



**OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA TO
THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
(19-23 MAY 2013; GENEVA, SWITZERLAND)**

**HE MUSA FRANCIS ECWERU
MINISTER OF STATE FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, AND REFUGEES
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

Chairperson, the key message of this Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction could not be more appropriate for our country – Uganda. As the country moves forward with sustained economic growth and increasing per capita income, we are mindful of disasters and climate change threatening the social and economic prosperity that our country and its people are currently embracing. We have realized that we could have achieved more in bringing development to our people had we managed to build their resilience to disaster and climate risks earlier on. We have seen for ourselves the benefits of early warning and early action, and how it has spared our country the brunt of the recent 2011 drought that wrought havoc in the Horn of Africa.

As a Government, with the full support of our development partners, we have set ourselves towards a development path of sustained productivity and socio-economic growth based on an integrated and multi-sectoral systems approach on the management of disaster and climate risks. Such is articulated in our National Policy on Disaster Preparedness and Management which promotes national vulnerability assessment, risk mitigation, disaster prevention, preparedness, effective response and recovery in a manner that integrates disaster risk management with development planning and programming.

While the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) has been instrumental in setting the tone of our policies and actions, much remains to be done to achieve the strategic goals and the full operationalization of the five priorities for action. As a country, we are looking at a post-2015 Framework for DRR that includes four key priority actions. Strengthening our resolve to ***address the underlying causes of disasters*** is essential and such could be done by building the resilience of vulnerable communities and mitigating the causes of people’s vulnerabilities. ***Strong, demonstrated leadership on the management of disaster risks*** is essential. Disaster risk reduction should not only be an integral part of development plans and strategies but clear goals, standards, targets and indicators must be established to enhance accountability by responsible actors. We should continue towards the path of ***building and strengthening partnerships*** on DRM and resilience building for our goal and objectives can only be achieved if we employ a highly inclusive and participatory process. Increasingly, civil society organizations and the private sector need to be better engaged and involved and we have to strengthen further the bridging between humanitarian assistance and development investments. ***Resourcing*** is imperative if we are to manage disaster risks and build resilience to disasters. The business case for

investing in DRR is clear and therefore Donors need to commit to longer term investments so as to achieve better outcomes and engage with a wider range of DRM actors.

Chairperson, what we have now is a different Uganda. It is a Uganda committed to managing disaster and climate risks. It is a Uganda whose resolve is to build resilience, particularly, those of vulnerable communities and families who often take the brunt of any disaster. It is a Uganda whose main tenets of partnership, inclusiveness, and transparency are given even greater emphasis.

We are pursuing Poverty Reduction Initiatives and programmes as a matter of priority – understanding that if we address poverty, we will be able to strengthen people’s resilience and reduce their vulnerabilities to disasters and climate change impact. We are establishing and operationalizing policies and processes to better protect communities at risk while providing them with livelihood options. More often, people’s vulnerabilities are driven by their livelihood (or lack thereof). We are improving people and policy makers’ access to information for our society to be better informed and aware in taking action towards reducing their vulnerabilities to disasters and climate changes. We are making DRR central in sectoral and local development plans as well as building codes/regulations. Our National Development Plan is already disaster-proofed but we need to cascade this down at district and community levels so as to reduce risks and avert the occurrence of potential disasters from the source itself. We believe that disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are two sides of the same coin. By assisting communities to reduce disaster risks, we are also allowing them to adapt to climate changes.

Our approach towards disaster risk management and resilience-building, has and will always be people-centered, proactive and information-based. We will be enhancing our national early warning system to make it more robust. We will soon be inaugurating our Early Warning and Emergency Coordination and Operations Center – a 24 hour, 7 day a week central hub for early warning information and alerts and for the coordination of response and recovery efforts. We will be strengthening our processes to be able to work with communities and tap into local indigenous knowledge in the development of adaptation and risk reduction measures. We will continue to professionalize our DRM workforce.

Chairperson, bringing all these initiatives together, we will soon be embarking - together with our development partners, donors and civil society organizations - on the development of a Strategic Programme and Investment Framework. The Strategic Programme and Investment Framework will allow all actors to get engaged and contribute, in a coordinated manner, towards the achievement of the wider objectives and goals for disaster risk management in the country. The Strategic Programme and Investment Framework will bring us all together in one table and pave the way for a comprehensive and harmonized approach and a more effective, efficient, transparent and inclusive delivery of development investments on disaster risk management. It is our appeal and hope that our donors and development partners continue to support us in sustaining our current initiatives and in the operationalization of the Strategic Programme and Investment Framework so as to realize our common vision and aspirations for the country and the people of Uganda.

For God and My Country.

Thank you, Chairperson.