**Background:**

Text for Remarks on next page. 🡪

The Working Sessions are a key mechanisms for advancing the review of progress under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as part of the [Fifth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform/en) (GPDRR).The working sessions are multi-stakeholder by nature and draw on the extensive experience of representatives from Governments, stakeholder groups, the private sector, regional inter-governmental organizations, national platforms for disaster risk reduction, and UN partners, that are participating or have contributed input in other ways to the review of progress under the Sendai Framework.

With its direct focus on community resilience, this working session provides a significant opportunity for the IFRC to achieve its its goal to use the GPDRR 2017 to strengthen the global focus on the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the local level. In particular the working session provides opportunities to

1. Highlight the work and contributions of the IFRC – particularly in the Road to Resilience guidance and the One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC)
2. Hear and learn from others on their own contributions toward strengthening local implementation of the Sendai Framework
3. Identify opportunities for advancing the attention to community resilience in other related global agendas, especially the Localization agenda under the Grand Bargain

The working session is intended to produce 4 outputs:

1. Elements for a new model of interaction between communities and local and national governments to reap the benefits of inclusive decision-making processes to reduce disaster risk and strengthen resilience
2. Recommendations to build capacity at the community level in disaster risk reduction and to strengthen resilience. The session provides an important opportunity to participants to share good practices and success stories on integrating disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development at the community level.
3. Key components for a community resilience framework that fosters an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and resilience and supports enhanced governance and interaction between community, local and national levels in support of Target (e) of the Sendai Framework.

Target (e) – *“Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020”* – [Overview chart of Sendai Framework](http://www.unisdr.org/files/44983_sendaiframeworksimplifiedchart.pdf)

1. Opportunities to strengthen the access of communities to financial resources and related services to build long-term community resilience to disasters through localization of international and national assistance, improved pooling of local resources, and increased private-public partnership.

**Remarks *[Total time is 3 minutes – to be confirmed]***

I would like to start by thanking my honorable co-chair, His Excellency, Dr. Win Myat Aye, Minister of Social Welfare in Myanmar. I valued the insights that he shared in his remarks and am reminded by his accomplished career that we all have multiple roles to play in resilience – as individuals, as family members, and as leaders in the organizations and in the communities and networks in which we work.

As I look around the room, I am very pleased to see the wide range of interest in the topic that has brought us here together. Community Resilience lies at the heart of the work that we do at the Red Cross Red Crescent – both in terms of the engagement of local volunteers in this work and in the focus given to local risk priorities and to local capacities and capabilities. In these respects community resilience is fundamental to advancing and protecting our progress in advancing the Sendai Framework and in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and related global goals. But you already recognize this – that’s why you are here.

This idea of acceleration is very interesting. Acceleration, as understood by physicists, has both magnitude and direction. These are important points to keep in mind as we proceed with our discussions today. As noted in the Sendai Framework, evidence indicates that the exposure of people and assets in all countries is increasing faster than vulnerability is decreasing. We need to reverse this direction. We can do this by increasing the pace of our investment and action in support of community resilience, but we also need to be mindful that we are moving in the same direction – a direction guided by local communities themselves.

We want to take advantage of your wisdom and learning throughout this session to help us do this better.

Along with my colleagues in the Red Cross Red Crescent, I am incredibly committed to the idea of ‘accompaniment’ – the idea that it is our role to accompany the vulnerable along their journey to resilience. It is not our role to set the path or direction but to help vulnerable communities to find their own best path -- and to lead and guide one another.

Within the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we have launched a new tool called the Road to Resilience, which is about helping vulnerable communities to find these paths. It builds on the experience that we and other organizations have with participatory assessment and extends the approach to helping communities identify resilience solutions and create action plans that draw on local resources and make the best use of national and international assistance. As is clear from this work, risk and vulnerability are already well localized. Now we need to ensure that our solutions and resourcing are similarly localized as well.

This work is, of course, not always easy. We recognize that communities are complex systems with diverse stakeholder interests and interdependent dynamics. This is especially true in the urban contexts in which growing proportions of our populations live. Communities in cities exist in a variety shapes and forms, sometimes based on spatial proximity but increasingly based on other types of identity and connection – be those social, economic, religious, or even entirely virtual.

Especially in these contexts, communities and individuals must be inspired and engaged with a sense of their own responsibility and power to reduce risks. This is essential to a resilience agenda. The absence of proper localisation of the disaster risk reduction agenda was one of the major gaps in the global achievements under the Hyogo Framework. We now have a chance to remedy this gap. Enabling more effective local level implementation of Sendai will require national systems and investments for disaster risk reduction that effectively reach local communities, complement local initiative and leadership, and enable early action on the ground. This means for instance connecting national climate and weather information, with early warning systems that effectively reach at-risk communities, and providing funding to local actors to enable early preparedness actions, through mechanisms such as forecast-based financing.

It also means strengthen the enabling regulatory environment (laws, policies and plans) to better enable and complement local action and inclusive community empowerment.

In the IFRC we are committed to being the best partner that we can to local communities -- to accompany them on their resilience journey and help them ‘accelerate’ their progress. We are strengthening our own capacities and systems, through tools like the RoadMap to Community Resilience, which I invite you all to review, use, and even come back to us with comments or ideas on how we can make our approach better. We have already seen a significant expansion in our members’ activities and invesments in disaster risk reduction; Water, Santitation, and Hygience; and Community-based Health and First Aid. For example between 2015 and 2016, we have seen an increase of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in our collective DRR programming. So we are looking forward to continued ‘acceleration’ in all of these programme areas in the years ahead. We are also expanding our own corps of volunteers (now 17 million strong) and working with partners like you to recognize and empower volunteering of all types (community, corporate, organizational, and even virtual) as a key element for civic engagement and local action.

Finally, the IFRC is committed to enhancing local capacity through partnerships. Together with UNICEF, WFP, the Connecting Business initiative (of which UNDP, OCHA, and UN-ISDR are partners), and the Global Resilience Partnership, the IFRC is leading the One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC) with the goal to engage at least one person in every family, every business, and every community to take action to increase their preparedness and reduce their vulnerability. Together we plan to activitely engage 1 billion people by 2025 and provide opportunities for them and for their communities to record their actions as contributions toward the SDGs. By linking our networks to make more opportunities available locally, we can ‘make local resilience actions count’ and multiply through our networks.

Come join us in our side events this afternoon to learn more about 1BC, Forecast-based Financing, and other related initiatives, such as the RoadMap to Community Resilience Ignite Stage event.

Together we can share and expand the culture of civic engagement, community volunteerism and empowerment which will be crucial to the success of the Sendai Framework. I look forward to the comments from our esteemed colleagues in the panel to start us off in this direction together and to all of your insights as well.