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Foreword by Han Qunli

The Kyoto Landslides Commitment 2020 (The KLC2020) is a significant and new step to advance Sendai Partnerships 2015–2025 for Global Promotion of Understanding and Reducing Landslide Disaster Risk (Sendai Landslide Partnership 2015–2025) which was launched in March 2015 during the Sendai Conference. As was set in its preamble, the KLC2020 aims to provide key to all actors and stakeholders concerned with landslide risk with the tools, information, platforms, technical expertise, and incentives to promote landslide risk reduction. To this end, the KLC2020 has brought forward ten strategic priority actions. For those who are familiar with the Sendai Partnerships 2015–2025, the difference is clear and substantial: we have moved forward from the six initial fields of cooperation in 2015 to the current framework of ten strategic priority actions. This change is a strong demonstration of the progress of cooperation for all in this area during last 5 years. Now we know much better than in 2015 on what actions are more required as well as their respective priority settings.

Time goes fast. I still remember those intensive discussions, meetings, and skype calls in 2014 and early 2015, prior to the 3rd World Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction, when the Sendai Landslide Partnership 2015–2025 was taking shape. I recall the active debates and dialog at the sessions and side events in Sendai in March 2015 and the moment at the signing ceremony in Sendai with the presence of SRSg, Madame Margareta Wahlström, and her encouragement and endorsement. I also recollect the successful 4th World Landslide Forum (WLF4) held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in May 2017, that brought over six hundred experts across the world to exchange, share, and elaborate for ways forward. It was in Ljubljana I met then the Chair of IRDR, Dr. Shuaib Lwasa, and witnessed his signing of the Sendai Partnership 2015–2025. This gave me a new mandate when I took the office of IRDR in September 2017 after I completed my long duty in UNESCO.

In the early summer of 2018, I had a chance to visit Sichuan Province, southwestern of China with my IRDR team, to see the impacts of 2017 earthquake in Jiuzhaigou Valley World Heritage site. In the same field travel, we went to a memorial of Xinmo Village in Mao County. The landslides damages in both areas were massive. While it is straightforward to evaluate these disasters by data and on the maps, it was very hard to describe impacts and losses as a human individual. For the World Heritage site, the 2017 earthquake and landslides induced have brought a very serious question regarding the sustaining conservation of the Outstanding Universal Values on natural beauty at this area in future. The tragedy of Xinmo Village, a relatively new settlement completely destroyed by the sudden landslide in the dawn of 24 Jun 2017, with an accumulation volume of 13.25 million cubic meters, posed an urgent call for science and technology communities as a whole, including myself, on how to come forward sooner and with much better and more effective risk assessment methodologies, monitoring mechanisms and early warning systems for countries and communities living in mountainous areas, where relocation is, unfortunately, not always an available option.

Risk of landslides has been seen increasing. This is primarily due to intensified urbanization and infrastructure development in areas

that are prone from geological conditions to landslides, which have been further exuberated by the increase of climate extreme events especially heavy and intensive rain falls. Also, the global warming leads to landslides in permafrost areas and glacial lake outbursts, signaling new disaster risks. Landslide risks have thus become, increasingly, a complicated DRR challenge from their direct drivers, underlying causes to the impacts, and consequently a major issue toward sustainable development. It is for this reason I see IRDR, an international scientific program for risk science, has its niche in the Sendai Landslide Partnership 2015–2025 and now in the KLC2020.

I am very honored to be part of this new global commitment of KLC2020. I take this opportunity to express appreciation to the leadership of International Consortium of Landslides, headed by Prof Sassa with his tireless effort over the years, and the ICL/IPL community. I look forward to the active cooperation in the coming years in the implementation of KLC2020.

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