

OFFICIAL STATEMENT SWITZERLAND

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here today, even more so as I'm representing a non-Asian country. As historical host of the UNISDR Global Platform on DRR, we are glad to share **Switzerland's contributions to protecting sustainable development gains in the Asia-Pacific region.**

1. As an **Alpine country**, Switzerland has always faced natural hazards: Riverine flooding, avalanches and mud flows put people and infrastructure at risk. Already in the 19th century, Switzerland invested in large-scale flood mitigation and reforestation schemes. Related federal laws in the 1870s prepared the ground for financial support from the federal government to provinces and municipalities. A national law including the prevention and mitigation of disasters dates back to 1976.
2. Today, Switzerland is in a privileged position to share its century-old experience: at the **global level**, our efforts such to link DRR with the Sustainable Development Agenda paid off: DRR-relevant targets can be found in 10 out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

3. DRR is a priority theme in our international cooperation, particularly in **Southeast Asia and the Pacific**, where Switzerland is contributing to the implementation of the Sendai (including its target F) and Regional Frameworks in various ways:

A few examples:

In **Mongolia**, our Green Gold Project is promoting sustainable rangeland management. An internationally recognized monitoring system is now used by the Government to assess rangeland health. 42'000 herder households (one fourth of all herder households) are applying sustainable rangeland management practices, and the development of a rangeland law has been initiated in 2015. Since July 2017, Switzerland has in addition provided technical support to the Mongolian National Emergency Management Agency to strengthen urban search and rescue capacities.

In the **DPRK**, we are introducing erosion control and gully plugging to stabilise slopes, improve land management and livelihoods for farmers in mountainous areas, in collaboration with authorities. The number of sloping land user groups has increased from 19 to 202 in 12 years, covering over 2,000 ha of land.

In the **Mekong**, we are linking DRR to integrated water resource management and early warning systems in **Cambodia**, thereby promoting agriculture, food security and livelihoods. In **Myanmar**, we have built over 100 disaster resistant schools that can shelter

tens of thousands of people during disasters. More importantly, we have capitalized on the experience gained to develop safe and child friendly national school construction guidelines, in collaboration with the Ministries.

4. At the **regional level**, within the frame of the ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, we are assisting the ASEAN in implementing the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response: by supporting high level policy dialogue and training in disaster management for the ten ASEAN countries, regional and national capacities are strengthened, while fostering the vision of “one ASEAN – one response”.
5. Our contribution to policy dialogue and disaster preparedness is being replicated in the **Pacific**, starting in Vanuatu, and with a regional perspective to support the implementation of the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific.
6. Switzerland is also engaged in the field of **disaster displacement**: As former Co-Chair of the Nansen Initiative and member of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, Switzerland actively promotes the implementation of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda. We do so, for instance, by working towards enhanced policy coherence at the global level across the relevant thematic areas, such as protection and humanitarian assistance, DRR, climate change adaptation and migration management.

7. Last but not least, Switzerland is ready to assist and deploy **Specialized Swiss Emergency Response teams** in case of a major disaster. Through our DRR and Emergency Response hub in Bangkok, and in partnership with the UN, AHA Centre, IFRC and technical partners, we therefore continuously monitor natural hazardous events in Asia and the Pacific.

8. In May 2019, the DRR community will come together again in Geneva for a particularly important edition of the UNISDR Global Platform: four years after Sendai and one year before the deadline for Target E, we will assess together the data submitted by Member States and take stock of the progress achieved.

Switzerland is delighted to host and co-chair the Platform.

We do not only strongly believe in the merits of DRR as such; we also believe that DRR is of vital importance in achieving the other landmark agreements of 2015: namely, to achieve comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable development by 2030.

To emphasize these interlinkages, the title of next year's Global Platform was therefore chosen to be "*Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies*".

9. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, we are looking forward to welcoming you next May in Geneva: we await with high interest your reports on progress achieved and look forward to your ideas on how to maximize DRR-related resilience dividends.

Thank you for your attention.