

IDRC CHENGDU 2009

MONDAY, 13 JULY 2009

OPENING CEREMONY

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you in my roles - both as one of the Conference Honorary Chairs and as President of the Global Risk Forum GRF Davos – to welcome you very warmly to the IDRC 2009 conference here in Chengdu and I would like to thank the conference organizers and the conference leadership committee to have taken up the initiative and responsibility to organize this important event on the Wenchuan earthquake and the way ahead..

After the successful IDRC conference in August 2007 held in Harbin, and after a impressive Plenary Session on the Wenchuan earthquake, given by Chinese top experts at the last year's IDRC Conference in Davos Switzerland, I am very pleased to see the IDRC conference back in China, providing the strategic platform for in-depth discussions on how to cope with disasters and to provide the necessary framework for the international risk and disaster management expert community to share with our Chinese colleagues the valuable experiences on the devastating Wenchuan earthquake.

We know that almost every country is earthquake prone – the probability of occurrence may differ from one seismic zone to the other but the expected amount of damage in almost all cases will be extremely high. It is also a fact

that the world we live in today is becoming more and more complex, less certain, and more interdependent than any time before in history.

It is therefore of highest importance for the international community to look ahead and to share experiences on best practices on how to cope with risks, on how to prevent disasters, to be able to develop and improve adequate strategies, and look for new solutions and approaches.

Shall this conference with your support, with our all common efforts, become a platform for fruitful discussions and create effective solutions to contribute to a safer, risk resilient, harmonious and sustainable world.

Let me finish by citing Konfuzius. He stated: "Gain new knowledge by reflecting the existant one and you will become a teacher for the others." Let us hope, that leaving the conference on Wednesday, we all are converted to teachers for the others.

Thank you

Walter Ammann