

[Opening Remarks by co-Chair Ambassador Kairamo]

This meeting marks the start of an important journey for the international community. In the next eight months, we will discuss the possible contents of a new framework for addressing disaster risk, for consideration by the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai.

All countries are at risk to disaster, whether small or large, rich or poor. It is an issue that affects all of us and requires us to exercise our shared responsibility. At the same time, it is an issue that has benefited from the goodwill of all countries. This is the spirit in which I hope we will approach our task in these next two days, and in the months ahead.

We have a good substantive basis for our work. For some time now, governments, regional and international organizations, community organizations, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community and many others have developed common thinking and approaches for reducing the risk of disaster. Their effort led, in 2005, to the development of the Hyogo Framework

for Action, which has guided the work of nations and communities to manage risk and create the basis for building resilience.

With the Hyogo Framework up for review in 2015, the international community can now develop a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction that incorporates new elements that can lift the work of reducing disaster risk to a higher level. This first session of the Preparatory Committee is an opportunity for us to exchange views with each other on what is needed in such a framework.

I would like to add, as well, that disaster risk reduction is not the concern of governments alone. Both my co-Chair and I look forward to hearing from the representatives of major groups at this meeting.

I thank you once again for giving us the privilege to lead this process, and now give the floor to my co-Chair to make his opening remarks.

* * *