

Norway comments.

Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for this opportunity to address some overall, general aspects regarding disaster reduction – as a supplement to the comprehensive thematic discussions ongoing at this conference.

In his opening remarks under-secretary Jan Egeland did challenge this conference on how we can agree on concrete actions for reducing losses of lives and damages – if and when natural disasters occur. I shall like to point at some activities in my brief presentation. All through the drafting process of the Outcome Document for this conference, Norway has reiterated the importance of recognising the interlinkage between natural disaster and development programmes. I am pleased to note that this understanding has been recognised by so many during the conference.

In the effort for poverty alleviation, the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is a vital mechanism. When outlining a PRSP we should analyse different development strategies also with the aim of addressing natural disasters, (reducing) the losses and reducing the human suffering. We know that the total annual costs of natural disasters are more than the total annual development assistance of approximately 50 billion USD. This also calls for an integrated approach, where natural disasters are introduced in the PRSPs. By implementing a strategy like this, we should also strongly link the Program Action from this meeting with relevant integrated intergovernmental agreements, such as the Millennium Development Goals – and with reference to inter alia the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Kyoto Protocol and the Johannesburg Declaration. I would also like to emphasise the strong link between the way we manage natural resources and natural disasters.

Mr. Chairman

The majority of those hit by natural disasters is not only poor in economic terms; too often also we see that the scope and the extend of the disasters also is reflecting lacks of legislation, institutions and policies. Lack of good governance and the rule of law often detonate the situation for vulnerable segments of societies. The challenges should be addressed by all of us, and financial as well as technological and professional support should be provided to countries and societies in need.

Norway strongly supports many initiatives taken on a regional basis, and we think that even more could be done in this respect. We also commend plans and initiatives in the wake of the sunami tragedy, in order to install efficient regional systems, measuring, monitoring and alarming significant changes in environment, soil, ocean and the weather conditions. All of them important factors for indication of possible natural disasters. I am also happy to confirm that Norway will work together with the UN and other countries in establishing an early warning in the Indian Ocean.

Mr. Chairman.

During this conference many delegates have emphasized the importance of awarenessbuilding, training and education – with regard to the danger of natural disaster. I agree. But similarly it is important to promote and support standardised research and evaluation as an internal part of sustainable competence and capacity building, endorsed concepts to transform collected and compiled data into knowledge and information. Such endeavour will contribute to a more in-depth understanding of cause- and effect reflections which pose a threat to, or is harming the health and well-being of individuals and

populations, directly and indirectly.

Finally Mr. Chairman.

I want to reiterate Norway's support to the ISDR. During this conference we are setting ambitious goals and targets, and there is a need for a long term funding to ISDR as a strong and formal structure in order to be consistent in following up this very important conference.

In this regard I also want to challenge all of us to give strengthened support to the Prevention Consortium in order to mobilize and integrate the resources outside the UN System. Also in this regard partnership with the private sector, NGOs and local Communities is most important.

At the end let me stress that there is a need for establishing indicators and a time Table indicating in clear terms what we are aiming to fulfill and when.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thanks for the Japanese hospitality extended to all of us