



**Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for  
Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for  
Disaster Risk Reduction\***

**STATEMENT  
Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries**

*4 November 2014, Vienna*

Distinguished Conference President,  
Secretary-General of the Conference,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Margareta Wahlström, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This gathering has been significant for several reasons. The international community has come here to demonstrate its commitment to a group of countries that face unique and particular challenges to their development.

Disaster and climate risk are major challenges facing LLDCs. Drought, landslides and earthquakes, among other hazards, directly undermine the sustainable development of LLDCs. Just last Sunday on 02 November, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that high food prices and intensified weather related hazards as a consequence of climate change would most likely leave poor people worse off.

LLDCs are particularly exposed to climate change and desertification. Land is central to the nexus that links energy, food, water and environmental health. Climate change, through variations in rainfall and temperature, is likely to have serious and far-reaching consequences. From the 1970s to the early 2000s, the percentage of the earth's area afflicted by serious drought has more than doubled.

Food security in land-locked dry land countries is a serious concern. It is estimated that food production will have to rise 60% by 2050 just to keep pace with expected global population increase and changing demand. The annual production gains we have come to expect will be impacted by climate change.

Natural hazards put at-risk critical infrastructure, agricultural yields, transportation links, undermine trade and discourage private sector investment. They can create new risk and

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worsen existing levels of risk. Development gains are often badly affected as economic losses multiply.

Disaster risk reduction and strengthening the resilience of communities and nations is therefore fundamental to the sustainable development of LLDCs.

We have come a long way since the Almaty Programme of Action. The recognition and prioritization of disaster risk reduction and the need to build resilience in the outcome document sends a clear message of the importance that LLDCs, and indeed the wider international community, places on managing risk and building resilience as an essential element part of sustainable development.

This Conference has grappled with many of the issues which will require political commitment in the year ahead, as the world prepares for new agreements on disaster risk reduction, climate change and sustainable development, including the SDGs.

I welcome the recognition in the outcome document of the value placed on the Hyogo Framework for Action and the support for its successor, the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction, currently being considered by States.

There is also a clear articulation of policies and programmes related to, and mutually supportive of, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development.

Identifying, managing and reducing the risk of disasters is an ongoing endeavour. We will be focusing on these matters at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan. I invite you all to attend this Conference, where the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction will be considered. We call upon LLDC leaders to bring their message to Sendai.

The international community will share the responsibility – with LLDCs – to overcome the complex challenges facing landlocked communities. The Special Representative for the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction is committed to continuing her work with LLDCs.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and its partners, stand ready to support the outcome document and the journey of landlocked developing States towards a sustainable and resilient future.

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*\* Statement delivered by Mr. Neil McFarlane, UNISDR Director oic.*