

UN-ISDR  
Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction  
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## Statement by Global Risk Forum GRF Davos

Dr. Walter J. Ammann, President

Mr Chairman

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for providing this excellent platform opportunity to meet and discuss on policy and strategic issues of major common concern to compete with disasters and to reduce risk.

I would equally like to commend the ISDR Secretariat for the comprehensive Assessment Report. It reveals – not unexpectedly – that since the Kobe Conference the international community has been able to make a “quantum leap” regarding DRR structures and systems, but also that in the coming months and years the community has to put much more effort in the DRR “soft and brain ware”, into capacity building, to build with the help of the people the culture of safety and resilience at all levels.

The Global Risk Forum GRF Davos with its three pillars – the IDRC Conferences and Workshops, the Risk Academy and the Platform for Networks – is keen to contribute to this endeavour. Let me therefore briefly address four points, where the GRF Davos makes or wants to make efforts to improve and accelerate the HFA implementation process in response also to key issues which have been addressed by Sir John Holmes in his opening address and in subsequent sessions:

## 1. **The GRF's contribution to the HFA**

The Global Risk Forum GRF Davos aims at closing gaps between science, policy and application by bringing together a broad group of experts, policy makers, practitioners, scientists and key players from governments, international organizations, civil society, media and the private sector in the areas of risk prevention, risk management and climate change.

GRF Davos reflects the necessity to consider risk, safety and security in a holistic manner and to involve and to create interactions between all key players, from line ministries and disaster management and risk reduction authorities to academic institutions and the private sector – public-private partnership playing a key role in vulnerability and disaster risk reduction and in climate change adaptation.

In this sense, GRF Davos, promotes to find answers and solutions in the form of “from thoughts to action”, as it was called in the IDRC Conference of August last year in Davos. It closely links practice, science, policy, media, the private sector and decision making in the search for sustainable development and it expresses the importance of transferring scientific knowledge to applicable know how. It thus supports and contributes to the indispensable global efforts of the UN Hyogo Framework for Action and the UN Millennium Development Goals. GRF Davos aims at supporting these efforts, as reflected in a joint agreement signed with the UN-ISDR, to facilitate and encourage the joint involvement of political authorities, professionals and practitioners of all relevant disciplines, and the public at large to build resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

## 2. **The “100 ideas for action” promoted at the last IDRC conference in Davos in August last year:**

The goal of the IDRC Davos 2008 was to come up with “*one hundred ideas for action*” – which should lead to concrete projects and actions in areas which have been identified as important for climate change adaptation, for disaster management and for risk reduction. As a result, similar gaps and deficiencies as

revealed in the ISDR assessment report came out of our “100 ideas for action”. You may find a joint ISDR – GRF Davos brochure on the 100 ideas for action in your conference documents.

Let us the ideas being followed by concrete, joint efforts. A global collaborative risk reduction process by closely linking practice, science, policy and decision making in the search for sustainable solutions becomes increasingly important as the risk landscape gains in complexity.

3. **Harmonizing climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction:** Let me address another important concern: the link between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Efforts made in natural disaster risk reduction support climate change adaptation and vice versa. Climate change adaptation with respect to disasters due to natural hazards is most effective when investing in preventive measures. On the other hand, it is a fact that dealing with disasters is still dominated by disaster response and recovery – even preventive measures are proven to be much more cost effective. “Invest today for a safer tomorrow”, the motto of the Global Assessment Report, is still many times an illusion. Obviously, there are not enough economic or political incentives for local governments to invest in disaster prevention.

Mainstreaming climate change adaptation with disaster and risk reduction clearly reveals huge benefits for the two communities, by harmonizing their efforts and working very closely together. Whereas know how in disaster prevention is well established, but in practice still very much dominated by response and recovery activities, public awareness for climate change adaptation in terms of preventive measures seems easier to be raised.

Linking climate change adaptation (CCA) with disaster and risk reduction (DRR), underlining the crucial importance of those links and similarities, and the necessity for coordinated strategies and action at all levels and sectors will help to address and achieve our common goals.

4. **A proposal on how to accelerate the implementation of the HFA goals.**

Our conference chairman, Sir John Holmes, has urged us to accelerate the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. And he made clear that for doing so, governments need support at the national, sub regional, and at community level. The chairman proposed for this purpose to establish a “help desk”. GRF Davos is ready to engage in such a “Joint HFA Implementation Initiative” of the whole UN-ISDR-system. As an example and first step, check-lists could be developed on how to best implement the HFA strategy. Such a check-list would have for example to address measurable targets, define indicators, propose a monitoring and assessment system, and define the reporting procedure.

Mr Chairman, DRR is a broad task asking the involvement of many players. We are convinced that with an increased joint effort and with much good will from all we can fulfil the expectations as laid down in the Hyogo Framework for Action. GRF Davos will do its best to contribute to this endeavour.

Let me add one final remark: As already done in 2006 and 2008, GRF Davos will next year again organize the IDRC Davos conference, to complement UN-ISDR’s Global Platform discussions in its biennial turn, additionally integrating academia, the business sector, media and the civil society. Due to reconstruction of the Davos Congress Center, the date had to be shifted to June 2010. Therefore, please note, that the conference will take place from May 30 – June 4, 2010 in Davos, Switzerland.

Thank you.

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