

Agenda 11: Adoption of the programme outcome
Agenda 12: Adoption of the Conference Declaration

World Conference on Disaster Reduction
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Statement by Dr Marco Ferrari
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Chairman of the Main Committee

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

In my capacity as Chair of the Main Committee of this World Conference, I have the honour and privilege to present for your consideration and adoption two main documents of this Conference: 1) the draft programme outcome document entitled "Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters: Hyogo Framework for action 2005-2015" and 2) the draft "Hyogo Declaration".

These two key documents are the result of a considerable process of consultation, deliberations and consensus building. There have been contributions from a wide range of stakeholders that have been taken into account. All these have led to this agreed collective effort.

The Drafting Committee which became the Main Committee of the Conference has laboured long and hard, first in Geneva, Switzerland where it met from October 2004 until the time just prior to the Conference and subsequently over the last few days here in Kobe. I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to all those who participated for the excellent spirit of cooperation that has been manifested all along the arduous negotiation process, including during sessions that extended to late at night and even to the early morning hours. The Main Committee concluded its work in the early hours of today with a result that I believe, we can be satisfied with and proud of.

The Hyogo Framework for Action builds on the Yokohoma Strategy for a Safer World which was adopted in 1994 and has provided the international community over the last decade with landmark guidance on reducing disaster risks. The Hyogo Framework is based on the lessons learnt and gaps identified in the Review process of the Yokohoma strategy that took place over the last year.

Drafting this document we have set ourselves the goal of elaborating a framework for action for the next decade with the expected outcome of a substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries. In the midst of our drafting process, the unprecedented tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean dramatically drew the world's attention to the subject matter we have been dealing with. It heightened our awareness on the importance of stepping up efforts to reduce disasters everywhere. As is certainly very well known in our host country, disasters can strike anytime anywhere.

In the Hyogo Framework for Action we identified the following five priorities for action for the next ten years:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response

For each of these priority actions, we have identified a number of concrete and specific measures and activities, which require implementation at different levels: local, national, regional and international. The Hyogo Framework also gives consideration to whom and how they should be implemented and identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of states, regional organizations and institutions and international organizations.

In the drafting process we dealt with numerous issues, some of which were politically sensitive and on a few we could reach consensus only thanks to the hard work and good will of all those involved.

I should also like to mention that we had to deal with many different expectations which of course could not all be met. Those who expected from this Framework for Action a concrete

commitment of donors in terms of allocation of funding or the definition of targets and time-bound setting of objectives may be disappointed. However I believe that we reached our key goal which was to come to a broad agreement of how to embark on and promote locally as well internationally a culture of prevention and disaster reduction.

The common understanding we reached on many key issues and which is reflected in the Hyogo Framework will facilitate; I am sure, the cooperation and partnership at all levels in the years to come.

I am convinced that this Framework for Action will serve as an important guidance in the collective endeavour of the international community to reduce, worldwide, disasters as well as the risks, vulnerabilities and adverse impacts associated with these. I therefore recommend this important document for adoption.

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I also have the honour and privilege to present, for your consideration and adoption, the Declaration of this Conference: the "Hyogo Declaration".

Japan, as host country, prepared the draft of this declaration and it subsequently benefited from consultations in the course of the work of the Drafting Committee in Geneva as well as during this Conference. It is gratifying to note that delegates have been very enthusiastic in endorsing the considerations and statements contained in this declaration during the negotiations.

The Declaration reflects the sentiments expressed at this Conference, particularly having been deeply touched by the desolation and suffering resulting from the recent tsunami disaster. The declaration speaks for itself. It reflects the political will to pay increasing attention to disaster reduction and recognizes that it is critically important that the "Hyogo Framework for Action", be translated into concrete actions at all levels to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities.

I therefore recommend this Hyogo Declaration for adoption.

In closing, I express my personal thanks for the great privilege and opportunity to have served the international community in some small way, as we endeavour to move towards a

safer world in the future through enhanced disaster risk reduction. I wish to thank the Bureau members of the WCDR for all the unfailing support they extended to me over the last few months.

I would also like to pay a special tribute to the ISDR and its staff who have worked so hard to make this Conference a success. My country Switzerland has been a strong supporter of the ISDR since its creation five years ago as a follow up to the International Decade for Disaster Reduction.

Finally, I would like to warmly thank our hosts, the Japanese government for taking the initiative to organize this important Conference and for being such great hosts. It has been a real pleasure to closely work with our host authorities, at Geneva level as well as here in Kobe in the Hyogo prefecture.

Thank you and aligatho!