

Seychelles



**REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES**

STATEMENT BY:  
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AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

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KOBE, JAPAN

Mr. Chairman  
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf on the government of Seychelles, I would like to express our gratitude to the government and people of Japan as well as the co-sponsors for hosting this timely and very important conference on disaster risk reduction. Seychelles being a Small Island Developing State has had its fair share of disaster occurrences. As you may all have learnt, Seychelles was not spared of the terrible effect of the recent Indian Ocean Tsunami. The aftermath of the Tsunami has left devastating effects on the economic infrastructure of the country and its people, especially the fishing industry. The extent of the damage has been estimated at over US\$ 30 Millions. This may seems small compared to the damages inflicted on our neighbours, but, it is nonetheless considerable for a small economy like ours.

At this present moment we are still soliciting assistance to get the economic infrastructure back to normal especially the Fishing and Tourism industry – the two main Economic pillars of our country. In this respect, the assistance provided by China, Australia, USA, Japan amongst other countries and UN agencies to relieve the heavy burden for the reconstruction of our damaged infrastructures is exceedingly appreciated. In fact, it is worth to note that Australia has been one of the first donor to respond positively to our Flash Appeal with a donation of 0.5 million Australian dollar. Thank you Australia.

Mr. Chairman, before us today is an initiative presented by the People's Republic of China calling amongst others for the establishment of regional early warning systems, specialized collaborative regional centers and establishment of databases and knowledge management. We would like to strongly commend the Chinese Delegation for this very important and excellent initiative as this will not only ensure that governments are alerted on any eventualities in time, but will also equip governments in setting up

quick response mechanisms to save lives and reduce economic losses. Seychelles would go as far as urging other developing countries, especially SIDS, countries that have limited resources and capacities to support China's initiative.

It should be noted and gratified that a number of leading countries and institutions have gone as far as proposing assistance to countries of our region to strengthen capacities at local level to cope with disasters.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates just last week the SIDS countries gathered in Mauritius for the SIDS conference where naturally the issue of the recent Indian Ocean Tsunami featured highly on the agenda. As a result of this Conference numerous resolutions were tabled for considerations, and one of them was that a special disaster fund is set up to help the long term recovery of small islands and coastal states in our region from such calamities. This proposal was put forward by The President of Seychelles, and Seychelles would further want to reiterate this need at this present conference. Expressions of solidarity and pledges of financial supports are welcome in our moment of need, but unless these are translated into concrete actions and in real terms, human suffering will continue and be exacerbated in the aftermath of natural disasters. We lack capacity in all fields of disaster preparedness, response and mitigation. We also lack appropriate post secondary institutions to benefit from formal education in the field of disaster management.

It is our hope that this conference would seriously consider the proposal by China for the establishment of regional early warning systems as well as the proposal by Seychelles on the necessity of a regional funding mechanism to assist countries in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and reconstruction.

I thank you for your attention.