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*President:* Mr. Körösi ..... (Hungary)

*The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m. on Wednesday, 31 May 2023 and resumed on Tuesday, 6 June, at 10.20 a.m.*

illustrating the need for innovative financing strategies to build long-term resilience.

It is of interest to note that only 32 per cent of SIDS currently have established multi-hazard early-warning systems. The rest remain even more vulnerable to disasters than they were at the time of the adoption of the Sendai Framework. Through the review process, SIDS have identified capacity gaps and inadequate means of implementation as the primary challenges that inhibited the advancement of the Sendai targets. Currently, most disaster funding is allocated to recovery and response rather than prevention or reduction, and the financing that is available is not commensurate with the scale of existing and future disaster risks.

## High-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework

### Agenda item 18 (*continued*)

#### Sustainable development

##### (c) Disaster risk reduction

**The President:** I would like to remind delegations that, as mentioned in the letter dated 11 May from the President of the General Assembly, statements will be limited to three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States.

I now give the floor to the representative of Samoa, who will speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

**Mrs. Bartley (Samoa):** The findings of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are alarming. While small island developing States (SIDS) are the most at risk, the progress made in disaster risk reduction has been very limited. Data gaps, as well as human and technical capacity constraints, have inhibited achievement of priority one and priority two, and the lack of access to capital markets and finite fiscal resources have also posed significant challenges in priority three. There were also numerous missed opportunities to build back better, under priority four,

The challenges in accessing financing, especially concessional financing, is an added burden in mobilizing the scale of finances required. Many SIDS continue to be excluded based on the status of their gross domestic product, which does not accurately reflect their resilience or vulnerability to disasters.

In addition to composition and scale, SIDS would also benefit from a more long-term programmatic approach to financing, rather than focusing on multiple short-term projects that do not comprehensively cover all aspects of disaster risk reduction. Projects should be guided and driven by the needs of recipients.

The persisting challenges in data-collection management and synthesis are also major obstacles in advancing disaster risk reduction and other sustainable development priorities. Education and training, supplemented by measures for retention of skills, must

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be significantly expanded to close those gaps in the coming years.

The Alliance of Small Island States wishes to highlight and emphasize the necessity of the call, in the political declaration (resolution 77/289), to invest in enhancing the capacity and capability of SIDS, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries for disaster risk reduction by strengthening capacity, building investments and programmes at the national, regional and global levels, including through the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Global Education and Training Institute.

Small island developing States are currently preparing to chart our sustainable development pathway for the next decade, which will be adopted at the fourth International Conference on SIDS, taking place in Antigua and Barbuda next year. Strengthening long-term resilience in SIDS is a priority outcome from the Conference. To do so, it is necessary to mainstream disaster risk reduction in all relevant action areas. We hope to have the strong support of the international community to generate targeted and impactful initiatives that will address the challenges in SIDS. Disasters may be inevitable, but increasing damage and destruction need not be. Creating a safer and more resilient future lies in our hands, and it is our collective responsibility for generations to come.

**Mr. Chekeche** (Zimbabwe): I am honoured to submit this statement on behalf of my delegation as we take this opportunity to take stock of what we have achieved since the adoption and implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. We applaud the choice of the theme for the meeting: “Working Together to Reduce Risk for a Resilient Future”.

Hydro-meteorological hazards affecting most Member States, particularly in southern Africa, are becoming more frequent, intense and complex to manage, and these are attributed to climate change. To protect its citizens and assets from the adverse impact of such disasters, Zimbabwe has prioritized the full implementation of the provisions of the Sendai Framework. My country has put in place several disaster risk management policies, strategies and measures that are aimed at risk reduction and resilience-building, in line with our national development strategy.

In that connection, we have launched various initiatives, including the establishment of a civil protection department, the procurement and installation

of weather radar networks, automated weather stations and near-real-time river gauging stations in order to improve accuracy in the detection, monitoring and tracking of severe weather events.

In line with the provisions of the Sendai Framework, we are implementing inclusive disaster risk management in order to ensure that no one and no place is left behind. We value the role that communities play in disaster risk reduction. In that regard, we note the use of traditional leadership structures, which have proven to be very effective, especially for the dissemination of early-warning information and alerts.

The coronavirus disease pandemic taught us fundamental lessons — that response to transboundary hazards requires concerted efforts to strengthen national, regional and international collaboration embracing a sector-wide approach. Disasters are multifaceted, and it is only by working together that disaster risks can be reduced effectively.

**Mr. Tun** (Myanmar): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this high-level meeting. Myanmar welcomes the adoption of the political declaration (resolution 77/289) of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. We thank the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Australia, for their able leadership and hard work.

As we speak, we are witnessing increasingly frequent and intense disasters all over the world and their devastating impacts on the lives and development of people.

Against that backdrop, we reiterate the need to integrate the implementation of the Sendai Framework as part of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We share the view that, without the Sendai Framework, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda cannot be complete. As we reflect on our progress, fragility and strategies for disaster risk reduction at the midpoint of the Sendai framework, it is imperative that we scale up our efforts and investment in disaster risk reduction, infrastructure and resilience building. It is also crucial to address the financing gap and strengthen the international cooperation system so as to increase access to multi-hazard early-warning systems. Those strategies must also be tailored to countries in special situations, particularly least developed countries and small island developing States.

Disasters know no boundaries. Myanmar is one of the most disaster-prone areas. With its unprecedented intensity and devastating consequences, Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm Mocha hit Myanmar and Bangladesh recently and made landfall over the Rakhine coast on 14 May. The cyclone barrelled towards inland Myanmar, passing as an inland storm through Chin and Kachin States and the Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing regions for several hours.

Cyclone Mocha left extensive and catastrophic destruction in its wake. Its impact has exacerbated the existing multiple challenges the people have been encountering due to the illegal military coup and its atrocities. It caused the deaths of more than 450 people, including many Rohingya, and the need of more than 6 million people for humanitarian assistance. The destruction of homes, public infrastructure, roads, bridges, crops and paddy fields is compounding the extreme suffering of the people of Myanmar. The people affected by Cyclone Mocha have faced various severe difficulties ranging from a lack of shelter, food and medicine to interruption of communication networks and transportation.

In response to the pressing humanitarian needs in the affected areas, the National Unity Government activated the Emergency Operation Coordination Committee (EOCC) and approved a contingency fund in the amount of \$1 million for emergency relief operations. The EOCC has responded to all requests for rescue and fulfilment of essential needs of the affected communities through various stakeholders, including local humanitarian actors and community-based organizations.

Taking the opportunity afforded me today, I wish to thank United Nations entities in Myanmar for their committed response and for their cooperation with the EOCC and relevant ministries of the National Unity Government. We welcome the press release by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the Cyclone Mocha flash appeal on 23 May, and its call for access to people in need and for an urgent injection of \$333 million in humanitarian funds to facilitate a full-scale response to the cyclone and to sustain underfunded life-saving programmes. I wish to thank all international donors for their support in this regard.

I also thank the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management

for its efforts, but it is imperative that humanitarian assistance reach all people in need. Despite efforts from all corners, the illegal military junta, with its “four cuts” strategy, will attempt to hinder delivery of humanitarian assistance to all people in need especially those in conflict-affected areas.

I therefore wish to make the following requests. We call for immediate help and assistance from the international community, including the United Nations, ASEAN and international actors, to contribute to an urgent injection of funds into the response plan and flash appeal, so as to deliver the urgent provision of food, medicine, emergency shelter and non-food items and to strategize delivery channels that ensure that they aid effectively reaches all those in need, especially in conflict-affected areas. We call for United Nations agencies and aid organizations to provide relief assistance fairly and equally to the most vulnerable communities, including internally displaced persons all over the country, particularly those living in the areas controlled by ethnic armed organizations and revolution alliances. We call for international actors to collaborate with the EOCC in providing relief assistances to vulnerable communities in Myanmar. We call for the international community to explore all possible ways to ensure that no one is left behind in the delivery of humanitarian aid. All the people in need in Myanmar must receive the much-needed assistance.

**The President:** I would like to remind delegations that statements will be limited to three minutes to allow all speakers to complete make their statements during this interval in the General Assembly-conducted Security Council elections.

I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Caccia (Holy See):** The Holy See is pleased to participate in this high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework 2015–2030 and welcomes the adoption of its political declaration (resolution 77/289). In that regard, the Holy See would like to offer the following considerations.

First, as reaffirmed in the declaration, efforts to promote a culture of disaster prevention through education and training on disaster risk must be enhanced. In particular, special attention should be devoted to addressing the needs of those living in vulnerable situations, involving them in awareness-raising and training programmes related to disaster

risks. Educational programmes can play a significant role in promoting better understanding and knowledge of disaster risk, which, in turn, reduces the loss of human lives.

Secondly, along with prevention, closer attention needs to be paid to our way of responding to the impact of disasters. Material aid is vital to reacting to the basic needs of the individuals and communities that are adversely affected. Many of those living in disaster-prone areas are in fact largely dependent on livelihoods and sectors that are negatively affected by disasters. Pope Francis has underscored the need also to take also into account, in addition to material losses, the interior damage — the suffering of those who have lost their dear ones and have seen the sacrifices of entire lives swept away. In responding to material and non-material losses, local communities have an essential role to play and, as such, require adequate support. As Pope Francis has stressed, their capacity to mobilize themselves ought never to be underestimated in catastrophic situations. Religious and cultural traditions also play a significant role and represent a source of enrichment for the work of resilience.

The Holy See, especially through the work of many Catholic schools, has provided educational and awareness-raising opportunities to build a culture of prevention. Moreover, Catholic institutions often play a crucial — and sometimes irreplaceable — role in responding to disasters by assisting affected people and communities, including through the supply of such basic services as food, water, shelter and medicines, but also through the provision of spiritual care and support. The Holy See remains committed to continuing to play its part in addressing disaster risk reduction.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

**Ms. Abdelhady (Palestine):** The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and expresses gratitude for convening this debate on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

It is an undeniable reality that while we are halfway through the implementation of the Sendai Framework, we remain far from implementing the goals set out in 2015. Today's surge in disasters is historically unprecedented and continues to expose the vulnerability of countries

by reversing decades of progress in development and disaster risk reduction.

Disaster vulnerabilities are increasing: climate change is relentless, land degradation continues, sea level rise is accelerating, extreme poverty rages, world hunger is on the rise, food insecurity is worsening, conflicts are ongoing, and displacement has reached new records. Everyone everywhere is affected. The Sendai Framework's midterm review is a wake-up call and a unique opportunity to renew the world's determination to reverse these vulnerabilities. From large to small, every commitment and every achievement will generate momentum in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, which will be a direct link with reducing disaster risks, enhancing resilience and protecting lives and livelihoods.

One of the principles of the Sendai Framework is that each State has the primary responsibility for reducing disaster risk. However, in Palestine, such a fundamental responsibility is undermined by the minute as our people are constantly attacked, our land stolen, our natural resources exploited, and development severely hindered. The main source of disasters in Palestine are Israeli-made hazards in breach of international law, including international humanitarian law. The Israeli occupation has destroyed vast infrastructure and agricultural lands, inhumanely restricts the movement of people and has illegally established a 700 kilometre-long wall and more than 300 illegal settlements throughout occupied Palestine, resulting in a deteriorating humanitarian crisis and exacerbating environmental destruction. Such unjust policies and practices have undoubtedly impacted Palestine's developmental capacities in preparing for, and recovering from, disasters, especially in a region that is highly vulnerable to natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and desertification.

However, despite Israel's attempts to undermine the Palestinian people's natural resilience to oppression and disaster, the State of Palestine continues its efforts to translate international commitments into plans for implementation. Exactly 10 years ago, we established our first national disaster-loss database with the aim of reducing the impacts of disasters, protecting vulnerable communities and promoting disaster-resilience strategies through scientific and technological capacities.



As of today, more than 20 cities in Palestine have joined the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, aimed at strengthening resilience through advocacy, education and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Academic research on disaster risk reduction is also promoted across universities and institutions, and development cooperation is increasingly integrated between ministries and agencies for disaster risk reduction.

In conclusion, the State of Palestine takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, for visiting Palestine and having a first-hand assessment of the challenges and progress made in the areas of reducing disaster risk.

The State of Palestine also recognizes the important role of United Nations agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as development partners and donors, in supporting Palestine's national strategy and action plan on disaster risk reduction, and wishes to congratulate the co-facilitators of the political declaration of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework (resolution 77/289) on the successful conclusion of their work.

Moving ahead, the State of Palestine remains committed to strengthening cooperation and partnerships with all States, the United Nations system, civil society, academia and other stakeholders and affirms its will to overcome today's crises through solidarity and cooperation with the aim of ensuring a resilient tomorrow for generations to come.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the League of Arab States.

**Mr. Al-Amri** (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as an opportunity to assess the challenges faced in achieving the desired progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework since its adoption in 2015. It is also an important opportunity to bolster international awareness-raising and mobilize political action for the implementation of the Framework, as it is closely linked with the efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and targets as well as other intergovernmental agreements

and conventions including, for example, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The Arab region faces great challenges in the field of disaster risk reduction, including difficulty in obtaining data and information related to risks, as well as limited access to financing and modern technology. Moreover, the Arab region is one of the regions affected the most by climate change, water and food insecurity and desertification, in addition to the growing number of displaced persons and refugees due to crises, which represents one of the obstacles to the implementation of the Sendai Framework. Therefore, the approach taken thus far to manage disasters is no longer adequate and requires a change in the means and strategy of work by shifting from managing disasters and their repercussions to striving to reduce disasters and prevent them.

The Arab countries attach a high level of importance to understanding disaster risks. We established an Arab coordination mechanism for disaster risk reduction, which was adopted during the 2018 summit of the League of Arab States in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That mechanism was established to enable us to implement the objectives of the Arab strategy for disaster risk reduction and the Sendai Framework, and to fit the unique circumstances of the Arab region.

The structure of the mechanism includes Arab countries, regional and international organizations, civil society organizations and stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction. The Arab region needs to promote better understanding of disaster risks through the exchange of expertise, the transfer of technology, designing specialized training programmes for disaster risk management and facilitating access to relevant information and data.

The Arab region needs to increase investment in disaster risk reduction and improve disaster risk management tools and their means of implementation, as well as adequate financial resources, data and partnerships. The League of Arab States looks forward to securing the necessary funding to prepare an executive economic report on disaster risk reduction for the Arab region, which will contribute significantly to defining investment priorities in disaster risk reduction.

In conclusion, we underscore the importance of accelerating the integration of disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investment at all levels. The Arab League will also work to strengthen

and develop its role in that field with the aim of strengthening the efforts of Arab countries to reduce the risk of disasters, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

**Ms. Olson** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Hundreds of millions of people every year are at risk of natural and human-made disasters and crises. Their vulnerabilities are increasing, their livelihoods are being lost and their well-being is at stake. The vulnerable and those hardest to reach are the most at risk. Local disaster risk reduction action is stronger when local communities are enabled and empowered to reduce their own risks. Investing in local action, local actors and local, long-term and sustainable solutions saves lives, protects livelihoods, reinforces social protection mechanisms and ensures strong health and education systems.

In 2015, the world adopted a new, global vision for how States can better prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and build resilience. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction agreed guiding principles and priorities, strengthened the need for multi-hazard policies and practices and focused on a people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction. As the first such global agenda, the Sendai Framework fuels the entirety of the sustainable development processes, especially the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. It is nearly impossible for countries and communities to develop when they face a cycle of repeated disasters. Since adopting the Sendai Framework, we have faced a global pandemic, rising inequalities and increased climate and weather-related hazards, leading us to an unrecognizable place, with increasing, overlapping and compounding disasters. Yet our understanding of underlying risk has evolved, and new and innovative technologies and financing mechanisms have emerged that help to provide solutions.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) predicts that 200 million people per year will need humanitarian assistance by 2050 due to climate and weather events. We also know that natural disasters, such as the recent earthquake in Türkiye and Syria, will persist, and that the threat of a new global pandemic is always present. As the largest humanitarian network, the IFRC and our 192

national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work in the countries of Member States to support their Governments to reduce disaster risks. The IFRC network is uniquely positioned to advise on, advocate for and implement disaster risk reduction measures at the community level. As they usually live in the communities they serve, our national Societies' staff and 16.5 million volunteers are trusted community members, who know the local language and understand their community's vulnerabilities, risks and needs. After the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria, for example, the Turkish Red Crescent and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were among the first to arrive after the shock and will be among the last to leave, providing shelter and essential services and supporting long-term recovery and development efforts.

The high-level meeting's political declaration (resolution 77/289) sets us on a renewed path. We must redouble our efforts, as many disaster risk-reduction measures still lack political commitment, and funding still fails to reach the local level and the most fragile and conflict-affected countries and communities. Unfortunately, we know that the next disaster is not a matter of "if" but "when". We first must develop and revise our disaster risk reduction laws and scale up and invest in inclusive, multi-hazard and multisectoral disaster risk reduction policies and plans that better support communities to prevent, prepare and anticipate disasters. That includes multi-hazard measures that improve pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. We must redouble our efforts in countries and communities currently getting left behind and that are fragile and conflict-affected. In line with that, we also need to invest in policies and practices that we know work, like scaling up early-warning and early-action systems, which are cost-effective measures that save lives, protect livelihoods and minimize associated losses and damages. Secondly, we need to invest in long-term disaster risk reduction measures that both link efforts made by the humanitarian and development communities and fund policies and practices where people are located — at the community level.

The urgency is clear. We must scale up our action to reduce risks and make our planet safer for future generations.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

**Mr. Beresford-Hill** (Sovereign Order of Malta): I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for calling this important discussion to the attention of the international community.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 holds immense significance in our collective endeavour to bolster resilience and mitigate the impact of disasters on a global scale. It presents a comprehensive road map that empowers Governments, communities and international organizations to fortify their disaster risk reduction strategies and enhance societal resilience. By harnessing foresight methodologies, stakeholders can proactively identify opportunities for innovation, make informed decisions and align their actions with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Order of Malta acknowledges the pivotal role of strategic insight and actively engages in initiatives to propel progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

We have been at the forefront of that effort by fostering collaborative frameworks and sharing knowledge among nations, organizations and stakeholders to pre-emptively identify and mitigate risk, establish robust warning systems and promote adaptive measures. We actively support insights that fortify multilateral capabilities, working in partnership with relevant stakeholders to augment risk-reduction endeavours. Our international aid agency — Malteser International — works closely with local communities

throughout the world, providing training and education on disaster preparedness, response and recovery. We empower community members to actively participate in identifying risks, developing migration and mitigation strategies and implementing disaster risk reduction measures. But we also reiterate the call made by many other speakers on this topic — the call that nations should continue to support the initiatives of international aid agencies in opening their borders and facilitating the transport and the transfer of aid, particularly medical supplies.

In that regard, we are thinking of the recent floods in Pakistan and the horrendous earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, where we have been particularly active and where the lives of so many depend on cooperation and collaboration at the bilateral level and multilateral levels. We are also particularly concerned that countries might close themselves off from aid and aid agencies before a crisis occurs, and we hope that they continue to remain open to the opportunities that international organizations, including the United Nations, can provide to ensure that they are prepared for the worst.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker at this high-level meeting.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 18?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.*