

**2019 Sixth Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2019)**

**13-17 May 2019, Geneva**

**Statement by H.E. A.L.A. Azeez, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva**

Co-Chairs,

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the UNDRR and the Government of Switzerland for the effective joint stewardship of the Global Platform.

Since its adoption four years ago we recognize significant developments in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction, especially strategic planning and the use of technological advances. It is satisfying to note that over the last four years, relentless efforts have been taken at national and global levels to ensure that we move away from the practice of managing disasters to managing disaster risk reduction.

The vibrant discourse today emphasizes the importance of benefits of inclusivity and sustainability going beyond just financial dividends. It provides us with a platform to share experiences, understand challenges in fully integrating the Sendai Framework into our national policies and programmes, and to address it in the overall context of SDGs, the UN Urban Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

Co-Chairs,

In understanding ‘resilience dividends’, we may need to look, beyond short term monetary gains, into long-term socio-economic and environmental benefits.

In Sri Lanka, National Strategies for disaster risk reduction have been formulated for the period of 2019-2030 and the national policy on disaster risk management has been revised thus enabling risk-informed implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

- The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) is working with the National Planning Department on establishing online Damage and Loss Reporting System, covering 13 major sectors.
- an insurance scheme against natural disasters for all houses, Small and Medium Scale Entrepreneurs (SMEs) through National Insurance Trust Fund,
- The National Building Research Organization and Institute of Construction Training and Development are working to introduce National Building Codes for disaster-resilient construction.
- A project has been initiated to introduce guidelines for 10 major sectors to mainstream disaster risk reduction and development sectors
- National and local level programmes on mainstreaming DRR into the education sector have been initiated with the support of the Ministry of Education, national universities are conducting M.Sc. programmes and postgraduate diploma programmes in Disaster Risk Management.
- A Muti-Hazard Risk index has been completed by the Government.

A stakeholder approach that is essential for the success of SDGs, is being actively encouraged and pursued.

Sri Lanka recognizes the importance of risk-sensitive economic planning and coherence building between climate and DRR policies to better achieve SDGs. Towards this end, we are currently working on an ‘online damage and loss assessment system’ for all sectors, in light of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage and other standards.

The Government of Sri Lanka is in the process of implementing a Climate-Resilient Integrated Water Management Project. This project is aimed to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka, particularly women.

Ensuring sustainable urban life, economic and spiritual wellbeing and decent living in harmony with Nature remains a foremost national priority. In line with this priority, the Megapolis and Western Development Ministry, for instance, implements a number of targeted sustainable infrastructure development projects.

The Climate Resilience Improvement Project, is mainly focused on contributing towards building a more climatic-resilient economy. Project support to implement urgent climate mitigation investments is important to ensure the short-term integrity of flood control and irrigation infrastructure, transport network and critical education facilities at risk.

An important priority is to optimize coordination throughout the entire disaster management cycle and to sharpen the focus on the disaster emergency response stage. A great emphasis on planning of a long-term recovery process would no doubt help enhance community and stakeholder resilience.

Increased efforts are currently underway to improve knowledge management, information sharing, and establishing coordination and coherence among the relevant institutions and programmes.

Sharing technology and assuring funding support through partnerships, as part of strengthened international cooperation, will go a long way in effectively addressing climate-induced losses and damage.

Other than natural disasters, Sri Lanka has also faced cycles of complex man-made emergencies in the past decades, and we have always demonstrated our ability to rise stronger after these disasters. Last month's Easter-Sunday terrorist attacks shocked and devastated my country, making us re-orient our immediate priorities drastically. Our national efforts are now focused on how best and how rapidly we could rise again. In the coming months, we would bounce back with renewed vigor, and emerge even stronger, demonstrating our collective resolve and resilience.

I thank you.