GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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Swedish statement presented by Mr. Per Olsson Fridh, State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Again, we witness the devastating impact of natural disasters, most recently the cyclones hitting South East Africa and India. We see the links between extreme weather events and climate change, and we realize the need to enhance not only our responses to disasters but also our efforts to reduce the risks of their occurrence and to strengthen resilience.

No one goes safe from the risk of disaster and disasters hit disproportionately. It is the poorest and the most vulnerable who have suffered the most and who are most likely to be affected again. Our obligation to leave no one behind must be backed up with concrete action. Investment in resilient infrastructure and an ecosystem-based approach to disaster risk reduction is key to mitigating the impact of natural disasters. It would drastically reduce the financial cost of humanitarian responses to disasters. More importantly, it would save lives.

While much needs to be done in the short-term, we also need to maintain a long-term perspective, making full use of the potential measures offered within the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. The impact of disasters on security must not be neglected. Despite obvious challenges, more work on disaster risk reduction should be done in conflict settings.

The Sendai Framework gives us the direction. Sweden is committed to meeting all global goals and we file reports in UNDRR's monitoring system for the Sendai framework.

Luckily, Sweden has been spared from major crises, but in the summer of 2018, Sweden was severely hit by wildfires. The economic loss from this, reported under Goal C, amounted to 568 million Euros.

Sweden stands ready to provide assistance to other countries in need, but last summer, when we needed help from outside our boundaries to handle the fires, the EU mechanism proved to be very effective. We welcome the EU initiative rescUE which we hope will prove to be an effective instrument going forward.

As for progress in reaching target E, a national DRR strategy, Sweden already has good legislation in place for the management of crises, but is still in need of a strategy that links the work with sustainable development and shows the importance of preventive work.

Climate change means, among other things, that the incidence of extreme weather events will increase sharply. Today's societies are not adapted for this. It also means a much longer fire risk season in the future. Climate change can also affect our security, including impact on water security, food production, sea-level rise and trade. We need more ecosystem and nature-based solutions to reduce the risks. This would also improve climate adaptation, biodiversity and reduce emission.

Disasters affect men and women differently. Therefore, gender-sensitive planning and responses are needed. Women need to be included in decision-making processes. We should support the leadership of women, and women as agents of change, which will provide benefits for the whole of society. For adequate action, adequate data must be made available. Efficient cooperation and coordination between stakeholders will remain important and we should strive for a more extensive involvement of local actors. Sweden look forward to the results of UNDRR’s localization campaign.

We are pleased to see that UNDRR is a lean and efficient organization. We also pleased to see that UNDRR has taken work on gender parity seriously and been successful in reaching notable progress. The commendable efforts in this regard should continue. While doing an excellent job with the resources available, we are concerned that UNDRR relies to 99 percent on voluntary contributions. Exploring innovative financing options is of importance, including local financing and public-private investments.

Sweden is proud to be the top bilateral donor to UNDRR with an annual core contribution of 6.5 million euros. Our funding is fully flexible, allowing the organization to use the funding when and where it is most needed.

Un-earmarked funding, particularly multi-year, has been found in many instances to have greater impact, especially when addressing social and environmental change agendas. It enables innovation and it provides important catalyst support. We, Sweden, hope more donors step up to create a broader foundation for funding.

Thank you!