



PRESS RELEASE

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Japan to host World Conference on Disaster Reduction

Senior officials from governments, UN system, NGOs and experts to meet in Kobe, Hyogo in January 2005

The United Nations General Assembly today adopted a resolution announcing the convening of a World Conference on Disaster Reduction, hosted by the Government of Japan at Kobe, Hyogo from 18 to 22 January 2005.

The event will coincide with the ten-year anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, when an unprecedented tremor of 7.3 hit Kobe and other areas of the Hyogo Prefecture, causing over 6,400 deaths and resulting in massive economic losses and impacts on Japan's economy. The disaster proved to be a valuable lesson in risk reduction for the Japanese and the rest of the world.

The Conference represents a milestone event to increase the international profile of disaster reduction and promote its integration into development planning and practices.

"While there is widespread commitment for disaster reduction demonstrated in many forums and programmes, there remains much to be done at the regional, national and local levels where action is paramount," said Sálvano Briceño, Director of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR).

Marking the culmination of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action (agreed upon at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction at Yokohama, Japan in 1994), the meeting is expected to result in a global Programme of Action for reducing risk and vulnerability to natural and technological hazards in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for sustainable development.

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