It is my pleasure to address this meeting on behalf of the UNISDR.

UNISDR is pleased to know that disaster risk reduction has been identified as one of the important emerging issues in the context of the preparatory process for the Rio+20. Anthropogenic factors such as poor land-use planning and management practices, ecosystem degradation, poverty as well as climate variability all lead to an increase in disaster risk at a rate that poses significant threats to lives and assets, jobs and development efforts.

While developing countries are disproportionately at risk, the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami remind us that even developed countries are exposed to high disaster risks. Economic loss risk to weather-related hazards such as floods is increasing faster in the OECD, which includes many western European countries, than in any other income region in the world. The volcanic ash cloud that affected Europe in April 2010 is estimated to have cost US$521 million in lost GDP in the United Kingdom and US$ 4.7 billion globally\(^1\). The death toll during the 2003 European heatwave reached to 72,210\(^2\). Indeed, Europe is facing a range of emerging risks, which highlight new patterns of vulnerability.

**Key Messages for the Rio+20:**

Many governments have already recognized that disaster risk reduction and risk management through concrete action and political commitment could bring significant benefits and opportunities for economic and social development as well as environmental protection. However, more needs to be done as the world’s vulnerability and exposure to disaster is growing faster than its ability to increase resilience. Ahead of Rio+20, a strengthened political and financial commitment is crucial to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes a core component of sustainable development. The following actions could be initiated by governments in order to accelerate the implementation and integration of DRR in the development agenda:

- Know risks and account for disaster losses: Establishment of national disaster loss databases (that account for all disaster loss and damage) and risk assessments can help countries to estimate their probable maximum losses and also estimate the costs and benefits of disaster risk

---

\(^1\) UNISDR. 2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction *Revealing Risk, Redefining Development.*


management strategies and options. This will also help in justifying investments related to disaster risk reduction.

- Integrate disaster risk reduction into public investments and sustainable development plans: Factoring and applying disaster risk into public investment decisions can directly address critical risk drivers and downplay potential disaster-related losses and costs. Through the application of DRR, quality and sustainability of public spending is enhanced and further contributes to social and economic development.

- Utilize disaster risk reduction as an instrument to achieve a more sustainable (greener) economy: Ensuring that physical infrastructure meets disaster resilient design standards is critically important. The exposure and vulnerability of infrastructure takes a significant toll on the economy of disaster affected countries and regions. When buildings and bridges are damaged by disaster, recovery is further inhibited and the ability of businesses to bring employees back to work at full scale is reduced. Addressing these factors can reduce the scale of losses and strengthen the resilience of the local economy. Businesses – both small and large – are increasingly planning for resilience through business continuity planning and the protection of supply chains.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that a clear prescription and practical application of disaster and climate risk are much needed to bring resiliency and sustainability to any development efforts and future sustainable development frameworks. It is also important to enhance synergies and strengthen coordination among different existing international frameworks and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships as this will help address many of the gaps and challenges in achieving sustainable development.

For delegations that are interested in this issue, you can visit the UNISDR website at: www.unisdr.org.

Thank you for your attention.