

14 March 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk
Reduction**

Statement on behalf of President Kutesa

I thank Prime Minister Abe, and the Government and people of Japan for hosting this Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. It is an illustration, not only of its commitment towards reducing disasters, but also the indispensable role and effectiveness of multilateral action.

Ten years ago in Hyogo, we embraced an international framework to build national and community resilience to disasters; increase awareness about disaster risks; and mainstream disaster risk reduction into national planning and development. We also undertook to reduce the underlying social, economic and environmental risk factors.

While we have registered success in some areas, we still face many challenges. Progress has been achieved in reducing disaster risk, contributing to a reduction in mortality, but socio-economic and environmental effects of disasters have increased.

Estimates indicate that more than 1.5 billion people have been affected by disasters in various ways since the Hyogo Framework for Action was adopted, with a total economic loss of more than \$1.3 trillion.

We should continue to move forward with our efforts. The increasing world population precipitates the need to increase both the number and resilience of settlements. Human induced global warming is contributing to an increase in climate change-related disasters. Together, these factors may increase disaster risk vulnerability for many people, especially in developing countries.

At This gathering, we should adopt a framework that comprehensively addresses the full range of issues that contribute to disaster risk. Building on Hyogo, it should address the underlying risk factors, including climate change and its related vulnerabilities.

Together with other major processes this year, such as Financing for Development, the Post-2015 Development Agenda and climate change, we can build an integrated and comprehensive international agenda in support of the global vision for a sustainable world.

Excellencies,

Reducing and managing disaster risk is a shared responsibility. Whether it is avalanches, landslides, floods, wildfires, earthquakes or tropical storms, disasters affect us all. However, they do not affect us equally, and our coping capacities differ a great deal.

Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States face significant additional burdens, given the vulnerability of their communities and economies. We need to strengthen international cooperation and partnerships to enhance their resilience. Many of these countries also need financial support to resettle communities from disaster prone areas, as well as appropriate and sufficient capacity and technology to ensure they can rebuild back better.

As we seek to eradicate poverty, and move towards sustainable development, a strengthened commitment to, and investment in disaster risk reduction will be critical to the success of the post-2015 development agenda.

In conclusion, I call on all States to seize this opportunity to establish a positive example of effective international cooperation. Let us reach 2016 with a strong, grounded agenda – one that recognises the importance of cooperation, collaboration and partnership, and sets a solid foundation for the challenges ahead.

The Hyogo Framework for Action has served us well over the last 10 years. Let us renew our commitment to build resilient and sustainable nations and communities. Let us use this conference, as well as the Summits in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris, to present a unified vision with concrete deliverables.

I thank you for your kind attention.