

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

The Plenary of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

(Kobe, Japan 18 - 22 January 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Mr Chairman, on your election as President for this World Conference, and our gratitude to the Government of Japan and the local authorities for their generosity and hospitality in providing these elegant and effective facilities for our work. I would also like to thank the ISDR Secretariat and its Director, Mr. Briceño for all their hard work in preparing this Conference.

Finland joins others in the global sorrow for the victims of the devastating tsunami. In a small country, like ours, practically everybody has been either directly or indirectly affected. We share with deep compassion the grief of those who have lost practically everything.

Finland fully concurs with the statement delivered by the Luxembourg presidency on behalf of the European Union.

Almost ten years ago in May 1994 the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World was adopted. A lot has been accomplished during these last 10 years, but regarding disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation we still face enormous challenges.

One of the observations in the Yokohama Strategy, based on experience, was that the concept of disaster reduction should be given holistic coverage, including natural and other disaster situations such as environmental and technological disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

