



MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PACIFIC

SENATOR THE HON. CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS

Australian Ministerial Statement

Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

Ulaanbaatar

Wednesday, 4 July 2018, 9:00am-12.00pm

Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, distinguished guests and participants; Australia is delighted to be participating in the 8th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

I thank the Government of Mongolia and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for organising this Conference.

Australia is vulnerable to crisis - drought, bushfire, cyclones, and floods. We have experienced how disasters destroy lives, livelihoods and infrastructure, and create instability and undermine economic development.

And we know that drivers of risk - in Australia and across the Indo-Pacific region – are expected to increase in the future.

Australia remains firmly committed to implementing the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* and the *Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework*.

The Sendai Framework provides an opportunity for nations to improve disaster risk management practices, and efforts to improve disaster resilience.

Like the Sendai Framework, Australia's National Strategy for Disaster Resilience stresses that disaster resilience is a shared responsibility across all sectors of society – individuals, communities, businesses, the not-for-profit sector, and all levels of government alike – not just emergency management agencies.

Disaster risk reduction is everybody's business.

In April this year, the Australian Government established a National Resilience Taskforce within the Department of Home Affairs to lead nation-wide reforms to reduce the impact and financial burden of disasters on our communities and economy.

The Taskforce's first priority is to develop a five-year National Risk Reduction Framework addressing existing risks and limiting new risks.

To develop the Framework, the Taskforce will engage all levels of government, communities and the private sector, including insurance and finance.

The Framework, and the Australian Government's broader natural disaster reform agenda, will seek to deliver an integrated, cohesive approach to disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

It will highlight the importance of empowering action at the community level, through partnerships between governments and the private sector.

Importantly, the Framework will help to drive Australia's domestic implementation of the Sendai Framework.

The Taskforce is also scoping a national disaster risk information capability to equip decision makers and Australians with the knowledge they need to prepare for natural disasters.

Australia is also taking action to understand our preparedness to report against the Sendai Framework. Measuring our progress against the targets will provide a better understanding of whether our policies and programs are reducing disaster risk.

The high priority that Australia is giving to disaster risk reduction domestically is also reflected in our actions internationally.

Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper released in 2017 recognises a range of significant trends shaping our world. Not least among these is the challenge posed by climate change.

Many countries in Australia's immediate region, especially small island states and those with large delta cities will be increasingly affected – with economic, environmental and security risks.

Australia continues to prioritise aid investments that support effective national action to reduce disaster risks. We draw on our domestic disaster risk management and climate change capabilities to support our neighbours confront the challenges of natural hazards and climate variability.

A priority for Australia is to promote enhanced gender and disability inclusion across all stages of the disaster risk management and disaster management cycles.

In 2016 – 17, Australia's funding on disaster risk reduction international aid expenditure was estimated at AU\$120 million, and 3.1 per cent of Australia's development cooperation program.

Australia recognises that disaster risk reduction and building resilience are central to good development outcomes. For development to be sustainable, it must be risk-informed to reduce the devastating impacts that disasters can have on development gains.

Australia is committed, at home and in our international efforts, to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to natural hazards through disaster risk reduction.

Through our collective efforts, we are confident that this will lead to greater stability and prosperity in the region. Thank you.