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by

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Minister of State for Home Affairs**

**at the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference
on Disaster Risk Reduction**

Bangkok

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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of my country, I would like to congratulate the Royal Thai Government on the successful convening of the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. I heartily appreciate the warm hospitality extended to us.

It is an honor to be a part of this important Conference as this is an occasion for consolidating our strategies to move forward after the completion of Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-15. This Conference also assumes importance in the context of the third United Nations conference on disaster risk reduction which is slated for 2015. We from India, would like to share our experiences with other countries and in turn, learn the various approaches and good practices elsewhere on Disaster Risk Reduction. We hope that the sharing of the experiences and learning would help us to ensure the resilience of communities and safety of the people's livelihoods and assets. Events like the Tsunami in Japan of 2011, the Cyclone 'Haiyan' in the Philippines of 2013 and the floods and landslides of June 2013 in Uttarakhand and the Cyclone Phailin of October, 2013 in India have highlighted the need to step up the preparedness efforts.

In India, we have established the required institutional framework for disaster management. Our Parliament enacted the Disaster Management Act in 2005. The Government of India has announced National Disaster Management Policy in 2009. Our National Disaster Management Authority has issued hazard-

specific guidelines. The Disaster Management Authorities have been established not only at the National level, but also at the State and District levels. We have already set up the National and State Disaster Response Funds. We have also raised the National Disaster Response Force, which is fully equipped to support the requirements of the primary responders in the States. We have ensured a comprehensive consultation process with the concerned Ministries, based on which the National Disaster Management Plan has been prepared, with the components of disaster mitigation, capacity building as well as disaster response. The State Governments are also preparing their State Disaster Management Plans. In addition, each Ministry of the Government of India prepares their own sector-specific disaster management plan. We have developed an institutional mechanism to see that all new projects are cleared only after it is ensured that disaster risk reduction concerns have adequately been met.

We took an important step by establishing our National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, for intense consultations and sharing of experiences by various stakeholders and disaster managers. The First Session of the Platform held in 2013, was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for strengthening community resilience.

We have developed large scale community based programmes for all sectors like education, health, livelihood, employment, housing, food security, agriculture and drinking water to increase the coping capacity of the community in dealing with disasters. We are making efforts to mainstream disaster reduction measures in the development programmes. Recently, we have taken a giant step forward by earmarking

10% funds in all our development schemes to be used for innovation, disaster mitigation and restoration. In addition, the private sector is also playing an important role through corporate social responsibility.

Our civil defence, home guards, State Disaster Response Force and the civil society organizations including the Indian Red Cross Society provide a well coordinated regime of high state of preparedness.

Coming to the scientific and technological advancement for better forecasting capabilities, we have come a long way by preparing vulnerability atlas, setting up of Indian national Centre for Ocean information Services. We have community hubs of the Indian Space Research Organization for early warning. We have the Central Water Commission to provide flood monitoring and flood forecast reviews.

Ladies and Gentlemen, during the June 2013 event in Uttarakhand, we took up a massive effort and successfully brought over 150000 pilgrims to safety, despite a difficult mountainous terrain, very adverse weather conditions and severe disruptions in the road connectivity. During October 2013, over 1.2 Million people were evacuated and brought to safety, before the cyclone 'Phailin' made the land fall. Ladies and gentlemen, I would request to appreciate that these capabilities do not come overnight automatically: It called for long years of patient, determined and concerted efforts by multiple organizations. It required channelising of technological developments into community based preparedness. It needed creation of infrastructure like multi-purpose cyclone shelters. It was also required to see that those assets were utilized by the

communities during the 'non-disaster' phase. We have made sure that the socially disadvantaged groups, senior citizens, the disabled, women and children receive adequate attention in all the preparedness efforts, mock drills and rehearsals.

Disasters cause impact beyond the political, social and economic boundaries globally. There has been an increase in the natural disasters over the past few years. India is highly vulnerable to natural hazards particularly earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones and landslides and a number of human-made disasters. Our country has witnessed several disasters in the past, which have caused great misery and sufferings. They have also given us the opportunities to bring institutional improvements. It is a continuous process to keep improving in this regard.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to enhance community resilience at all levels. India will continue its determined efforts in this regard. India will play its role in the regional cooperation.
