



Statement of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the Africa-Arab Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction. Tunis, 9-13 October 2018

Mr. President
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al Othaimeen, I would like to express our deep condolences over the loss of life following the heavy floods in Nabeul, last month and to Indonesia and Uganda that experienced very recently similar tragedies due to natural disasters.

Allow me also to express the OIC gratitude to the Government and people of Tunisia for hosting the first ever Africa-Arab Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and for their warm hospitality.

I would like to convey as well OIC congratulations to the African Union and the League of Arab States for their initiative to convene jointly, in collaboration with the UNISDR, such an important event, that brings together sister countries from Africa and Arab regions to address common concerns with regard to DRR.

Many of Members States from these two regional organizations form the majority of the OIC. It is therefore an opportunity for our organization to reaffirm today the engagement towards the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction at local, National, regional and global levels.

The OIC considers that the theme of this conference is more relevant than ever. Disaster risk informed and inclusive sustainable development call for anticipation, inclusion and sustainability in our reflection and action.

An effective data collection on range of vulnerabilities, participatory approach that brings together the whole society and development oriented policies and actions are critical to prevent, mitigate and respond effectively to the human, social and economic impacts of disasters.

A recent report produced by an OIC research institution, SESRIC, outlined that more than 800 million people in OIC countries were affected from natural disasters since 1970, with more than 50 million in just last three years.

The magnitude and severity of natural disasters in our regions and the high vulnerability of our populations to natural hazards and effects of climate change urge us to look at best synergies and inclusive partnerships for investing into building resilience to shocks and for developing evidence-based policies.

Therefore, and as it was recalled by many, it is time to work actively for the implementation of the Sendai framework, particularly its target (e).

Having in mind the four priorities of this landmark framework, it is clear that national and local Disaster risk reduction strategies could help achieving effective and inclusive governance systems to manage Disaster risk and to be better prepared to the recurrence of natural hazards and to climate change and their devastating impacts.

While OIC countries account for around one fifth of total natural disasters in the world, they account for almost two fifth of total number of people killed by natural disasters in the world during the period 1970-2016.

This reflects the level of vulnerability of OIC countries to disasters. But it also calls for an urgent action from OIC Member States to implement the priorities and targets of the sendai framework.

It was also extensively recalled during our deliberations that natural disasters and conflicts usually have adverse impacts on the welfare of communities, by increasing their vulnerabilities and worsening poverty, inequality, discrimination and access to basic services. They are as well drivers of internal displacement and migration as their effects undermine peace and stability and self reliance of communities in the affected countries.

The exposure of OIC countries to natural and man-made disasters as well as to climate change, water scarcity and environmental degradation, requires substantial and long-term commitments and action from all stakeholders, including women and youth to overcome these challenges.

In this regard, a holistic and inclusive approach involving disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery should drive national and local strategies to be set up by 2020.

Therefore, strong recommendations should be reiterated to working collectively for disaster risk reduction. Subsequently, it would be necessary to strongly advocate for efficient policy shift from response to prevention and mitigation to ensure effective resilience.

It is in this regard that the OIC, the IDB, SESRIC and the Turkish Red Crescent jointly organized a workshop on 2-3 October in Istanbul aimed at reinforcing the capacities of humanitarian NGOs and other civil society organisations to help build resilience of affected communities. Furthermore, recommendations were made to pool financial and material resources for efficient and sustainable impact on all beneficiaries.

Finally, it is important to underline the linkage of the DRR strategies to the implementation of the SDGs, which is in our view, a good start to integrating disaster risk management concerns into national development planning and to strengthening the capacity of the institutions for disaster risk management at local and national levels.

I thank you.