

**STATEMENT BY THE SIERRA LEONE DELEGATION ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
PRIORITIES OF HYOGO FRAME WORK OF ACTION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE
GLOBAL PLATFORM 16TH – 19TH JUNE 2009**

[SALUTATION] THE DIRECTOR I S D R, HEADS OF DELEGATION OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS ON DRR, HONERABLE MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENTS OF STATE, REPRESENTATIVES OF SPECIALISED AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, HEADS OF DELEGATION OF SUB-REGIONAL & REGIONAL BODIES, REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION, ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED

On behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, I wish to extend warm felicitations to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR) and partners for taking this laudable venture in providing a forum for national governments to make a statement at the global platform on the progress made on the main priorities of the Hyogo Framework of Action.

With respect to Priority I which underscores **‘Disaster Risk Reduction as a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation**, the government of Sierra Leone has established a National Disaster Management Department in the Office of National Security within the Office of the President. Twelve (12) District Disaster Management Committees across the country have been established. Draft Disaster Management Plan and National Disaster Management Policy have been developed and are currently with both Cabinet & Parliament awaiting ratification and endorsement by Government. Both documents are representative of the views of government ministries, departments, agencies, International Non-Governmental Organisations, UN agencies, Community-Based Organisations and Civil Societies. The Plan covers disaster prevention, preparedness, and response and it clearly spells out the roles and responsibilities of agencies and institutions in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response.

A close examination of priority 11, which stresses **'the use of knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels'**, the Government of Sierra Leone has been conducting regular educational and awareness raising campaigns on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through the United Nations Radio which is broadcasted all over the country. The programme known as **'Disaster Management Hour'** is aired every Thursday and is a radio discussion programme that engages experts in various fields of disaster management. Government also started a schools' Outreach Programme some three (30 years ago, code-named **'Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School.'** This is an Outreach Programme that takes disaster management and other DRR issues to school children and communities. As part of the Schools' Outreach Programme, government has been organising Inter-schools quiz competitions to test the knowledge of students on issues of disaster management. The focus of these sensitisation programmes is to imbibe the culture of risk reduction and environmental protection in their everyday interactions with the environment and into the minds of ordinary people at community level.

On Priority 111, the Disaster Management Department has engaged all sectors to ensure that they incorporate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development initiatives. In this respect government has included disaster risk reduction into Pillar Two and Three of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). With regards coordination of all disaster-related issues, the Disaster Management Department organises monthly coordination meetings with all relevant stakeholder institutions from ministries, department and agencies, UN specialised agencies, Non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross, Community –based organizations and Civil Society.

To take forward Priority 1V, Government through the support of the UNDP conducted a National Hazard Profile to set the foundation for the development of an effective national disaster management programme.

In addition, government has conducted Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) in 9 out of the 12 districts in the country. This includes risks assessments, hazard-mapping and risks monitoring programmes right across the country. The VCA exercise also includes

identifying coping strategies and strengthening the capacities of communities in relation to disaster preparedness and response.

The government has also developed Contingency Plans on H5N1 (Bird Flu), H1N1 (Swine Flu) epidemic, Population Movement and Health related issues among others in Sierra Leone. The latter was done in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO) Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Non Governmental Organisation which have the mandate in Health - related Disaster Risk Reduction issues.

Though government has made substantial gains in meeting most of the priorities of Hyogo Framework, it remains to be confronted with some challenges. One such limitation is the lack of emergency funds to conduct assessment, monitoring and analysis of risk and response to disasters, the enforcement of DRR activities within state institutions among others.

It is hoped that with meeting the needs of the department will further strengthen key priorities of Hyogo Framework of Action and Government of Sierra Leone's resolve to make Sierra Leone disaster-resilient.

Thank you for your attention.

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