

Statement by Mr. Akinori Eto
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(Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office of Japan)

Mr. Chairperson,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of the Japanese government. Japan has developed several constructive proposals in the process of preparing for this conference. Regarding the conference outcome document, the drafting committee has been actively working under the leadership of Chairman Marco. I believe that the committee will compile a meaningful draft of the programme outcome document.

Japan welcomes the identification of future priority actions and the compilation of implementation and follow-up frameworks based on the review of the Yokohama Strategy. We hope that effective outcomes will be developed by the drafting committee.

We also look forward to engaging in serious discussions to ensure that the Hyogo Declaration (Draft) submitted by Japan can serve as a bold message for promoting disaster reduction activities worldwide.

The major themes of this conference are that disasters pose a significant impediment to sustainable development and that it is important to develop a culture of disaster prevention. The unprecedented magnitude of the recent Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami disaster are a tragic reminder of just how important these themes are. But we are not powerless against the threats of nature. Had warning mechanisms like those that exist in the Pacific Ocean been functioning in this region, a significant degree of damage could have been prevented.

Japan has proposed that a special session be held on this topic as soon as possible. At the thematic session that have already been held, we worked with the relevant nations and institutions to develop a report on the development of an early warning tsunami system for the Indian Ocean region, which will be shared at the special intergovernmental session to be held tomorrow. Japan hopes to utilize the knowledge possessed by the specialists in this field to appeal for the prompt establishment of a system.

We are emphasizing the importance of implementing and following up on the conference outcomes, and are proposing the development of a structure for sharing information that we are calling "Portfolios for Disaster Reduction." The

