

## World Conference on Disaster Reduction

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### Russian Federation

#### Report of the Minister of the Russian Federation for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters (EMERCOM)

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*(slide 1)*

Dear Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues!

Let me welcome you on behalf of the Russian Federation and express satisfaction for having a privilege to attend this representative forum and address you. I would like to share the Russian Federation's experience in disaster reduction and to put forward a number of initiatives aimed at promoting the role and efficiency of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

In recent years the world trend to a higher number and wider scope of emergencies has substantially strengthened which underlines the **increased significance** of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction *(slide 2)*.

This is illustrated by catastrophic floods in the South of Russia in 2001-2002, catastrophic earthquakes in Iran, extremely high air temperatures in the countries of Western Europe in 2003, a number of the highest category typhoons in the Atlantic shore of the USA in 2004. The World Bank estimated that during the last 30 years the total damage from natural disasters in the countries of Europe and Central Asia alone amounted to over 70 billion dollars. In some countries the damage from natural and man-made disasters reaches 20 per cent of gross domestic product.

The whole world is now under the shocking impression of the catastrophe in the Indian Ocean area. Hundreds of thousands of perished, material damage for billions of dollars, longstanding rehabilitation and reconstruction works to be done - this is the incomplete list of this planetary scale disaster.

The Russian Federation immediately joined international activities for humanitarian response to the tsunami consequences. On December 27 we accomplished two cargo flights to Sri Lanka and delivered rescue teams, equipment, portable water, food and other humanitarian assistance to the affected population. In accordance with the President direction there was made a decision to deliver also food grain to the affected region. We deployed mobile hospitals and sanitary epidemic teams in Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Russia plans as well to provide considerable financial contribution through specialized UN Agencies' channels.

Similar trends are observed in the Russian Federation too. Russia's territory is characterized by a great diversity of natural conditions and indicators of social and economic situation in the regions. Differences in composition and intensity of natural threats, unequal distribution of hazardous industrial facilities combined with diversity of demographic rates create prerequisites for substantially varying levels of threats of natural, man-made, biological and social emergencies in different regions of the country.

During the last five years a trend was observed towards a slight decrease in the number of emergencies in the Russian Federation. The scale of their consequences and damage, however, is increasing (*slide 3*). Direct damage from all types of emergencies in 2003 exceeded 3 billion dollars.

During 2001 and 2002 in Russia's territory there were three catastrophic floods which occur, according to the forecasts, once in 100 years (*slide 4*). The spring high water on the Lena river (May 2001) resulted in flooding over five thousand settlements with water running more than 20 meters higher and damage exceeding 5 billion rubles. During the rain flood in the Southern Federal District (June 2002) 114 persons died and over 300 thousand were affected, the damage exceeded 15 billion rubles. The rain flood at the Black Sea coast in the Krasnodarsky Krai (August 2002) coincided with a unique natural phenomenon - a gigantic waterspout. A mean semi-annual precipitation fell bringing the death toll to 59 persons and damage amounting to over 1 billion rubles. The floods consequences had repercussions throughout the whole country and made the implementation of a number of large investment projects impossible.

During recent decades the Russian Federation has gained a vast experience in practical implementation of the strategy of disaster and accident reduction. I would like to elaborate on only some of them.

**The creation of mechanisms to prevent emergencies and accidents (*slide 5*)** is one of the most important areas of the state policy in disaster reduction. In recent years, we witnessed a change of paradigm in this area, including refocusing of efforts from response to the emergencies that already occurred to the prevention of dangerous processes and events. System of monitoring and forecasting natural and man-made emergencies plays a central part in this respect. Activities aimed at establishing regional and local emergency monitoring and forecasting centers have been practically completed.

Scientific and technological achievements contribute greatly to the reduction of emergency threat. In the field of identification of risks and responding to emergencies, Russia has developed modern technologies to assess robustness, seismic resistance and durability of

buildings and constructions and has established a geographic information system to forecast consequences of emergencies in earthquake-prone regions, as well as a security monitoring system in the areas of disastrous floods.

Russia has established a space system of emergency monitoring and developed methodology for remote detection of destructions, forest fires, oil spills, earth creeps and mudflows.

The Russian Federation has extensive **experience in the field of use of civil defense forces and resources to mitigate consequences of emergencies and catastrophes**. That experience has been gained during the periods of war, as well as in peace-time. Civil defense forces are used to fulfil a broad range of tasks, as shown on the diagram (slide 6).

Considering their qualification and special training, civil defense forces can successfully perform the following types of works when mitigating consequences of emergencies:

- engineer, radiological, chemical and biological reconnaissance in the zones affected after the destruction of hazardous industrial facilities as a result of the impact of natural destructive forces;
- evacuation of people from the areas of dangerous chemical and radiological contamination resulting from the destruction of hazardous facilities;
- extinguishing large-scale forest and peat-bog fires;
- priority life support to the affected population, including delivery of food, warm clothes and other essentials;
- decontamination of roads, vehicles, living and industrial premises as well as sanitary and hygienic treatment of the population.

**A single national system for emergency prevention and mitigation of consequences thereof** forms the basis of the national mechanism to coordinate and carry out activities in the field of disaster risk reduction (slide 7).

This system is composed of regulatory bodies, forces and facilities of federal executive authorities and of the authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, as well as the resources of local authorities and organizations empowered to solve the issues relating to the counter-emergency protection of the population and territory, to elaborate and implement legal and economic norms in this sphere, to implement target and scientific and technological research programmes, to ensure the readiness of forces and facilities and to provide training of the population for action in case of emergency.

The main objectives of the system's activities are:

- to prevent accidents, catastrophes and natural disasters;

- to reduce losses and damages from emergencies;
- to provide emergency control and priority life support to the population.

The system comprises territorial and functional sub-systems and is operating at five levels (*slide 8*) - federal, regional, territorial, local, as well as facility level.

Each level of the system has its own steering bodies; permanent governing bodies; units and means; reserves of financial and logistical resources; communication, warning and information support systems; special educational establishments.

Target budget financing within **federal target programs** (*slide 9*) is an efficient mechanism of disaster and catastrophe risk management. The implementation of the federal target program "Reduction of Risks and Mitigation of Natural and Man-Made Emergencies in the Russian Federation" is based on the Federal Law on Protection of Population and Territories from Natural and Man-Made Emergencies. The Program is aimed at reducing risks and mitigating consequences of accidents, catastrophes and natural disasters in the Russian Federation for better protection of the population and territories from natural and man-made emergencies. This aim is achieved by combining scientific research, law-making, investment activities and technological innovations.

Early in 2004 in Russia **activities aimed at declaring security of administrative and territorial units** (constituent entities of the RF and municipal units) (*slide 10*) were initiated to improve the existing system of declaring security of potentially dangerous industrial facilities.

Security passports of territories contain a comprehensive evaluation of the achieved level of life safety in a particular territory in terms of maximum values of indicators reflecting its level of development as regards the following spheres of life: social and spiritual; internal policy; economic; municipal and housing; natural; technical; ecological; information; psychological; criminal; the sphere of terrorist manifestations.

The criteria maximum values are set on the basis of statistical data which characterize the situation in the mentioned spheres of people's life in Russia, taking into account the world tendencies.

The safety passports of territories are based on a system of quantitative criteria for evaluation of security and life quality of the population across the basic sectors of life safety in terms of potential internal and external dangers and threats.

In November 2004 Russia made an important step towards implementation of a sustainable development strategy, with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as its inalienable part. Following long discussions **the Kyoto Protocol** (*slide 11*) was ratified, that

makes it possible for all countries which had ratified this document earlier to initiate practical measures to reduce the greenhouse gases emission.

The Protocol sets commitments for each signatory, regarding quantitative indicators of the reduction of the greenhouse gases emission into atmosphere within the first period of its validity - from 2008 to 2012. The commitments of the Parties to the Protocol as regards quantitative indicators of the reduction of the greenhouse gases emission into atmosphere will be specified during talks with the Parties to the Protocol expected to begin in 2005.

The global changes implications are of complex nature and, in particular, may provoke an increase of catastrophic phenomena and processes risk. Forecasts show that climate change in the territory of Russia may have a significant impact upon frequency and scale of natural, man-made, biological and social emergencies (*slide 12*). The worst implications are to be expected in the Asian part of the country and in the Northern territories of Russia. At the same time organizational, economic and natural adaptation possibilities of the European part of Russia are evaluated higher in comparison with the Asian ones. According to expert estimates almost all key economic sectors of the moderate zone of the Asian part of Russia are highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

In today's context, the importance of security and its weight in the general rating of the quality of life of a society and development of a socio-economic system are constantly growing. Enhancing security of an individual, society, state and the world community as a whole has become a key priority for the coming decades and a main objective of the strategy aimed at providing survival of the human civilization in the present and predictable environment (*slide 13*).

A nation should be governed based on a concept underlying the chosen strategy, i.e. development priorities set by national leaders taking into account the analysis of the balance of socio-economic opportunities and threats for the sake of ensuring sustainable development.

A new approach to state governance could be based on **a concept of strategic risks** understood as such combinations of risks of certain crisis events, processes, catastrophic situations and their possible consequences which would substantially undermine the security level of the state in general.

Today, we have developed principles and mechanisms of the use of integrated indicators of strategic risks to control social and economic development at a national and regional levels, and have completed a preliminary forecast of strategic risks in the main spheres of life of our society and state.

Russia has acquired positive experience of the implementation of recommendations formulated in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction within the framework of cooperation with member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (*slide 14*). The CIS countries occupy a considerable part of the Eurasian continent - over 22 mln. sq. km, with a population of approximately 300 mln. people. The size and geographic peculiarities of this vast region explain a high risk of natural disasters of most of a major part of the known types in its territory. The presence of a great number of industrial facilities in many regions, developed economic infrastructure, a high level of urbanization and often poor technical state of obsolete productive assets, explain a heightened risk of accidents and disasters. Difficult environmental situation in some countries of the Commonwealth also aggravates the situation in the field of prevention and mitigation of consequences of natural and man-made emergencies.

Due to the recognition of their individual and common interests, the member states of the Commonwealth demonstrate their wish to integrate and cooperate in resolving issues of prevention and management of natural and man-made emergencies through the establishment of a collective security system in this field (*slide 15*).

In January 1993, the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth signed the Agreement on Interaction in the Field of Prevention and Mitigation of Consequences of Natural and Man-Made Emergencies. During the past decade, Commonwealth States have implemented a number of major national and interstate development programs and programs aimed at responding to natural and man-made disasters and catastrophes as well as at developing strategies of their prevention and mitigation consequences thereof.

For the purposes of implementation of the provisions of that Agreement, **the Interstate Council on Natural and Man-Made Emergencies** was established composed of plenipotentiary representatives of the States Parties to the Agreement. An overwhelming majority of them are deputy heads of the national authorities in charge of civil defense and emergency issues.

Establishment of the Commonwealth Agency for Monitoring and Forecasting Natural and Man-Made Emergencies gave rise to a new line of activities in the field of prevention of emergencies. In May 1995, the Scientific Council for Emergency Prevention and Response composed of prominent scientists from the CIS countries was created to coordinate research activities and to develop a coherent scientific and technological policy in the area of prevention of and response to natural and man-made disasters.

With a view to further developing and strengthening the international strategy to reduce the risk of emergencies, **the Russian Federation considers it appropriate to put forward a number of initiatives.**

1. The analysis of consequences of various emergencies in the territory of Russia shows that the highest risks are associated with man-made emergencies, such as large fires and accidents at high-risk facilities and electrical energy systems as well as utilities. The above emergencies can lead to man-made/natural disasters. The same is true with respect to other countries.

In recent years, there have appeared **new threats to sustainable development, namely terrorist acts.** There have emerged a new phenomenon terrorism with the threat to use chemical and biological weapons or their components. Potentially, terrorist acts can provoke natural disasters or aggravate their consequences.

*(slide 16)*

**That is why the activities in the framework of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction should not be limited only to dangerous natural phenomena but also should embrace the full range of threats which might provoke natural disasters or aggravate their consequences.**

2. One of the most important tasks is to **form a culture of security and risk** which would correspond to modern realities. That concerns both the activities of decision-makers and the day-to-day life of every person. By the culture of risk a system of views is meant under which risk is perceived as a complex phenomenon related to the uncertainty of future situations of the world and requiring understanding of possible, first of all negative, consequences of decisions to be taken or behavior to be chosen.

The educational system plays an important role in enhancing safety awareness *(slide 17)*. In the Russian Federation there are not only educational programs on disaster risk reduction, but since a long time it also has a functioning national training system for all population groups on safety in natural and man-made emergencies. This system was originally developed in 1920s as a response to military threats to the civilian population and for a long time its purpose has been to educate people in civil protection matters. Since 1986, the emphasis in the training system has shifted to preventing natural and man-made disasters.

In May 1991, a new course in life safety basics was introduced into curricula of all state-run secondary educational institutions. The syllabus consists of 400 class hours. A 136-hour life safety course for higher educational institutions started off the same year.

A degree in life safety was introduced in 1993. In 2003, six thousand students of life safety were enrolled in Russia's 158 higher education institutions offering degrees in this area.

*(slide 18)*

**The formation of security culture is an essential part of developing national attitude and new standards of organization and management of the social development, where the risk should become an ideological, value-laden category. This would bring about a higher sense of responsibility with regard to potential consequences of managerial and behavioral decisions and personal behaviour.**

Before I complete my presentation I would like to declare that Russia is ready to share its experience and participate in establishment of the international net of monitoring, forecasting and early warning of natural disasters including utilization of space technologies. Catastrophic events in the Indian ocean vividly demonstrated the barest necessity of such international network.

In conclusion *(slide 19)*, I express confidence in the success of our Conference and, on behalf of the Russian delegation, I would like to reiterate that our country is prepared to actively participate in encouraging the efficient implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.