

Statement by Global Risk Forum GRF Davos

Dr. Walter J. Ammann, President

Mr Chairman

Excellencies

Dear colleagues and partners

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 that in the coming months and years the community has to put much more effort in the DRR “soft ware” to build with the help of the people the culture of safety and resilience at all levels.

With its three pillars – the IDRC Conferences and Workshops, the Risk Academy and the Platform for Networks – the Global Risk Forum GRF Davos is contributing 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:

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 and the private sector in the areas of risk prevention and risk management.

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.

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 September last year in Davos. It closely links practice, science, policy 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 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 natural disasters and climate change adaptation. Efforts made in natural disaster risk reduction support climate change adaptation and vice versa. Climate change adaptation with respect to natural disasters is most effective when investing in preventive measures. On the other hand, it is a fact that dealing with natural 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 natural 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 this governments need support at the national, subregional, and community level. What I would like to propose is to invest in – what I would call – a HFA- Joint Implementation Initiative of the whole UN-ISDR-system, a kind of

HFA help desk for governments. 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. GRF Davos would be willing to provide support for such an initiative which should already improve the mid-term assessment of the HFA implementation.

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 layed down in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Thank you.

Davos, 6 June 2009