

Address by Junichiro Koizumi
Prime Minister of Japan
At the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction

Kobe, Japan
January 18, 2005
(Provisional Translation)

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs,
Honorable national delegates, and distinguished participants,

Thank you for traveling from all over the world to participate in this UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction. You are visiting here in Kobe, a city with rich historical and cultural atmosphere, and so as many other neighboring cities in the region. I sincerely hope that all of you take this opportunity to visit around as much as possible and obtain deeper understanding of Japan.

The earthquake and tsunami that struck in the waters off Sumatra Island in Indonesia last month have wrought an unprecedented level of damage on the countries around the Indian Ocean. I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of those who perished in that disaster and my sincerest sympathy to all of the nations and people who have been affected by this terrible tragedy. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of the professionals and volunteers of the governments, international organizations, and NGOs who are courageously working on recovery and rehabilitation activities in the disaster-stricken regions.

Immediately after the tsunami dealt its terrible blow, Japan deployed vessels and helicopters of Maritime Self-Defense Forces that were on duty nearby to Phuket Island in Thailand for conducting search and rescue activities. Japan Disaster Relief Teams including medical teams were also sent into the affected countries to conduct relief operations. We now have plans to further strengthen our efforts there with activities to support transportation and to improve sanitary conditions. Japan has also pledged as immediate assistance US\$500 million in grant aid and is now consulting with the relevant nations about the moratorium of the debt payments of the disaster-stricken countries. Japan is

