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**Statement by Mr. Martin Chungong
Deputy Secretary General
at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction**

Geneva, 22 May 2013

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Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate you on convening this fourth meeting of the Global Platform. It is taking place at a critical time as policymakers and practitioners try to come to grips with an unprecedented impact of disasters on people and societies. I am honored to have this opportunity to speak at this landmark event on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the global parliamentary community.

Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The figures speak volumes about the urgent need for coherent and effective measures to protect citizens and communities from the growing threat of disasters. I do not need to go into the details of how many people have been killed directly or affected by earthquakes, floods and drought in the last 20 years. The economic losses brought about by natural hazards have been on a sharp rise over the years. What is even more disquieting for us is that this trend is not likely to go down especially in view of the exponential growth of urbanization and increasingly severe weather conditions. Firmer action is therefore required.

For the IPU, the impact of natural and man-made disasters is a critical political question in which parliamentarians have an important role to play. In cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, we have striven to mobilise legislators around this issue over the past several years. In the fall of 2010, we launched together here in Geneva an Advocacy Kit for Parliamentarians. This is a tool, now available in the six official languages of the UN, designed to assist MPs in overseeing national progress and investments towards achieving the MDGs in their respective countries through the prism of disaster risk reduction.

In both 2011 and 2012, we convened side events at IPU to explore concrete modalities through which parliaments and parliamentarians can address disaster risk reduction. A little over a month ago, when the IPU convened for its 128th Assembly in Ecuador, member parliaments concluded their deliberations with the Quito Communiqué, which constitutes a parliamentary contribution to the global reflection on the post-2015 development agenda and to the shaping of the future Sustainable Development Goals. The Quito Communiqué underscores the key components of social and environmental sustainability, and firmly argues in favour of the inclusion of democratic governance as one of the pillars of the next generation of development goals, both as an end in itself and as an enabler of sustainable development.

Also in Quito in late March, the IPU member Parliaments decided to formally place on the agenda of their Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade, the very topical issue entitled Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints. This October in Geneva, the IPU will debate this topic, and begin to identify specific recommendations for parliamentary action. Member parliaments will be invited to submit their own inputs, which will serve as the basis of negotiations on a resolution to be adopted in the spring of next year. Going beyond the resolution, we will be putting in place modalities to track follow-up to and implementation of the main provisions of that resolution. Among other things, we trust this will help mobilize a robust parliamentary contribution to the UN process leading up to the establishment of the post-Hyogo framework.

Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, earlier this week, members of parliament from 26 countries and four regional parliamentary assemblies gathered in a Parliamentary Meeting organized by the IPU and the UNISDR. They stressed the interlinkages between governance for disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. In their view, effective responses to disasters will only be possible through comprehensive institutional and regulatory frameworks that are transparent, inclusive and accountable.

A fully representative parliament that has the requisite powers and means to express the will of the people and that can legislate and hold government to account is a key institution that can ensure this. Parliaments build national ownership of sustainable development policies. They hold policy debates and translate international development commitments and sustainable development policies into national legislation. They facilitate implementation of development plans and hold government to account through their oversight function. They hold the purse strings and provide funding for development through the national budget. It is therefore critical that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction recognizes parliaments as a partner and a key stakeholder.

I would like to conclude by saying that we at the IPU very much value the cooperation which has been developing in recent years with the UNISDR. We hope that the important role of parliaments will be reflected post-Hyogo, and we look forward to continued cooperation to engage legislators and help mobilize parliamentary action towards building risk-resilient societies.

Thank you.