**Your Excellences**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my pleasure to participated in the 6th session of the Global Plate Form Disaster Risk Reduction.

I would like to take this opportunity to covey my true thankfulness to the Swiss Confederation for hosting this important event. Thanks to the UNISDR for organizing this important event.

As you all know, disasters set back development gains, reverse economic growth, cause environmental degradation, undermine achieving sustainable development goals and result in human losses and suffering in the affected countries.

Palestine is vulnerable to **natural hazards** including earthquakes, floods, droughts and landslides and **man-made hazards,** mainly, as Israeli violations in terms of: repeated attacks on Palestinian citizens and their property, military attacks or the use of military oppressive forces against Gaza. As well as their control of the Palestinian land, sea and air borders, which impedes the movement of individuals and groups in case of disasters.

The value of losses in the agricultural sector caused by the Israeli Occupation attacks during 2004, 2012 and 2014 wars in the Gaza Strip reached more than 500 million dollars.

In the West Bank, farmers’ losses caused by the Israeli Occupation reached more than 70 million dollars from 2010 to 2018.

Climate change, as well, poses a serious threat on the Palestinian communities and expected to aggravate the problem of land degradation, water availability and food security. According to National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, frequency of extreme weather events (heat waves, winter storms) are expected to increase. During 2013, Palestine experienced two extreme winter storms that tested the ability of national and local institutions to respond and recover from an emergency. These short events clearly showed that Disaster Risk Management, including risk analysis, mitigation and preparedness, were a major gap in the existing system.

The Winter Storm called “Alexa” of December 2013 impacted differently major cities in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The lack of preparedness capacity in Gaza caused the displacement of almost 10,000 people to temporary shelters, damaging approximately 21,000 homes. Additionally, significand agricultural damages were recorded.

The Palestinian Agricultural Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund (**PADRRIF**) was established in 2013 by a special law to deal with the agricultural, political and natural hazards, as well as the establishment of an insurance system and the introduction of technology and early warning systems.

**PADRRIF** is also implementing projects to recover from the losses caused by the Israeli Occupation attacks on farmers with the support of the European Union.

Overall, disaster related risks is further aggravated as a result of the high vulnerabilities of the Palestinian communities which is driven by various factors: **1)** restrictions on mobility and access issues, **2)** lack of control on natural resources, **3)** poor housing conditions and inadequate infrastructure, **4)** lack of awareness about disaster risks at different levels; **5)** limited economic resources to create a resilient society and **6)** increasing rapid urbanization in Palestinian major cities and **7)** high potential for escalation of conflict.

Disaster risk level in Palestine is high and increasing, mainly due to the absence of a “risk informed” disaster risk management system among other factors such as high socio-economic vulnerability, rapid urbanization and limited preparedness capacities.

On 14 March 2017, the Council of Ministers issued a decree to establish the National Disaster Risk Management Centre **(NDRMC)** under the Prime Minister and a National Platform. The National Platform comprises of 41 members representing Ministers, Heads of Governmental Agencies, and representatives of civil society organizations, academia, and private sector.

The main functions of the **NDRMC** are to: 1) lead and facilitate coordination among respective stakeholders and provide technical support on implementing guided prevention measures, 2) facilitate carrying out multi-hazard risk analysis, 3) formulation of a national disaster risk management strategy, 4) enhance preparedness for effective response, and 5) assume command for response and recovery in case of emergencies or disasters at national level.

Following the Palestine’s accession to Sendai framework, the global target of A-E were guided by the work priorities and the guidelines of Sendai Framework for achieving an effective risk management system before 2020. Where we have completed the following:

1. A disaster risk management law has been prepared in Palestine and its implementation procedures.

2. An institutional framework and functional structure was completed at the National Disaster Risk Management Center.

3. Being engaged in international cooperation - UN agencies, Forums, Platforms – for developing international cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction.

4. Provide relevant information of global target (A-D) before 15/10/2018.

Finally, I wish you a successful session and meetings.