

Statement by Mr. Yoshitami Kameoka,
Parliamentary Secretary of Japan's Cabinet Office
at the “Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas”
27-29 May 2014, Guayaquil

Chairperson,

As the representative of Japan, the host country of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, let me express our appreciation for this opportunity of statement.

Japan has hosted the World Conference on disaster risk reduction twice, the first held in Yokohama in 1994, and the second held in Kobe, Hyogo in 2005. The second conference adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, which since then has been utilized as guidelines for national implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction measures in each country.

Since 2005, we have been facing many emerging issues, such as expansion of population and business activity at high risk of disasters, due to various factors such as growing urbanization, and an expanding global economy. In this context, the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, scheduled for March 2015 in Sendai, Japan will be a crucial occasion to adopt the succeeding framework of the Hyogo Framework for Action, namely “HFA2,” taking into consideration of those challenges and the progress in disaster countermeasures.

Natural disasters are serious obstacles to efforts for sustainable development and poverty reduction since they deprive many people of their lives and wipe out long-term achievement of development. It is therefore important to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policies. The World Conference in 2015 will be an important occasion to position disaster risk reduction clearly in the post-2015 development agenda.

Chairperson,

In March 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami occurred

in Japan and caused serious damage in Tohoku region, which include the city of Sendai, where the World Conference will be held. Taking this opportunity, allow me to reiterate our appreciation for the generous support from the Americas during the Disaster.

Based on the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, we have been working on reconstruction in a more resilient manner – what we call “build back better.” One of the good practices is to reexamine the land use plans and relocate residences and communities onto the hills where there is no risk of Tsunami.

I would like you to participate in the World Conference in Sendai, see in person how Japan has been making efforts in reconstructing cities, towns and communities through your firsthand experience of Tohoku region’s vigorously recovered Status, and explore its rich natural and cultural wealth.

Chairperson,

Japan has been cooperating with international communities in sharing its knowledge, experiences, know-how, and technologies learned from past disasters including the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

In the preparation of the World Conference, we have been working on our proposal toward a new framework on disaster risk reduction. Key elements we think should be positioned in the new framework include, “Build back better” that I just mentioned, and “Enhancement of investment in disaster risk reduction”, “Promotion of engagement of diverse stakeholders including private sector”, and “Enhancement of early-warning and disaster response preparedness to save people’s lives” and “governance and mainstreaming by central/local government”.

I sincerely hope that active discussions will be generated at this Regional Platform based on the experiences in the Americas.

Chairperson,

As described in the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/68/211), the World Conference will be convened “at the highest possible level”.

In order to implement effective disaster risk reduction measures through ensuring priority in national policies and budgets, a political commitment is of extreme importance. In this sense also, we expect high-level participation such as heads of state/government and ministers as well as many participants involved with disaster risk reduction.

Let me conclude my statement by wishing a fruitful outcome of this Regional Platform toward the World Conference.

Thank you for your kind attention.