

New Zealand Statement: 5th Global Platform for DRR (Cancun 2017)

Theme: Risk-Sensitive Development for Community Resilience

Natural hazards including earthquakes, storms, volcanic eruptions, drought, fire, floods and landslips are part of life in New Zealand, some of which impact on our main cities. In 2011, Christchurch our second largest city was devastated by major earthquakes, causing damage of over \$40 billion, some 20% of our GDP. Last November we experienced a magnitude 7.8 earthquake in Kaikoura, which caused \$2 billion of damage to road and rail infrastructure and led to the demolition of several large buildings in our capital, Wellington. Then in February, forest fires in Christchurch led to evacuations only 5km from the CBD.

Not surprisingly, we are very serious about how we prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, and have developed a broad range of skills and experience that we are keen to share with others.

We strongly endorse the Sendai Framework, and are now preparing for implementation. Just four months after the World Conference in Sendai, we held our own New Zealand Symposium on Disaster Risk Reduction, to benchmark our capability across the Sendai Framework's four priorities and promote a 'national conversation' on the Framework's implementation. The Symposium was attended by a wide range of stakeholders. We have also completed a comprehensive assessment of our capability at both the local and national levels against the Sendai Framework's actions, with a view to informing our forward work programme.

We are now working on a range of initiatives to give effect to the Framework's goals and priorities and to manage better our national disaster risk, and tackling the substantial challenge of collating data from multiple organisations, to meet our routine reporting obligations. We are also about to release a new National Disaster Resilience Strategy, which aligns closely with the Sendai Framework, and has benefited significantly from our experience with the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes. This Strategy identifies how we will boost our resilience to disaster risks, and includes an implementation roadmap which prioritises our effort and investment over the next decade. Community engagement and community resilience are at the heart of our Strategy, and its development used a 'whole of society' approach. It also acknowledges the supportive, enabling environment that is necessary at the local and national levels.

We continue to take stock of our learnings from the Christchurch earthquakes, and use them to improve our approach, including amending legislation and strengthening governance. Particular lessons from the Christchurch recovery include: the role of the private sector in response; the importance of early recovery planning, and how high levels of insurance penetration facilitates prompt recovery.

In September 2015 we held the Built Environment Leaders Forum aimed at improving the way we manage infrastructure risks. The Forum was attended by 200 chief executives, directors and principals from engineering consultancies, lifeline utilities, building, banking, insurance and legal communities, technical experts and researchers; as well as excellent representation from central and local

government. We will continue to foster collaborative partnerships across all sectors, including importantly, business interests, the private sector, to inform our domestic disaster resilience agenda.

New Zealand is, and will remain, deeply committed to international collaboration around Disaster Risk Management. Strengthening resilience is one of twelve investment priorities for the New Zealand Aid Programme, and is an area where New Zealand can make a tangible and lasting impact. Although we invest substantially in disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction in South East Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 60% of our official development assistance and the bulk of our humanitarian response efforts are directed to the Pacific.

Many Pacific island countries are particularly vulnerable to disasters, and their development trajectories are severely constrained by multiple disaster events such as cyclones, storm surges, flooding and tsunamis. The Pacific region is projected to experience an increased frequency and severity of disaster events in response to climate change, and consequently disaster risk reduction is a major focus for governments across the region.

New Zealand supports the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, which guides implementation of the Sendai Framework and emphasises regional coordination, community engagement, and the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Effective coordination of development activity will be particularly important, given the substantial increase in climate change adaptation funding that the Pacific is currently experiencing.

International collaboration around disasters is very much about partnerships, and we are constantly learning from each other's experiences. New Zealand will always remember the international response following the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes, including support from many participants in this Conference.

So while New Zealand is pleased to share our own experiences, we are also here to listen and to learn. We welcome implementation of the Sendai Framework. We have high expectations that this Conference will lead to greater collaboration and coordination among participants and that it will lead to practical, effective outcomes.

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