



Bangladesh

**Statement by
Mr. Abdul Alim, First Secretary
on agenda item 54 (C) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
at the Second Committee of the UNGA
New York, 2 November 2005**

I thank the distinguished presenters for their valuable inputs. Our appreciations are also owed to the Secretariat for their preparations of the comprehensive reports. Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement of Ambassador Stafford O. Neil made on behalf of G-77 and China. However, we would like to highlight the following points:

The world is confronted with daunting challenges posed by natural disasters. It diverges from tsunami to hurricane, from floods to earthquake. These disasters are now occurring with greater intensity and devastation than any time before. Building resilience to natural disasters, particularly in the developing countries is therefore, critically important. Well concerted efforts at national, regional and global levels are of paramount importance. World Conference on disaster reduction is a stepping stone. The Secretary General has pointed out that "The conference represented a landmark in worldwide understanding of and commitment to implementing a comprehensive disaster risk reduction agenda".

The Hyogo Framework for Action tailors a comprehensive blueprint for strategic and systematic approach to reduce vulnerabilities and risks to hazards. The commitments of Hyogo are primarily as follows:

1. To place disaster risk at the centre of political priorities and policies;
2. To integrate disaster risk reduction in the development work; and
3. To strengthen the capacity of disaster prone countries to address the risks.

The Framework sets out specific priorities for action on early warning for all hazards. And also on associated risk assessment and preparedness. Agreement on developing global early warning system is a significant achievement of the conference. The need for developing regional initiatives in risk reduction capacities is also asserted in the framework. We

are encouraged to learn that progress is being made in developing an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean region.

Information and data sharing in a timely manner is vital to the success of early warning systems. Experts believe tens of thousands of people could have been saved last December had they been alerted in time. Disaster-prone countries must have access to early-warning information in an unrestrictive and timely manner for their immediate and effective utilization and diffusion.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country. The Government has brought a paradigm shift in disaster management from conventional response and relief approach to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture. The objective is to reduce the vulnerability of people to a manageable and acceptable humanitarian level. We have a number of financial instruments in place to address the needs of people affected by disasters, and these include agriculture credit, micro-credit and community funds.

Our Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) is the vehicle to conduct disaster management reform. It encompasses disaster preparedness, early warning, risk reduction, prevention, mitigation and development. We have also mainstreamed disaster reduction strategies into our PRSP.

Bangladesh is one of the first countries that instituted a national platform to guide risk reduction efforts. It is designed as part of the CDMP. It forms the basis of the Corporate Plan – A Framework for Action 2005 –2009. The National Platform is modeled around five strategic areas. These are as follows:

1. Professionalisation of the disaster management system;
2. Mainstreaming disaster management and building strategic partnerships;
3. Community empowerment;
4. Expanding risk reduction across a broader range of hazards; and finally
5. Strengthening emergency response systems.

The Corporate Plan highlights a road map for the development of internal strategic plans. It also demonstrates a commitment to address key issues like risk reduction, capacity building, climate change, food security, gender issues and the socially disadvantaged people. This will contribute to the successful implementation of our Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG s).

Despite our pragmatic policies and programmes in disaster management, the reality remains that we are resources and technology constrained. Furthermore, due to some seismic and biological faults, Bangladesh runs a high risk of earthquake. We are regularly tormented by cyclones. These natural disasters wreck havoc. The human and material challenges are colossal. Implications for our economy are devastating. Therefore, a state-of-the-art disaster warning system at the Bay of Bengal is necessary to protect the vast vulnerable population of the region. We hope that international cooperation will be forthcoming to establish such a centre.

Mr. Chairman,

The political will that emerged in Hyogo must be translated into reality. Building global partnership and collaboration with increased provision of resources and technology transfer to developing countries, particularly the LDCs, is imperative. It will enhance their capabilities to address the challenges of disasters in an effective way.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.