

**Statement by Mr. Tek N. Pandey, Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs,
Government of Nepal at the APMCDRR, 19-22 September 2022 Brisbane, Australia**

His Excellency Mr. Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

1. I am delighted to be here and address this august gathering on behalf of the Government of Nepal. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Australia and the United Nations Office for DRR for organizing such an important event in this beautiful city of Brisbane. As the Asia-Pacific region is the hotspot of natural disasters, the decision to organize this important event in Brisbane deserves merit.
2. Disaster is not just about damage, destruction and tragic loss of lives and property. It creates not only socio-economic disequilibrium by deepening deprivation and poverty but also fuels political disequilibrium, threatening social harmony and peace. To be precise, disasters anywhere may threaten the peace, progress, prosperity, and social cohesion everywhere.
3. Amidst of these natural calamities, the COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated the situation. I am confident that this conference provides a platform for all of us to discuss the pertinent issue of global importance and share views, exchange experience and lessons, explore opportunities, and find solutions for safer and resilient communities with renewed political commitment.
4. Nepal is susceptible to multitudes of hazards and risks. The triple planetary crisis has further intensified the problems. We have been experiencing hydro-meteorological disasters such as heavy rains, floods, and landslides annually that have claimed lives and property worth millions of dollars. These phenomena have become more frequent, destructive, and regular, leading to food insecurity.
5. Moreover, Nepal is in a seismically active zone. In 2015, Nepal experienced massive earthquakes of 7.6 magnitudes that claimed nearly 9,000 people and destroyed monuments, heritages and property worth billions of dollars. We involved the affected communities to carry forward post-earthquake reconstruction works under the

leadership of a government constituted separate National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). In this connection, NRA teamed up with private sector, civil society organizations and the international community for reconstruction of individual houses, public infrastructures, including monuments and heritage sites.

6. Nepal was able to complete the major post-earthquake reconstruction works with an effective response from the government in line with the principle of 'Build Back Better and Smarter.' It was possible due to an active participation of the private sectors and local communities, including our bilateral and multilateral development partners, international community, and other stakeholders. We have replicated this approach in the reconstruction of landslide and flood damages and will continue to expand it for a resilient recovery. Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction works are applauded by the international community. While we have made remarkable achievements, we are still struggling to overcome the compounded impact of damage and destruction caused by the earthquake.
7. We have made significant improvements in our legal framework, policy instruments and institutional arrangements for the effective disaster risk reduction and management. We believe that these important measures will significantly augment Nepal's capacity to effectively respond to the potential disasters in the future. Nepal's disaster risk governance is guided by the Constitution. It is executed through the DRRM Act 2017, the Local Government Operation Act, 2017 and other legal and institutional arrangements at all levels of the Government. The overarching National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, 2018 and DRR National Strategic Plan of Action 2018-2030 are in line with Sendai Framework as well as the SDGs. These policy frameworks have well spelled out key priority areas and actions. These instruments guide concerned stakeholders and development agencies to achieve goals and targets within the stipulated timeline.
8. Strengthening of the institutional structures and mechanisms for effective risk management remains at the core of the Government's vision for a disaster-resilient Nepal. In December 2019, the Government of Nepal established the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is a permanent entity which has mandates to coordinate, facilitate and operate DRRM related activities. In a short span of time, it has been able to provide momentum to DRRM's initiatives and overall governance related to DRR. It has been able to coordinate in promoting risk reduction measures and evidence based DRR through research support, reinforce key government agencies with logistics and capacity, technical

and grant support on housing reconstruction, fostering risk financing and risk informed planning, among others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. The Government of Nepal has adopted the Humanitarian Cluster Approach to bring all stakeholders together including the government, UN agencies, Red Cross, I/NGOs, private sector, media, academia, and individuals in disaster preparedness and response. The Government has also given priority to strengthen search and rescue capacity of front-line security personnel. Collaboration between security forces and civil society organizations has strengthened along with the stockpiles of relief materials at key strategic locations. National Platform for DRR (NPDRR) is in practice since 2008 and has been playing crucial role to enhance coordination amongst stakeholders through nine different thematic committees namely government, semi-government, the UN agencies, donor agencies, private sector, academia, NGO, INGO, and Affected Community, considering the whole of society approach and fostering dialogues for policy improvements.
10. Nepal has introduced a comprehensive and integrated Disaster Information Management System (DIMS), known as the Bipad Portal, to strengthen the risk information base and is in process of localizing it. The Government is committed to use advanced technology for hazard identification, mapping, modeling, and risk assessment, including earthquake, landslide and flood risks and providing policy inputs for decision making and development planning. We have put efforts in generating knowledge on risks and communicating them properly to both disaster managers and community groups at large.
11. The Government has formulated a National Strategy on Disaster Risk Financing, 2021. The Strategy has institutionalized the sector-specific policies and plans including in health and education sectors. The Strategy has focused on disaster governance in line with the SDGs and the Sendai Framework. It is a strategic tool to harness the resources, expertise, experience, and potential between the public, private and individuals. These funding mechanisms are functional at national, sub-national and local levels. Gradually, the risk reduction Strategy is attracting investment and partnership between public, private, community and individual levels. Though progressing slowly, engagement of the private sector in risk reduction and emergency preparedness is a remarkable shift in Nepal.
12. The annual and long-term programs are harmonized and coherent to each other. National and Provincial DRM Executive Committees oversee the DRRM planning, investments, and participation to ensure coherence, inclusiveness and effective

interventions to address the future risks including the impacts of climate change. Local Disaster and Climate Resilient Planning is an outcome of integrated approach.

Distinguished Participants,

13. Strengthening the understanding of disaster risk has been a key priority area that needs to focus while assessing vulnerability and risks such as identification, assessment, and mapping of risks. Addressing these demands expertise and access to technology and resources. Moreover, monitoring hazards, vulnerability assessment and risk mapping for communicating risks have strengthened science-people nexus in saving lives and properties.
14. Nepal has been able to improve the flood early warning system. As a result, there has been a substantial reduction in loss of lives due to floods in recent years. On the contrary, death tolls and incidents of landslides are on the rise. Therefore, observation, research, and mapping of landslide risks have been initiated through substantive financing, new technology, and expertise. Similarly, there is a need to predict climatic phenomena more precisely, timely, and specifically to strengthen the multi-hazard early warning system.
15. Also, emergency operation centers and health emergency operation centers are operational at all levels. Community Disaster Management Committees are functional at grassroots level along with public and private sectors in managing risks, emergencies, and recovery. We are undertaking awareness and law enforcement measures for structural safety from individual housing to critical infrastructures and promoting culture of safety through risk informed planning and programs. In this regard, we have prioritized the development of human resources, use of technology, arrangements of equipment, and exchange of knowledge and skill.
16. Nepal successfully managed the COVID-19 pandemic through effective case management and administration of vaccines with a whole of the government and whole of the society approach. Nepal conducted tracing, testing, isolation, treatments, and vaccination measures. All government mechanisms were mobilized effectively to contain the virus, setting a good example of coherence between all tiers of government. As a result, Nepal was able to contain and manage the pandemic limiting the deaths, achieving satisfactory recovery of identified cases and vaccinating successfully and limiting the death toll at 1.2% as of 31 August 2022.
17. Inclusive approach is the priority of disaster risk reduction in Nepal. The Constitution of Nepal places top priority to inclusion and ensures meaningful participation of women,

children, senior citizens, and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, people living in poverty, sexual and gender minorities, adolescent girls, single women, Dalit women, indigenous women, religious and ethnic minorities, etc. Inclusion policy has ensured to include diverse stakeholders in all disaster management committees. Likewise, we have put our efforts to ensure inclusive and accessible practices through disability inclusive disaster risk reduction. Policy formulation, institution development and budgeting are the key tools to engage targeted groups and reflect the inclusive approach.

18. We are conducting a mid-term evaluation of implementation of the Sendai Framework this year. It will indicate our achievements as well as priorities to be focused in the years ahead. High-level steering committee and working committees are working on it to review and monitor the progress made by line ministries and respective agencies responsible to implement the plan. The ongoing preparation of biennial Nepal Disaster Report is also expected to contribute to this mid-term review process. We will revise and realign the strategies and plans based on the recommendations of the evaluation to achieve the targets by 2030.

Excellencies,

19. Recent incidences of disasters clearly indicate a hydro-meteorological phenomenon as causal factor. As the world ecosystems are linked to each other, the climatic situation on the ocean system has enormous impact on the mountainous system. There has been an organic link between sea-level rise and melting of glacier in the Himalayas leading towards abrupt changes or gradual shifts in the world climatic system. Lives and livelihoods can be adapted accordingly for gradual shifts in global climatic conditions to mitigate the adverse impacts caused by climate change. Climate funds and the resources should be channelized to make available on mitigating hydro meteorological disasters to reduce such disaster risks.
20. As incidents of disaster are trans-boundary in nature, their impacts spread regionally. The cause and impact are nonlinear and compounding impacts are beyond national boundary and capacity. This situation demands strong collaboration among and between the Member States to reduce risks and their impacts. In this connection, information generation, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and resource collaboration are the opportunities that accelerate progress towards achieving the set objectives by the year 2030. There is a need and a natural expectation for further engagement towards regional collaboration to ensure safer communities and disaster resilient nations in the region and beyond.

21. The Government is committed to strengthen disaster risk resilient governance, increase investment and nurture national and international partnerships and risk financing to build a disaster-resilient nations. We are also committed to implement global and regional frameworks for DRR and building resilience, leaving no one behind. We believe that the learning from this platform will enable us to pave our path toward achieving the targets of SFDRR and SDGs to build disaster-resilient communities.

22. I am confident that after fruitful deliberations and prolific discussion among delegates, this conference will come out with shared solutions for better preparedness and enhanced coordination among the Member States to meet the common objectives from the crisis to resilience. Nepal is committed to work with the international community diligently and looks forward to engaging constructively during the deliberation. My delegation wishes every success to the conference and assures you of its full cooperation.

Thank you very much.