



Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Cancun, 22-26 May 2017

-

Statement by the Representative of the Kingdom of Belgium

Thank you chair,

Dear Excellencies, Colleagues, ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly thankful to **Mexico for hosting us in Cancun, the first forum outside of Geneva**, and wish to extend my appreciation to Special Representative of the **UN Secretary-General Mr. Glasser** for his leadership on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Improving coherence and synergies in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New urban agenda and the Paris Agreement will be key to ensure Risk-Resilient society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The uniqueness of the Sendai commitment we all subscribed to in 2015 is to look beyond disaster response and to start managing the risks. For that we need to achieve two things: **the paradigm shift from response to prevention through a holistic approach which brings all players together**. Setting up a **national implementation platform** requires the buy-in of all relevant stakeholders into a national disaster reduction strategy.

After consultation with experts from the UN and the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, **Belgium started by appointing early 2016 a national focal point for the implementation of Sendai**, located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We then started **mapping existing initiatives, crisis-response structures, coordination protocols and civil protection responsibilities** in order to start the implementation of a national platform. **Since March 2016, several meetings have taken place allowing participants to present their action plans and method of work**, thereby focusing on **how they plan to shift from responsiveness to long term prevention efforts**.

But most importantly the Belgian Sendai platform has become a forum for experts to build the **necessary communication lines between departments at all levels**. Indeed, disasters are not only cross country issues, but their effective handling requires clarity in roles and responsibilities amongst different departments.

Our next goals are firstly, to **involve the civil society and the private sector** in the platform, and secondly, to **draft a National DRR Security Strategy, which requires strong political commitment.**

The set-up of a DRR monitoring mechanism was identified as an important **challenge**. In this regard, we welcome the adoption, by the UNGA, of a set of indicators for the global targets of the Sendai Framework.

Dear colleagues,

In order **to make the national platform operational**, Sendai focal points of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg meet every 2 months. They are considering including **experts from the three countries to provide input on risks induced by specific climate change impacts**, such as persistent heat wave or long periods of rain **on different sectors** (energy, health, transport, etc.). Those experts would then look into existing protocols and improve them to reduce the risks spread either between sectors (cascade effect) or across national borders (chain effect). This could be the true hallmark of effective Sendai implementation platform.

Finally, the Kingdom of Belgium also strives to implement the Sendai framework in partner countries by **supporting and funding DRR programs in highly disaster-prone countries**, such as the Sahel and the Great Lakes region.

I thank you.