

2018 ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 3rd – 6th July 2018

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY INDIA

Excellency/Chairperson

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives us immense pleasure to be part of the Indian Delegation for the 8th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction being hosted here in this beautiful city of Ulaanbaatar. On behalf of the Government and the People of India, we extend our warmest greetings and take this opportunity to congratulate the host, the Government of Mongolia and United Nations, for organizing this event.

2. It was our privilege to host the 7th AMCDRR in November, 2016 at New Delhi. At the Delhi AMCDRR, more than 50 countries came together for the 1st time after the adoption of SFDRR and adopted the Asia Regional Plan to provide a sense of urgency to the implementation of Sendai Framework in our region. Our Prime Minister outlined a 10-point agenda to provide a practical road map for the implementation of SFDRR in India and the region.

3. In just over a year after the adoption of SFDRR, we launched our National Disaster Management Plan aligned with the Sendai Framework. However, we look at our plan as not a static document. Based on the experience of implementing it over the last two years and inputs from stakeholders, we are already in the process of revising our plan. However devising plans and strategies particularly at local level remains a big challenge. In addition, implementation again at the field level is a big challenge due to lack of technical, financial and human resources. To overcome this, capacity building should be one of the main areas while investing in disaster risk reduction. This will help us achieve Target E by 2020.

4. It is common knowledge that bulk of global infrastructure investment during the next few decades will take place in developing countries. India believes that there is an urgent need to ensure that the infrastructure to be created anywhere;

should be resilient to disaster. It is in this context that one of the featured events organized by us in AMCDRR 2016 was on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI). We also hosted an international workshop on DRI in January, this year, in which more than 21 nations participated. We are happy to note that Mongolia, the host country, is also organising a featured event on DRI. It is our earnest endeavour to work along-with other nations and stakeholders to build partnerships and collaborate in the domain of resilient infrastructure.

5. We believe that Disaster Risk Reduction will be more effective if we work together; as disasters recognize no boundaries. There are common challenges. There are benefits of sharing best practices and in case of a major disaster, there is also a need to respond together for search, rescue and to provide immediate relief. Towards this end, India had organized a Joint Exercise of SAARC Nations in 2015. In view of the successful conduct of that exercise and the need to bring synergy, India conducted another joint exercise of BIMSTEC Nations in October, 2017. We are planning to conduct one more joint exercise for SCO nations next year.

6. While analysing the pattern of disaster mortality for different hazards, we found that mortality due to heat wave was quite high. Working across the entire chain of stakeholders, by improving heat –wave early warning and its application at the local level, we have been able to drastically reduce heat wave mortality in last two – three years. We will be sharing our experience in a thematic session later during the conference.

7. Both SDGs and SFDRR call for resilience in the education sector. At the country level, we have successfully implemented School Safety Programme in 8,600 schools in the selected 43 districts spread over 22 States/UTs of the country falling in seismic zone IV & V. This is an endeavour to bring national spotlight on Children's safety and disaster risk reduction. We are now monitoring the time-bound implementation of the National Guidelines on School Safety Policy.

8. We are implementing a National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project to reduce vulnerability of coastal communities to cyclones, through development of early

warning communication system, construction of multipurpose cyclone shelters, roads & bridges linking such cyclone shelters, saline embankments, capacity building of coastal communities and strengthening risk mitigation capability at different levels to mainstream Disaster Risk Mitigation in the overall Development Agenda. Drawing on the experience of the cyclone risk mitigation progress, we will soon be launching a comprehensive project on similar lines to address risks due to earthquakes.

9. The Sendai Framework calls for disaster risk management in cultural sites and heritage. We have formulated National Disaster Management Guidelines on Cultural Heritage and Museums. We will be sharing our experience on this front also in a separate round table side event.

10. In order to measure progress against the Sendai Framework, we need to systemise disaster data. This will not only help us to measure progress against targets but also help risk informed decision making. Setting up of disaster database on a sustainable basis with common understanding by a number of actors who would be entering disaster losses into database itself is a big challenge. Regional support and sharing of best practices may facilitate in setting up of disaster database. We had recently organised a National Workshop to brainstorm various aspects and challenges that we are likely to encounter in setting up of a National Disaster Database. It will be our endeavour to set up Disaster Database expeditiously well before the target date of 2020.

11. In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment and support towards implementation of SFDRR and Asia Regional Plan. In this endeavour, we look for opportunities to collaborate with countries, learn from their experiences and share what we have learnt on DRR.

12. Before I conclude and take my seat, I once again thank the Government and people of Mongolia and UNISDR for organising this event and making our stay very comfortable.

Thank you for your kind attention.