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Statement

by

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at

UNDRR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

**Mid-term review plenary session 2 on theme: “Beyond natural hazards –
operationalizing the expanded scope of the Sendai Framework”**

26 May 2022, 10h30 – 13h00

Intervention limited to 3 min

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

It is my pleasure to outline UNECE's vision on operationalizing the expanded scope of the Sendai Framework.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how a single biological hazard can affect every one of us, and how vulnerable and exposed we all are. It has been an urgent wake-up call for better prevention, and preparedness – visibly revealing the compounding effects of disasters.

Let me highlight this with one example: We still witness the pandemic's direct long-term impact on trade flows, given the shortage of goods in many markets. Looking forward, we should seize opportunities to better prepare for and mitigate the impacts of disasters on all sectors, for example through normative recommendations, *such as the UNECE Recommendation on Pandemic Crisis Trade-Related Response.*

Another key example: the compounding effects of the pandemic on the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We need to urgently address the full range of environmental, natural and other hazards, in an increasingly interlinked manner: Joined-up actions to combat air pollution and climate change by reducing short-lived climate forcers will also benefit biodiversity. Restoring forests and other ecosystems, meanwhile, provides critical benefits in reducing disaster risk and enhancing climate resilience. Here,

UNECE has facilitated Ministerial pledges to restore 7 million hectares of forests landscapes by 2030, and launched an ambitious Trees in Cities campaign.

So, what do we recommend going forward?

First, new approaches to risk governance and policy-making, to ensure that national institutions can relate to each other on an equal footing, institute a true multi-hazard and multi-sectoral approach and end the rigid silo-approach, all too often still prevalent.

Second, DRR policies should comprehensively address technological risks, in addition to natural hazards and risks, and take account of cascading effects such as Natech events.

Third, transboundary cooperation needs to be enshrined in such policies - disasters do not stop at borders! Positive examples are strategic decision-making on land-use and urban planning, as well as infrastructure and transport development which are based on environmental and technological risk assessments, across borders or shared water bodies.

Finally, it is fundamental that our efforts to reduce disaster risk involve all levels of governance, empower the local level, and promote public participation in decision-making. *UNECE's Aarhus Convention provides important guidance in this respect.*

I call on governments and stakeholders to increasingly include the full scale of hazards and risks into policy and governance, in order to enable risk-sensitive sustainable development. We look forward to contributing with UNECE's experience, legal and normative instruments, so as to jointly

accelerate progress in implementing the Sendai Framework, the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and our Common Agenda.

Thank you.
