

**Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Special Meeting on
Response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe**

**Intervention by
Ambassador K. Nagaraj Naidu
Deputy Permanent Representative**

Thank you Madam President,

1. India welcomes the effort of ECOSOC to have this meeting as it stands at the intersection of the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, Climate Change Adaptation, issues that we have all been involved with in very many ways since 2015 and the SG's Climate Action Summit that is the big occasion that we are all planning for today.
2. Cyclone IDAI made landfall on 15th March, 2019 causing widespread destruction and loss of human life in East and Southern African countries particularly Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
3. In response to a request from the Republic of Mozambique, Government of India on 23 March 2019 launched "Operation Sahayata" or "Operation Assistance", which diverted three Indian Naval ships namely, INS Sujata, INS Shardul and INS Sarathi to provide immediate humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the affected people in coordination with local authorities and the High Commission of India, Maputo.
4. The Indian Naval Crew rescued more than 204 people. Medical assistance has been provided to 1381 persons in medical camps set up by the Indian Navy. Indian Naval helicopter Chetak in coordination with disaster management officials of Mozambique took several sorties to facilitate aerial survey for evacuation of people and for air dropping food and water packets in cyclone affected areas. Indian Naval ships also provided fresh water in relief camps, undertook community service including clearing of debris and repairing damaged roads etc. Food supplies were provided to about 761 persons working in the port areas.

5. On March 25, under Operation 135 tons of critical relief material including additional food material was delivered at Beira. This includes relief materials from Government of Mozambique and from the local Indian Diaspora in Maputo. Support was also pro-actively provided by the Indian Community in undertaking relief operations involving medical camp and community services. In addition, 12 Mozambican defence personnel took passage to Beira on INS Shardul at the request of Government of Mozambique.
6. In view of the evolving crisis in Mozambique and to sustain HADR operations, a fourth Indian Naval Ship Magar loaded with relief materials has been sent to Mozambique. The HADR Ship loaded onboard contains medicine, dry provisions, ready to eat meals, daily essentials and clothing items. This would cater for approximately 1000 persons for 7 days. In addition, 500 kg of epidemic related medicines from one private Indian entity Apollo Group of Hospital and 250 tons of rice has also been loaded on the ship. The ship is expected to reach Beira by 11-12th April 2019.
7. The Indian Navy was the first responder in evolving humanitarian crisis in the aftermath of cyclone IDAI that hit Mozambique. The indomitable spirit, humane approach and professionalism of the Indian crew have received wide acknowledgement from the Government of Mozambique and the people of Mozambique as well as the international agencies including the UN staff involved in HADR operations in Mozambique.
8. In this hour of tragedy, Government of India stands ready to extend support to the affected people. India has been extending humanitarian assistance to Mozambique and had provided 10 million dollars for food grains in 2017, after it suffered food shortage as a result of natural calamities.
9. Malawi has declared a state of national disaster in 13 districts of Malawi and has appealed for assistance in terms of emergency relief material including food supplies and medicines. India is in the process of expediting the supply of 1000 MTs of rice and medicines worth \$2 Million to Malawi.

10. In response to request from Zimbabwe for medicines, Government of India is sending the 1st tranche of medicines worth Rs. 2.44 crores which is already underway to Zimbabwe. Medicines are expected to reach Zimbabwe by mid April 2019. Supply of the 2nd tranche of medicines is under process.
11. It is urgent and critical to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk in order to more effectively protect persons, communities and countries, their livelihoods, health, cultural heritage, socioeconomic assets and ecosystems, and thus strengthen their resilience.
12. Going forward we need to look beyond immediate relief and rehabilitation. We need to try and see can the challenges of this disaster be transformed into an opportunity for action. Graca Machel has said that 90% of the infrastructure of Port Beira has been hit by the Cyclone and the consequent flooding. Beira, will go down in history as having been the first city to be completely devastated by climate change. It raises the issue of how can we disaster proof a world that lives under serious existential threat. A disaster resilient world demands disaster resilient infrastructure.
13. Madam President, it will be nearly impossible to achieve the objectives of the Sendai Framework, unless disaster risk reduction is mainstreamed across multiple development sectors.
14. For some time there has been thinking that it is important to focus on affordable Climate Resilient Infrastructure. While we should seek to make “build to last” becoming the norm, we should try and “build back better” after this disaster. In the Indian State of Kerala, in the aftermath of the recent flooding, the effort has been not simply to rehabilitate the areas devastated by floods last year but to build back better. The way we build our infrastructure today will either build risk or resilience for future generations. The path of resilience is open to us – if we so choose.

15. Can the Resilience and Adaptation track of the SG's Climate Action Summit in Sept 2019 try and see if they can set up a coalition of the willing to work on a concrete example of helping any or all of these States in building back better? If we can do that it would underline the fact that events such as these will have an importance beyond norm setting.