

**Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
19 - 22 September 2022**

Excellency Madam Mami MIZUTORI, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Excellencies, Honorable Ministers, Heads of Delegations and Distinguished Participants;

It is a privilege for me to address this Conference on behalf of Economic Cooperation Organization. At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Government of Australia for excellent arrangements to convene this important Conference. My gratitude also goes to United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), particularly to the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific for organizing this important event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are kindly aware that the ECO is an inter-governmental regional organization with more than 8 million square km territory and 500 million inhabitants in its 10 Member States includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The ECO Region is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Due to its geological structure, topography and climactic characteristics, the region is exposed to a wide range of hazards such as floods, earthquakes, landslides, sand and dust storms, droughts, glacial lake outburst flood (GLOFs), heat and cold waves, sea water intrusion, cyclones and avalanches that trigger various types of natural disasters, which cause deaths, human suffering and economic losses.

During the past decade more than 70 million of the inhabitants of the region have been affected by disasters triggered by natural hazards, mostly in Pakistan and Afghanistan. From the onset of the pandemic, the region has lost more than 310,000 people due to the Corona Virus. At the same time, the region has lost two percent of GDP accounting for an average of more than 2 billion US dollars annually due to natural disasters.

In consideration of the foregoing, the ECO Member States have, since long, been exploring to develop a joint mechanism to be ready for responding to these expected hazards that appear to hamper and damage not only their socioeconomic progress but also claim their human capital.

Excellencies,

In March 2021, the Ankara Declaration, the ECO Regional Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (ECORFDRR) and the ECORFDRR Implementation Road Map were adopted during the 8th Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

The Declaration calls for promotion of cooperation among Member States, and with international stakeholders/partners to implement the ECO Vision 2025 on DRR. Further it welcomed the development of a strategic action plan for managing cascading risks from natural and biological hazards through cooperation with sub-regional bodies such as ECO and others to shape a longer-term, holistic, coordinated and more strategic approach to building disaster and climate resilience, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. .

For addressing the issues related to disaster in ECO region, we adopted Regional Plan Action of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for Cascading Risks and apply a multi-hazard, inclusive and solution-oriented approach to disaster risk reduction. Disasters recognize no borders and therefore, regional cooperation and partnerships play a vital role in achieving tangible results on sustainable development.

A key recommendation from the participating Member States is to develop a strategic action plan for managing cascading risks from natural and biological hazards through cooperation with sub-regional bodies to shape a longer-term, holistic, coordinated and more strategic approach to building disaster and climate resilience aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Furthermore, a specific suggestion made by the ECO Member States was to broaden the geographical scope of the framework to include the ECO sub-

region while shaping ESCAP's regional co-operation mechanism for managing climate and disaster risks and The Asia and Pacific Centre for Development of Disaster Information Management (APIDM) as a regional institute of ESCAP cooperated with ECO in developing the ECORFDRR and its Roadmap.

Within the above context and toward the implementation of ECORFDRR, a Regional Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for Cascading Risks in ECO Region has been initiated with the joint efforts of the ECO, UNESCAP and APDIM to support the ECO region,

This action plan identifies towards achieving effective disaster risk reduction and management for cascading risks in 5 priorities:

- 1- The following challenges are improved knowledge on the causes and impacts of cascading and biohazards risk understanding and assessment is required.
- 2- Integrated mechanisms and risk-informed measures for cascading risk management within national disaster management and risk reduction systems are needed.
- 3- Multi-hazard monitoring and early warning systems are an imperative for effective management of cascading risks.
- 4- Enhanced data policy and governance and information management as well as capacity for information and knowledge generation, application and sharing are essential.
- 5- Predictable, stable and sufficient financial resources are required to ensure adaptive an Expected outcomes and results.

Now ECO Region" with 6 (six) components, to be implemented in three phases over a period of coming 5 years (2021-2025), have the following objectives:

First: To determine the hazards and mapping the risks of Members States and Region;

Second: To identify the risk informed development areas;

Third: To mainstream DRR and improve disaster risk government;

Fourth: To support public awareness and knowledge management;

Fifth: To protect the people and communities from the impacts of natural disasters, including the potential impacts of climate change, and

Sixth: To improve lives and livelihoods through promoting achieving the target of Sendai Framework for DRR and Sustainable Development Goals.

Distinguished Participants

Raising this pivotal issue that implementation of the ECO Framework on DRR needs cooperation and support of Member States, relevant local, regional and international organizations and other stakeholders, for financing and managing some project activities that are reflected in the mentioned framework. These activities includes; support to regulatory and institutional mechanisms on DRM capacities, support to improve disaster risk governance, strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems, strengthen post disaster damage loss and need assessment tools, public awareness and knowledge management, develop disaster risk transfer mechanism and tools, support to strengthen ECO regional disaster response mechanism.

In conclusion, I am confident that Together we can slow the rate of preventable disasters to deliver the sustainable development goals for everyone, everywhere." To really reduce risk we must also reduce inequalities and investments in strengthening social protection systems, which can also play a critical role in strengthening individual and society-level resilience.
