

Statement by Samoan delegation on behalf of government at the ICDR

Mr President,

Let me firstly congratulate you sir for your appointment at the helm of this very important conference. On the same notion I would like to echo the congratulatory remarks expressed by previous speakers on the great resilience shown by the Hyoko prefecture for its effective response in rebuilding of this beautiful city that we are herein hosted after the devastating earthquake of 1995. And also extend its sincere sympathies to all the countries and people affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Samoa also contributed to the global efforts in relief donations, but most importantly we hope that our many prayers for a quick recovery will lessen the <sup>substantial</sup> loss suffered in one way or another.

Samoa like other small island developing states is indeed highly prone/at risk of being adversely impacted by many natural hazards. We have been hit by various catastrophes, and recent meteorological information has predicted a possible cyclone in the next month. Since the devastations of two major cyclones in the early 1990, Samoa has been focusing its infrastructural and asset development on an all encompassing path where risk reduction and disaster management are integrated into national planning and community development. Integrated asset management strategies, integrated coastal asset management plans have been established whose development involved community capacity building, national wide awareness and educational programmes. Most importantly are the policies and plans that function

to enhance resilience of coastal communities to the main hazards resulting from disasters of natural origin and climate change triggered, that are being developed for all districts of the country.

With that Mr Chairman, there may be a feeling of readiness in my country with all this integration and mainstreaming taking place. However there is still a greater feeling of uncertainty and nervousness once we are in the cyclone season from Nov to March, (sometimes also throughout the year) due to the lack of an effective early warning system for all disasters. Early warning systems for local as well as regional disasters are critical to complement the work already undertaken at the national level.

(I wish to inform you today that) At the regional level, Samoa is working very closely with other Pacific Island Countries and regional organizations and bodies such as SOPAC, SPREP and others to develop and implement relevant measures to minimize the impacts of natural and human-induced catastrophes. Particular mention is made of the kind contributions of our bilateral and regional development partners in our strive for the reduction of disaster risks. While actions are being taken by our small country at the national level despite the limited resources available at our disposal, Regional mechanisms and systems specifically for the south pacific region will be of even greater importance as a cost effective means of response. On that notion I am pleased to note and welcome the interest, willingness

and readiness of developed and developing donors for supporting such a system, and similar ones for other SIDS regional seas.

Finally, Samoa renders its strong support for this conference to take into account the outcomes of the recent review of the BPOA held in Mauritius for SIDS. It our view that close connections are to be made between the agreements already made internationally at Mauritius and here in order to strengthen regional coordination and effective support that are geared towards building and strengthening the resilience of SIDS to adverse impacts of disasters. My delegation therefore call on the international community to assist the SIDS in developing our human and institutional capacities in disaster management in order to cope with the already experienced impacts of and build our resilience to natural, environmental, social and technological disasters. Of equal importance also is the availability of and access to affordable insurance and reinsurance mechanisms as well and other financing modalities particularly those suitable to our local circumstances. This conference should consider these in detail and use existing reports of workshops and work already progressed in the pacific and Caribbean region as well as in other forums such as the UNFCCC.

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Let me conclude sir by thanking the Government of Japan and its people for hosting this conference and to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) for its excellent arrangements.

**Thank you.**