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ESCAP

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Islamic Republic of Iran

Speaker, Mr Khalesi,

Mr. / Madam Chair,

Disasters triggered by natural hazards still impose heavy human and physical damages on many countries and nations in our region and hamper socio-economic development in some countries. Latest global reports on disaster risk trends reveal that economic loss risk continues to increase across all regions – and seriously threatens the economies of low-income countries. The *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* in 2011 shows that the improvement in risk governance capacity and reduction in vulnerability in low- and middle-income countries as they develop, are insufficient to address the run-away increase in asset exposure to natural disasters, particularly in countries that are experiencing rapid economic growth. Based on the same report, earthquake mortality risk may be increasing, particularly in countries experiencing rapid urban growth and disasters adverse impact significantly on child welfare and cause displacement within countries and across borders.

The Asia-Pacific region also experiences many frequent but low-level disasters that inflict serious damage for highly vulnerable populations. Based on the various recent reports published by ESCAP and ISDR in 2010, the Asia-Pacific region has the world's top ten most exposed countries to hazards and for cyclones six Asia-Pacific countries are in the top 10-reflecting the high concentration of people living in river flood plains and deltas. Despite the efforts to improve multi-hazard warning systems, between the periods 2000-2004 and 2005-2009 the risk from these disasters do not appear to have been reduced.

These are the facts and realities which create more and more obligations for all of us in order to find more effective ways and means to reduce disasters risks in our region and preparedness to address the subsequent challenges.

Mr. / Madam Chair,

In the last two decades, the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran took a number of steps to enhance its national disaster management capacity which resulted in strong disaster preparedness and emergency response capabilities at national and local levels. The Government of Iran was also one of the first countries to establish an executive secretariat to follow up the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) at the national level. One of the key

accomplishments under the HFA implementation has been an Act on the formation of the National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO) in May 2007. The NDMO supported by its affiliated technical and operational bodies is now functional with a dedicated budget line for Disaster Risk Reduction and management.

The 5<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2011-2015) addresses the issue of disaster risk reduction and management in several areas including enhancement of disaster preparedness and response, upgrading building and construction codes and standards and earthquake prevention measures, improving safety in rural settlements and importantly allocation of 2% of annual national budget to disaster risk reduction and management.

In the framework of regional and international cooperation on disaster management and risk reduction, Iran has been heavily engaged in providing emergency and recovery assistance to the people affected by disasters in various countries across the world.

The Government of I.R. of Iran in cooperation and coordination with the ESCAP Secretariat has taken the initial key steps toward the implementation of the ESCAP Resolution 67/4 on the establishment of the Asia Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management. Here I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Dr. Noeleen Heyzer the Executive Secretary of ESCAP for her support and guidance, and her colleagues especially Dr. Shimick SRIRIMANNE and the regional advisor for advisory and technical support, and cooperation to prepare the ground for the establishment of the center as well as the valuable assistance for the side event in Indonesia. Allocation of the first portion of budget for the establishment of the Centre by the Iranian Parliament as well as establishing the necessary administrative set ups for the establishment of the Centre in the Government of the I.R. of Iran, among others are two key measures taken in this regard. Furthermore, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran jointly with ESCAP and ISDR secretariats held the side event on “capacity development for disaster information management in the Asia and the Pacific” during the 5<sup>th</sup> Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Indonesia in 2012. I wish to take the opportunity to express my appreciations and gratitude to the ESCAP Executive Secretary and her colleagues for their valuable ongoing support and cooperation in this direction.