**UNESCO Statement in the occasion of 6th Global Platform for disaster risk reduction**

**Date and time: morning of 17 May (exact date and venue will be communicated by UNDRR later)**

Dear Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests,

Disasters induced by natural hazards affect millions of people every year worldwide. It represents a privilege for UNESCO to share with you our progress in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) practices at this 6th Global Platform for DRR.

Working alone or in collaboration with UN Agencies and scientific entities, UNESCO has been a catalyst for international, interdisciplinary cooperation in many aspects of DRR.

UNESCO’s efforts include the promotion of early warning systems; risk and vulnerability assessments of critical infrastructure, notably school facilities; and strengthening resilience of UNESCO-designated sites; and advocacy.

All activities align with the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 (SFDRR) and support Member States (MS) in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Paris agreement.

UNESCO’s work on DRR is unique, due to its multidisciplinary approach, which is increasingly recognized as a key element of multi-hazard risk reduction. UNESCO’s work is essential to support MS in enhancing their knowledge on both technical and policy aspects.

As an example of technical assistance, UNESCO is actively engaged in empowering schools and communities to enhance school safety. UNESCO promotes a multi-hazard school safety assessment methodology, named VISUS, which provides decision-makers with tools and information allowing them to make science-based decisions on where and how to invest their resources for enhancing school safety. So far, UNESCO has assessed more than 1500 schools in seven countries ensuring the safety of more than 500,000 students and educational personnel.

To help MS better understand drought related risks, UNESCO’s International Hydrological Programme published the Latin America and Caribbean Drought Atlas. With its success, the development of a similar Atlas for Africa has started in partnership with regional African institutions. The system combined with drought analysis and seasonal forecasting components enhances the skills of experts, strengthening MS capabilities.

Building on experiences from the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System and the Pacific Tsunami Warning System, UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will continue to improve tsunami preparedness in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and North-East Atlantic.

UNESCO protects cultural and natural heritage, including UNESCO-designated sites and their communities. Preserving heritage, both tangible and intangible, is an effective mean of managing risks more effectively and strengthening social cohesion in times of crisis. UNESCO is actively engaged in assisting MS to implement national and local emergency preparedness and risk mitigation interventions.

Regarding advocacy, UNESCO works closely with scientific and research institutions, UNESCO centres and chairs, and promotes inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation by establishing platforms and networks that promote knowledge exchange. UNESCO is currently chairing the Global Alliance for DRR and Resilience in the Education Sector, a multi-stakeholder mechanism composed of UN agencies, international organizations and global/regional networks, which promotes the Comprehensive School Safety Framework.

UNESCO is an active member of the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction, a global alliance of UN agencies, NGOs and specialist institutes which seeks to promote and scale-up implementation of ecosystem-based DRR. UNESCO is currently involved in the EU funded project OPERANDUM aiming to develop innovative nature-based solutions for DRR through large-scale demonstrations in Europe and beyond.

UNESCO annually raises awareness of DRR measures. In 2018, UNESCO-HQ organized an interactive event for the International Day for Disaster Reduction during UNESCO’s Executive Board. It was an opportunity to advocate technological tools and services developed by UNESCO and its partners to support MS in implementing the SDGs and the SFDRR.

UNESCO functions globally through its regional offices. Our Asia and Pacific office encouraged youth involvement in DRR by initiating the Youth and Young Professionals in Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation (SETI) for DRR program. This resulted in the formation of the youth platform U-INSPIRE Indonesia and support for further platforms across Asia.

Our Regional Office for Arab States recently brought together scientists and practitioners to share information on countries technical and social preparedness to natural hazards. It assisted in developing various tools and materials to support decision-making processes for DRR in the region.

UNESCO believes that all these actions are essential skills for preparedness to mitigate the risks of natural hazards and for “building a culture of resilience”.

UNESCO stays committed to supporting MS in their efforts to build resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.