

**Statement by Hon'ble Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
the Leader of the Nepalese Delegation at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster
Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan on 14-18 March 2015**

Mr. President,
Excellencies Heads of State and Government
H.E. Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honour and privilege for me to address this Conference. First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over this conference and assure you of my delegation's full support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Japan for their warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the UNISDR for the excellent coordination for the organization of this important event.

We attach great importance to this conference as it symbolizes the culmination of our collective endeavours in ensuring that disaster risk reduction is a sustainable and embedded process within the overall development of our countries.

Nepal is committed to the principles, goals and priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). This framework has provided us a valuable guidance and support in developing our disaster risk management approach. It has inspired us to develop a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management. Based on this strategy, we have also drafted a new Disaster Management bill for the consideration of our parliament. It will provide us an important institutional framework to strengthen disaster risk reduction in the country.

Even in the absence of a new and separate Disaster Management Act in force, the Government of Nepal has been undertaking necessary actions on reduction of disaster risks. With the support of our national stakeholders and development partners, the Government has created the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) to implement key areas of our National Strategy. Through the NRRC and the National Platform, the Government has been coordinating efforts to ensure that risk reduction work is also aligned with the national vision.

We have made significant progress over the last decade in line with the spirit of HFA. Nepal has been able to strengthen resilience both at local and national levels. Our reach has been expanded to both rural and urban communities. We are also encouraged by the global recognition of our progress in this regard as well as our efforts for innovative coordination mechanisms. Nevertheless, we are seriously concerned that Nepal continues to remain one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to disasters such as earthquake, flooding, landslide, glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF), etc. The fact that Nepal continues to lose an average of two citizen everyday to natural disasters is something that alarms us. It is also estimated that the human losses in the Kathmandu Valley alone, should there be a major seismic event, will be similar to those in Haiti in 2010.

The year 2015 is critical for Nepal as it is for the global community to underpin resilience in our efforts to promote health, wealth and safety for individuals and communities. Towards this end, our focus this year has been on improving our evidence base. We are currently completing the stocktaking phase of a national risk assessment, strengthening engagement with private sector and evolving our systematic search and rescue capacity. Nepal will shortly complete a substantive review of progress so far made towards search and rescue plans and operations. The Government is committed to formulating a long-term plan in line with the global understanding, resolve and partnership that evolves during this conference. We also expect continued support of and partnership with the international community in the implementation of this plan. Countries like Nepal which is a least developed country and at the same time highly vulnerable to natural and other disasters needs focused attention in terms of building resilience thorough enhanced level of resources and technology from the international community.

Nepal has accorded due priority to ensure easy access to adequate risk information in view of its significance for the promotion of evidence-based decision making and resource allocation for risk reduction. The stocktaking work, currently underway in Nepal, is expected to support the Government's initiative towards defining Nepal's risk reduction priorities over the long term and also ensure that our work is closely aligned with post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction for the next decade and beyond.

The HFA has provided a solid foundation for the global efforts in the disaster risk reduction. Building on this, we expect that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to be developed during this conference will be a milestone in protecting the lives and properties of the peoples in the world. It will help shape priorities over the next decade and allocate resources towards risk reduction. The stocktaking and analysis currently underway in our respective countries will continue to facilitate this task. The Government of Nepal is aware of the need for an enhanced disaster management financing and expects development partners to ensure that their development support is risk informed and disaster management remains a priority for them as well. The Government looks forward to forging necessary collaborations with the development partners in support of our priorities on both hardware and software.

Mr. President,

Disaster risk reduction cannot be a stand-alone process. It must be well integrated with the government priorities and development agenda. In Nepal, despite great progress in our efforts towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals, we have not always been successful in ensuring that these achievements are risk-sensitive. It is, therefore, important that the post-2015 framework for action place greater focus on the integration of disaster risk reduction with development. At national level, we must be prepared to engage all stakeholders across all sectors. In particular, working with private sector is a priority for the Government of Nepal. We welcome the inclusion of this in the post-2015 framework and look forward to sharing our experiences and learning from other countries on strengthening Public-Private Partnership in the days to come.

Nepal also attaches importance to the regional cooperation for disaster preparedness and response. Recent trends in disasters also call for strengthened regional cooperation. The decision to establish the SAARC Environment and Disaster Management Centre in the region is also an indication of our understanding of the need for regional collaboration. We also look forward to working under the umbrella of Asia Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) in the same spirit.

The HFA adopted a decade ago in Japan has been an important instrument in the disaster risk reduction. We need to keep the momentum generated by its implementation throughout the world. Given the seriousness and commitment of all gathered here, again in Japan, I am confident that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be a significant document for the next decade and beyond.

Before I conclude, I would like to appreciate strong commitment demonstrated and proactive role being played by Japan in advancing international cooperation in this field. Japan being one of the most disaster-prone countries has exhibited remarkable resilience in dealing with major disasters in the past. As a global leader in the field of disaster management, its expertise and experience both in the field of disaster preparedness and post-disaster management are exemplary. On this occasion, we also have fresh memories of how Japan effectively handled the deadly triple disaster caused by Great East Japan Earthquake that hit the Tohoku region causing colossal loss of thousands of precious lives and virtual dislocation of the economy of three prefectures in March 2011.

Thank you!