

# United Nations' World Conference on Disaster Reduction

## World Conference on Disaster Reduction

Kobe, Hyogo, Japan  
18–22 January 2005

### Adopted in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 22 January 2005

---

Agenda item 13  
Adoption of the Conference Declaration

Limited Distribution  
21 January 2005

Original: English

We, delegates to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, have gathered from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe City of Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, which has demonstrated a remarkable recovery from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 17 January 1995.

We express our sincere condolences and sympathy to, and solidarity with, the people and communities adversely affected by disasters, particularly those devastated by the unprecedented earthquake and tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004. We commend the efforts made by them, their Governments and the international community to respond to and overcome this tragedy. In response to the Special Leaders' Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami, held in Jakarta on 06 January 2005, we commit ourselves to assisting them, including with respect to appropriate measures pertinent to disaster reduction. We also believe that lessons learned from this disaster are relevant to other regions. In this connection, a special session on the recent earthquake and tsunami disaster, convened at the World Conference to review that disaster from a risk reduction perspective, delivered the Common Statement of the Special Session on Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future as its outcome.

We recognize that the international community has accumulated much experience with disaster risk reduction through the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the succeeding International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. In particular, by taking concrete measures in line with the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, we have learned much, including about gaps and challenges since the 1994 Yokohama Conference. Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned that communities continue to experience excessive losses of precious human lives and valuable property as well as serious injuries and major displacements due to various disasters worldwide.

We are convinced that disasters seriously undermine the results of development investments in a very short time, and therefore, remain a major impediment to sustainable development and poverty eradication. We are also cognizant that development investments that fail to appropriately consider disaster risks could increase vulnerability. Coping with and reducing disasters so as to enable and strengthen nations' sustainable development is, therefore, one of the most critical challenges facing the international community.

We are determined to reduce disaster losses of lives and other social, economic and environmental assets worldwide, mindful of the importance of international cooperation, solidarity and partnership, as well as good governance at all levels. We reaffirm the vital role of the United Nations system in disaster risk reduction.

Thus, we declare the following:

1. We will build upon relevant international commitments and frameworks, as well as internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, to strengthen global disaster reduction activities for the twenty-first century. Disasters have

a tremendous detrimental impact on efforts at all levels to eradicate global poverty; the impact of disasters remains a significant challenge to sustainable development.

2. We recognize the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction, sustainable development and poverty eradication, among others, and the importance of involving all stakeholders, including governments, regional and international organizations and financial institutions, civil society, including non-governmental organizations and volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community. We therefore welcome all the relevant events that took place and contributions made in the course of the Conference and its preparatory process.
3. We recognize as well that a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, and associated pre-disaster strategies, which are sound investments, must be fostered at all levels, ranging from the individual to the international levels. Human societies have to live with the risk of hazards posed by nature. However, we are far from powerless to prepare for and mitigate the impact of disasters. We can and must alleviate the suffering from hazards by reducing the vulnerability of societies. We can and must further build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters through people-centered early warning systems, risks assessments, education and other proactive, integrated, multi-hazard, and multi-sectoral approaches and activities in the context of the disaster reduction cycle, which consists of prevention, preparedness, and emergency response, as well as recovery and rehabilitation. Disaster risks, hazards, and their impacts pose a threat, but appropriate response to these can and should lead to actions to reduce risks and vulnerabilities in the future.
4. We affirm that States have the primary responsibility to protect the people and property on their territory from hazards, and thus, it is vital to give high priority to disaster risk reduction in national policy, consistent with their capacities and the resources available to them. We concur that strengthening community level capacities to reduce disaster risk at the local level is especially needed, considering that appropriate disaster reduction measures at that level enable the communities and individuals to reduce significantly their vulnerability to hazards. Disasters remain a major threat to the survival, dignity, livelihood and security of peoples and communities, in particular the poor.

Therefore there is an urgent need to enhance the capacity of disaster-prone developing countries in particular, the least developed countries and small island developing States, to reduce the impact of disasters, through strengthened national efforts and enhanced bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including through technical and financial assistance.

5. We, therefore, adopt, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters with its expected outcome, strategic goals, and priorities for action, as well as implementation strategies and associated follow-up, as a guiding framework for the next decade on disaster reduction.
6. We believe that it is critically important that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters be translated into concrete actions at all levels and that achievements are followed up through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in order to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities. We also recognize the need to develop indicators to track progress on disaster risk reduction activities as appropriate to particular circumstances and capacities as part of the effort to realize the expected outcome and strategic goals set in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. We underscore the importance of strengthening cooperative and synergistic interactions among various stakeholders and promoting voluntary partnerships for disaster reduction. We also resolve to further develop information sharing mechanisms on programmes, initiatives, best practices, lessons learnt and technologies in support of disaster risk reduction so that the international community can share the results of and benefits from these efforts.
7. We now call for action from all stakeholders, seeking the contributions of those with relevant specific competences and experiences, aware that the realization of the outcomes of the World Conference depends on our unceasing and tireless collective efforts, and a strong political will, as well as a shared responsibility and investment, to make the world safer from the risk of disasters within the next decade for the benefit of the present and future generations.
8. We express our most profound appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for hosting the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and thank particularly the people of Hyogo Prefecture for their hospitality.

Adopted in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 22 January 2005