

World Conference on Disaster Reduction
Kobe, Japan, 18-22 January 2005
General Statement by Denmark
Wednesday 19 January 2005

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me join others in thanking the Japanese Government and people for hosting this event, which also coincides with the 10 year commemoration of a terrible earthquake that hit Kobe.

The UN has a major role to play in the international efforts on disaster reduction. As member states we must ensure that it is well equipped, with adequate and predictable funding to play its proper role – also in the future. My delegation will gladly participate in a discussion on this issue.

This conference is a milestone to:

- a. Increase international profile of disaster reduction
- b. Promote the integration of disaster risk reduction in national sustainable development planning at all levels
- c. Strengthen local and national capacities to address causes of disasters.

The importance and relevance of disaster reduction has with recent events (in the Indian Ocean) been clearly demonstrated. We do not need to be reminded – its importance is all too clear. It is now more a question of transforming the unprecedented public interest and international solidarity into concrete actions. This conference is a welcome opportunity to discuss this in more detail.

Concerning the promotion of disaster risk reduction into development planning and practice, it is essential to demonstrate to decision makers the central importance of disaster risk reduction as a development priority. There is no trade off between combating poverty and reduce disaster risk. On the contrary. It is the poorest countries, and it is the poorest segments of society that are most at risk and most vulnerable. We should therefore integrate the risk reduction in our discussion of poverty reduction strategies.

