Sendai Partnership for Risk-Informed Development, modelled after the 'NDC Partnership' for the Paris Agreement, could facilitate this collaboration, help avoid parallel or duplicated efforts and ensure greater complementarity across funding and programming. Risk-informed development is an imperative for sustainable development.

**In 2014 Serbia had a first-hand experience how a flood event can turn into a disaster**:

As a result of extraordinary rains in May 2014, Serbia was affected by the most severe flooding in 120 years. The disaster affected 22% of the total population, in more than 2/3 of all municipalities.

Total value of disaster effects was estimated at 4.8% of Serbia’s GDP.

The disaster has caused a recession in the Serbian economy, causing it to contract by 1.8% in 2014, rather than growing by 0.5% as it was previously projected, which, I believe, represents a good illustration of the extent of the impact of the disaster.

In addition to sustaining a budget shock, Serbia was caught without an adequate system in place to respond to overwhelming social and insfrastructure needs in a coordinated fashion.

In the aftermath of the disaster, with the help of international partners, primarily the European Union and with great help from our friends at the World Bank and the UN, Serbia has invested considerable resources into the recovery and reconstruction of flood protection infrastructure, transport infrastructure, public buildings and power production and distribution facilities. Government aid has also been provided to over 21,000 families, as well as to tens of thousands of small and medium-sized businesses and farmers.

We now understand that the damage would not have been so devastating, had we had the DRR and recovery systems in place.

To justify the trust and support our international partners have invested in us – in addition to spending their generous contributions in a transparent and accountable manner – we have also invested a considerable effort over the past three years to improve our DRR system and bring it in line with Sendai Framework, understanding that the risk assessment is key for improved understanding of risk and therefore for planning to reduce probability of its occurrence and impact once it has happened.

Serbia continues to be exposed to various risks, in addition to the largest among them…the continuous risk of flooding. Over the past three years alone, we have seen heavy snow storms cutting off the entire cities from the rest of the country for days; ice storms, crippling our power distribution systems causing the interruption of power supply to tens of thousands of families and businesses; hailstorms causing damage to thousands of farmers across our contry.

An estimated 30% of the teritorry of our country is under the risk of lanslides.

In addition to this, total effects of droughts are estimated at USD 500 million per year, which accounts for 1.4% of our GDP. Each year.

Climate change is an undeniable fact. More frequent and significantly more intense natural disaster events, floods in particular, represent a clear indication of a changing environment we need to adapt to. With that in mind

1. In 2014, only months after the disaster, the Government of Serbia has passed a National Disaster Risk Management Program, completed with the help of the World Bank, European Union, UNDP and the Swiss government. Serbia passed the Action Plan – in line with the Sendai Framework, to implement this Program with the high emphasis to the Disaster Risk Reduction and with the support of CADRI, UNDP and the World Bank.
2. In April 2015 Serbia signed the agreement on participation in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which also presupposes harmonization of the national legal framework with the EU one.
3. Serbia turned the ad-hoc recovery body, established after the floods in 2014 into a permanent one, having the Law on Post-Disaster Reconstruction, fully aligned with the Sendai framework, which now deals with aftermaths of all disasters. Serbia is upgrading its national disaster loss methodology to incorporate the PDNA methodology. Serbia has prepared a Disaster Risk and Crisis Management Law, also fully aligned with the Sendai Framework, which is pending in the Parliament at present.
4. Serbia has also passed the National Disaster Risk Financing Program and has signed Development Policy Loan with a Catastrophe-Deferred Drawdown Option (CATDDO), with the World Bank, to increase the resilience of country to the adverse impact of natural hazards. The Government identified contingent financing as a critical component of its strategy to secure access to immediate post-disaster liquidity to meet emergency and recovery needs, ensuring that budget resources are not diverted from ongoing development programs.
5. Serbia became a donor to the GFDRR, thereby giving back a small fraction of what we have received when we needed it the most.

**We can and must prepare for recovery before a disaster occurs as** resilient recovery is a condition for further sustainability. All the countries, especially those most often impacted by disasters, need to put in place the recovery preparedness plans. These plans ensure that policies and procedures are in place prior to a disaster event. They also expedite and facilitate the movement of goods and people that enable relief and reconstruction, while also avoiding conflict, encouraging multi-stakeholder involvement, and accelerating the process of building back better. It can be done only through active engagement of all stakeholders, especially at community and municipal levels.

Serbia has been on the receiving end of international development aid for at least the past 17 years. Not nearly enough, however, has been invested into prevention. Having learned firsthand how a single disaster can render meaningless considerable investments into development, we are now fully committed to making sure that the disaster risk management stays at the top of our development agenda for the years to come.