

# Edinburgh Statement: Children in Disasters

## World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM)

Statement by the WADEM during the 14th World Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland  
20 May 2005

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*Whereas*, children suffer disproportionately in all natural and human-made disasters, lately being targeted as both victims and vectors of terror; *and*

*Whereas*, the Save the Children Fund, in 1923, and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, in 1990, have both declared that children should be first in receiving aid after natural and human made disasters; *and*

*Whereas*, children suffer disproportionately even greater hardships when their families, upon whom they depend for their needs, also are neglected; *and*

*Whereas*, scientific, medical, and public health advances considerably have improved the standard of health and well being for many of the world's children; *and*

*Whereas*, the measurable impact of natural and human-made disasters on child health worldwide, although substantial, is not known with precision; *and*

*Whereas*, the Ottawa Charter of 1986 states that children's health should be defined as the extent to which an individual child or groups of children are enabled to develop and realize their potential, satisfy their needs, and develop the capacities that allow them to interact successfully with their biological, physical, and social environments.

*Therefore, be it resolved, that the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine will:*

1. Universally condemn the exploitation of children as victims and vectors of terror; *and*
2. Act to facilitate global efforts to categorize the effects of natural and human-made disasters on children and families worldwide, with respect to health conditions, health functioning, and health potential; *and*
3. Disseminate these findings as broadly as possible, toward the end that children and families receive the benefit of priority care in natural and human-made disasters worldwide, consistent with their present needs and future welfare.

*Proposed by the Pediatric Committee of the WADEM, Edinburgh, Scotland, 18 May 2005;  
Adopted by the General Assembly of the WADEM, Edinburgh, Scotland, 20 May 2005*

*Passed Unanimously  
All Participants  
Closing Session  
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