

Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, distinguished guests and participants; Australia is delighted to participate in the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

On behalf of the Australian Government, I thank the Government of Mexico and UNISDR for organizing this Global Platform.

The Australian Government is firmly committed to implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

As a famous Australian poet put it, '*Australia is a land of drought and flooding rains*'. Our communities face extreme natural hazards that have major societal and economic impacts.

Most recently, Category 4 Tropical Cyclone Debbie impacted two of our most populous states – Queensland and New South Wales.

It highlighted the vulnerability of Australian communities but it also demonstrated the resilience of the Australian spirit.

The Australian Government is working hard to reduce the impact that disasters have on our communities.

Since we gathered in Sendai in 2015, we have focused on ensuring we have the right policies and governance arrangements in place.

We undertook a review of our emergency management arrangements and implemented a new, agile structure to enable flexible responses to emerging priorities.

We established a Senior Official interagency committee to ensure disaster and climate risk policies are progressed in tandem.

We hosted a high-level platform of representatives from business, the community sector and government to develop innovative solutions to disaster risk reduction.

This work has placed us in a strong position to deal with the inter-generational problem of escalating disaster risk in Australia.

Australia complements robust domestic action with strong regional and global action.

Two of the largest tropical cyclones in recorded history recently devastated our neighbours in the Pacific.

Cyclone Pam affected 188,000 people in Vanuatu (70 percent of the population) and cost an estimated 64 percent of their GDP.

Cyclone Winston affected 540,000 people in Fiji (62 percent of the population) and cost an estimated 20 percent of their GDP.

This scale of impacts thwarts economic growth and constrains development. But prevention and preparedness paid dividends.

For the first time, Vanuatu activated an SMS warning system to alert communities to the approaching cyclone. As a result, the death toll was remarkably low for an event of this scale.

Similarly, Fiji's early warning system meant that the toll from Cyclone Winston was well below that experienced in past events.

In 2015-16, we invested almost three percent of our ODA in managing disaster risk and building disaster resilience.

Our level of investment will increase in step with our commitment to increase investments in climate and disaster resilience in the Pacific to AUD 300 million over the next five years.

Working collaboratively with partners is key.

Over the past six years, our NGO partners have increased the disaster resilience of over 310,000 people across 36 countries.

We have boosted our partnership with UNISDR to AUD 6.1 million over three years.

We will also allocate AUD 12.3 million over three years to the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

Through the MIKTA group, Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia, we will work to strengthen business sector engagement in disaster risk reduction.

However, the Sendai Framework affirms that national leadership is crucial. Accordingly, Australia will continue to assist where we can add value to the national actions of our development partners.