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WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION,
HELD AT GENEVA ON 11 AND 12 OCTOBER 2004

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. In its resolution 58/214, the General Assembly decided to convene the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005 and to establish an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Conference. It requested the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) to serve as the secretariat of the Conference and to coordinate the preparatory activities.

2. The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 11 and 12 October 2004 to review the organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference. The Preparatory Committee held four plenary meetings (1st to 4th).

Opening and general statements

3. At the 1st meeting, on 11 October 2004, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Mr. Hernán Escudero Martínez (Ecuador), made an opening statement in which he referred to recent disasters around the world and noted growing awareness about the impact of natural hazards, underscoring the need for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Highlighting the key objectives of the programme outcome document, namely, reducing losses resulting from disasters, integrating disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies and plans, and developing stronger institutions, mechanisms and communities to build capacity and resilience to natural hazards, he expressed the hope that the Conference would produce viable, practical and concrete results.

4. At the same meeting, on behalf of the host of the Conference, the Government of Japan, Mr. Masaki Konishi stressed the importance of building resilience to natural hazards based on a combination of economic, social and environmental policy measures. He presented three proposals to support the effective implementation of the targeted actions outlined in the draft programme of action, namely, the establishment, within the United Nations system, of a “portfolio of disaster reduction actions”, a “gallery of best practices and lessons learned from previous disasters”, and a “catalog of technologies for disaster reduction”.

5. The Director of the ISDR secretariat noted that over 90 countries had prepared national reports on progress and challenges in risk reduction. He also stated that the outcomes of the regional and thematic consultations held in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific had been incorporated into the drafting process of the programme outcome document. Highlighting some of the recommendations of the tenth session of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), which preceded the second session of the Preparatory Committee, he referred to the fact that the IATF had encouraged ISDR to develop concrete targets and measurable goals for the effective implementation of the programme outcome document.

6. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, statements were made by representatives of Algeria, Australia, China, Colombia, Congo (Democratic Republic of), the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Iran

(Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands (on behalf the States members of the European Union), Norway, Sudan (on behalf of the States members of the African Union), the United States of America, and Venezuela.

7. At the same meetings, observers from the following specialized agencies made statements: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

8. The observers for the European Space Agency, United Nations Volunteers, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, and the United Nations Children's Fund made statements.

9. Speakers stressed the need to understand countries' specific vulnerabilities, to integrate disaster response and reduction strategies into poverty and development goals, and to identify policy gaps and priorities. It was stated that bridging the gap between the current situation and the principles of the Yokohama Strategy should be one of the objectives of the Conference. Thus, the Conference should take account of the achievements reached in pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the ten-year review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and the Conference Statement of the Second Conference on Early Warning. The Conference could also look into the possibility of producing a legal framework for international cooperation on disaster prevention, and of establishing a financing mechanism to support activities related to disaster prevention in developing countries through public-private partnerships, and a specialized regional and sub-regional centre for disaster research. In this connection, speakers called upon the ISDR to provide a platform for ongoing dialogue, information exchange, training and research and to engage all relevant United Nations and other agencies in monitoring the implementation of the outcomes of the Conference.

10. The importance was highlighted of a collective effort to reduce disaster risk by engaging local communities, non-governmental organizations, local government, industry, and academia, incorporating gender-specific and age-specific perspectives. The necessity and importance of a holistic approach for disaster reduction, enhancement of information system and building of disaster resilient communities was emphasized. Some speakers also called for a broader definition of disasters to include social, environmental and technological hazards.

11. While targets to be set at the Conference should allow flexibility for regional and national adaptation and should foster ownership, a cautious view was expressed as to the relevance of global targets, which may create unrealistic expectations of additional aid flows at the local level.

B. Adoption of the agenda of the second session of the Preparatory Committee

12. At its 1st meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda of its second session contained in document A/CONF.206/PC(II)/1, as follows:

1. Opening of the Preparatory Committee
2. Adoption of the agenda of the second session of the Preparatory Committee
3. Organization of work
4. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups to the preparatory process and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
5. Provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
6. Progress report on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
7. Proposed format of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
8. Proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
9. Proposed draft agenda for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
10. Draft review of Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World
11. Draft programme outcome document tentatively entitled “Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005 – 2015”
12. Other matters
13. Conclusion of the session

C. Organization of work

13. At its 1st meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 3, entitled “Organization of work”. The Chairman invited the secretariat to introduce a tentative schedule of work (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/1).

14. The Preparatory Committee adopted the work schedule as presented.

15. The secretariat requested the endorsement of the Committee for the participation of the following five intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process (see A/CONF.206/PC(II)/INF.2): Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research, Asociación Iberoamericana de Organismos Gubernamentales de Defensa y Protección Civil, Association of South East Asian Nations, European Space Agency, and International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth’s Interior.

16. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee endorsed the participation of those organizations in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process.

D. Attendance

17. In accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 58/214, the Preparatory Committee was open-ended to allow for the full participation of all States.

18. The following States were represented: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo (Democratic Republic of), Congo (Republic of), Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea (Republic of), Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

19. The following specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), World Health Organization, International Telecommunications Union, and World Meteorological Organization.

20. The following United Nations offices, organs and programmes were represented: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations University, United Nations Volunteers, and United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

21. The following convention secretariat was represented the session: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

22. The following intergovernmental organizations and other entities were represented by observers: African Union Commission, Andean Community, Association of Caribbean States, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, Centro de Coordinacion para la Prevencion de Los Desastres Naturales en America Central, Corporacion Andina de Fomento, Council of Europe, Council of the European Union, European Commission, European Community, European Space Agency, Asociacion Iberoamericana de Organismos Gubernamentales de

Defensa y Proteccion Civil, Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction of the Organization of the American States, International Civil Defence Organization, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Permanent Delegation of the African, Caribbean and South Pacific Group of States, and South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission.

23. Observers for 28 non-governmental organizations attended the Preparatory Committee, of which 11 had their accreditation provisionally endorsed by the Bureau, pending subsequent accreditation by the Preparatory Committee.

E. Documentation

24. The documents before Preparatory Committee at its second session are listed in annex I.

II. PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

A. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups to the preparatory process and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

25. At its 2nd meeting, on 11 October, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 4, entitled “Accreditation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups to the preparatory process and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”. It had before it a report prepared by the secretariat (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/7 and Add.1). In introducing the report, the representative of the secretariat stated that it had received 55 applications for accreditation from non-governmental organizations and other major groups. After an evaluation of the completed application packages, it recommended the accreditation of those organizations and major groups.

26. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee endorsed the secretariat’s recommendation regarding the participation of those non-governmental organizations and other major groups.

B. Provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

27. At the 2nd meeting, on 11 October, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 5, entitled “Provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”. The Chairman recalled that some changes had been proposed to the provisional rules of procedure introduced at the first session of the Preparatory Committee and that the Committee had agreed to apply “Provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”, on an interim basis, on the understanding that rules under dispute, i.e. relevant parts of rules 1, 3, 24, paragraphs 1 and 3, 47, and 62, as well as full newly proposed paragraphs to rules 33 and 34 would remain bracketed pending consultations between concerned parties.

28. The Chairman proposed deferring the discussion under this item on the agenda, owing to the fact that no agreement had yet been reached between the parties concerned. The Chairman

also requested that in the interim period, further consultations actively continue between the parties concerned with a view to prompt resolution of the matter, and requested that the results of such discussions be reported to the secretariat as soon as possible during this period and no later than by the third session of the Preparatory Committee, as envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/214. The Chairman proposed that the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction would, in the meantime, function under the current provisional rules of procedure.

29. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee endorsed the proposals of the Chairman.

C. Progress report on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

30. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 6, entitled “Progress report on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”.

31. The coordinator of the Conference introduced the report (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/5), and summarized the activities carried out since July 2004, when it had been prepared. In particular, he noted the development of a communications plan and briefed participants on the funding situation.

D. Proposed format of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

32. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 7, entitled “Proposed format of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”.

33. The secretariat introduced the report (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/6) and provided an update on the three components of the Conference, namely, the intergovernmental segment, the thematic segment (high-level roundtables, thematic panels, thematic sessions, and a regional session) and the public forum.

34. Statements were made by the representatives of Algeria, Australia, Cameroon, Cook Islands, India, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

35. Speakers stressed the need to further streamline the thematic sessions, thereby reducing their number, and to allocate time for regional sessions.

36. The Committee approved the proposed format of the Conference.

E. Proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

37. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 8, entitled “Proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”.

38. The secretariat introduced the report (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/9).
39. A statement was made by the representative of India.
40. The Committee approved the proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the Conference.

F. Proposed draft agenda for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

41. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 9, entitled “Proposed draft agenda for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction”.
42. The secretariat introduced the report (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/8).
43. The Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft provisional agenda (see annex II).

G. Draft Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World

44. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 10, entitled “Draft Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World” (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/3). The secretariat provided an overview of progress in reviewing the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. The review had benefited from the inputs from 96 national reports, the analysis of which was made available at the tenth session of the IATF. The secretariat informed the Committee of its intention to publish all the national reports on a CD-Rom. Delegates were invited to provide comments on the draft review no later than by the end of October 2004.
45. Statements were made by the representatives of Germany, Switzerland and the United States of America.
46. It was pointed out that reporting requirements should not overburden governments. Instead, it was suggested that the secretariat undertake some of the work, providing guidance on the necessary information for assessing the implementation of the Conference outcomes. Furthermore, it was stressed that a stronger link should be established between the Yokohama review document and the draft programme outcome document. In this regard, the secretariat was urged to review the section of the Yokohama review document containing recommendations, with a view to aligning it with the text of the draft programme outcome document. It was agreed that a revised version of the document would be issued for consideration by the drafting committee.

H. Draft programme outcome document tentatively entitled “Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005 – 2015”

47. At its 2nd meeting, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 11, entitled “Draft programme outcome document tentatively entitled 'Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005 – 2015'” (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/4). The Secretariat introduced the document, with a brief review of the genesis of the document and of its substantive content.

48. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 12 October, the Preparatory Committee continued its consideration of the agenda item.

49. Statements were made by the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Jordan, Kenya, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Zambia.

50. The observers for the European Community, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Volunteers, and the World Meteorological Organization made statements.

51. In the pursuing debate on the subject of the outcome document, the need was stressed for Conference outcomes to be in line with other multilateral processes and agreements, namely, the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Johannesburg Declaration, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The linkages and synergies with the process of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States were particularly highlighted, in this regard.

52. The role of regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions in disaster risk reduction was underscored. Such regional organizations could contribute to generating and sharing information on disaster risk management. The outcomes of regional meetings in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were announced, and the secretariat was urged to incorporate their recommendations in the programme outcome document.

53. It was proposed that a set of objectives and priority actions be established that would indicate concrete and measurable targets, indicators and appropriate time frames, and leading stakeholders. That proposal received the support of many speakers. Others, however, expressed concern about setting global targets that may be burdensome in terms of the resources required and may subsequently hinder the effective implementation of the Conference outcomes. Such targets should be voluntary and adjustable to countries’ specific circumstances.

54. While the importance of monitoring progress in implementing the programme outcome document agreed upon at the Conference was recognized, a cautious view was expressed that governments, particularly those of developing countries, should not be overburdened.

55. While several speakers proposed that the Conference address not only natural hazards but also social, environmental and technological hazards, others stressed the point that the discussion at the Conference should focus on issues directly linked to natural disasters.

56. The critical role of information sharing in risk reduction was emphasized. The Conference should provide an opportunity to share good practices and lessons learned within existing mandates and agreements.

57. Many speakers made substantive comments on the elements to be included in the next draft of the programme outcome document, which covered the following areas:

- Financial mobilization, including the financing mechanism and the engagement of the private sector in the implementation of the programme outcome document
- Capacity building in developing countries, in particular through the establishment of national platforms in the least developed countries
- Enhancement of a culture of prevention, emphasizing early warning systems
- The significant impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly in Africa
- Specific reference to food security, safeguarding hospitals and health-service infrastructure from natural hazards
- Inclusion of disaster risk reduction components into post-conflict reconstruction programmes
- Use of earth observation, other relevant satellite applications, and information and communication technologies
- Specific reference to gender and age-specific perspectives in the Preamble
- The importance of community participation in disaster reduction initiatives

58. At the 4th meeting, the Chairman invited the secretariat to make available draft terms of reference of a drafting committee, which he suggested, on behalf of the Bureau, would be an appropriate mechanism to pursue the work of drafting the outcome documents (see annex IV). He requested that the Preparatory Committee entrust the Bureau with the responsibility of finalizing the draft terms of reference. The Preparatory Committee agreed to the Chairman's proposal. The Chairman then announced that Mr. Marco Ferrari, Deputy Head of the Humanitarian Aid Section in the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, had agreed to assume the responsibility of Chairman of the Drafting Committee.

59. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of Switzerland.

60. Also at the same meeting, the Chairman requested that outstanding specific comments on the draft programme outcome document be submitted to the secretariat by 1 November 2004, at the latest. The Chairman announced that the first meeting of the drafting committee would tentatively be held during the week of 25 October 2004. The revised version of the document would be issued for the consideration of the drafting committee.

I. Other matters

61. At the 4th meeting, on 12 October 2004, the Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 12, entitled "Other matters".

J. Closure of the session

62. At the 4th meeting, on 12 October, the Chairman summarized the discussion of the session (see annex III).

63. At the same meeting, the Chairman made a closing statement and declared the second session of the Preparatory Committee closed.

Annex I

**DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE SECOND SESSION
OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE***

| <u>Document symbol</u> | <u>Title or description of contents</u> |
|---|--|
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/1 and Corr.1 | Provisional agenda and annotations |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/2 and Corr.1 (English only) | Provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/3 | Draft Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/4 | Draft programme outcome document tentatively entitled “Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005-2015” |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/5 | Progress report on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/6 | Proposed format of the Conference |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/7 and Add.1 | Accreditation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups to preparatory process and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/8 | Proposed draft agenda for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/9 | Proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/INF.1 (English only) | Information Note to Participants |
| A/CONF.206/PC(II)/INF.2 (English only) | Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |

* All the documents are available at <http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr>

Annex II

**DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE
ON DISASTER REDUCTION**

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the President and other officers.
3. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
4. Adoption of the agenda.
5. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups.
6. Organization of work, including the establishment of the Main Committee.
7. General statements.
8. Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World.
9. Adoption of the programme outcome document tentatively entitled "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005-2015".
10. Adoption of the Conference Declaration.
11. Report on the discussion of the Thematic Segment.
12. Report on the Public Forum.
13. Conclusions of the Conference.

Annex III

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

The chairman summarized the key points that the second session of the Preparatory Committee had discussed as follows.

1. During the session, over 70 delegations took the floor to make statements. The general consensus is that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction provides a unique opportunity to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development policies and their implementation, and to support the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The session heard many examples of effective initiatives by countries to move the agenda forward as well as recognition of the fact that much remains to be done. In addition, delegations emphasized the importance of an integrated, coordinated and holistic approach to disaster risk reduction.
2. The second session, under item 4, endorsed the participation of five intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Conference, and agreed on the secretariat's recommendation regarding the participation of 55 non-governmental organizations and other major groups, which submitted the applications for accreditation to the Conference process. The meeting took note of the progress report on the preparatory process of the Conference presented by the secretariat.
3. The second session agreed to prepare its work under provisional rules of procedure. The chairman expressed his appreciation for the understanding that the delegations shared. The chairman also urge parties concerned with issues of rules of procedure to actively continue their consultations and to report the results of the discussions to the secretariat as soon as possible and no later than by the third session of the Preparatory Committee.
4. This session approved the proposed format of the Conference, with the recognition of the need to ensure further streamlining of thematic sessions. References were made to the need to identify appropriate time and space to allow regional and inter-regional sessions to take place on demand. The secretariat will pursue its work to plan for the best possible use of time and space at the Conference.
5. Under items 8 and 9, the session approved the proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the Conference and the proposed draft agenda for the Conference.
6. With regard to the draft review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, delegations emphasized the importance of establishing clear linkages between the review and the programme outcome document. The secretariat indicated that further comments on the draft review of Yokohama Strategy may be submitted by the end of October. The delegations were urged to do so as early as possible.
7. Under the agenda item on the "programme outcome document", a considerable number of delegations took the floor. While there was an overall consensus that the current draft

provides a good and useful starting point, delegations provide general comments, many emanating from regional consultations held prior to this session.

8. Delegations also suggested looking at the scope of the term "disaster", as reflected in the current document, and in particular the inter-linkage between natural hazards and environmental technological and man-made disasters.

9. Delegations also requested to strengthen regional perspectives in the document. The secretariat has taken note of all points, and will treat suggestions as appropriate for the advancement of the programme outcome document.

10. One delegation suggested looking at the title of the document, as this would help to orient future discussions.

11. Finally, many of the statements referred to the inclusion of measurable actions, complemented by indicators, timetable, and identification of lead stakeholders, with a view to strengthening the document. Addressing these concerns, while retaining some flexibility at the level of implementation, will be a key challenge of the drafting committee.

12. In order to advance the discussion on the outcome document, the session approved the establishment of a Drafting Committee. The drafting Committee will be chaired by Mr. Marco Ferrari, of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. The meeting welcomed Mr. Ferrari who would take up this challenging endeavour.

Annex IV

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

1. Background

1.1. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction will convene on 18-22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo (Japan). The outcomes of the conference will be the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, a programme document containing a programme of action for the next ten years (2005-2015), and a declaration. The programme document will be the basis for the declaration that will be adopted on the last day of the Conference.

2. Purpose and scope of the Drafting Committee

2.1. To carry out this drafting work, the Preparatory Committee of the WCDR has decided to create a committee that will be entrusted with drafting final texts of the outcome documents for adoption by the WCDR. The host country will present to that committee a draft of the final declaration for the conference, initiated on the provisions of the draft programme document.

2.2. The Drafting Committee's scope of work is initially focused on the programme outcome document to be adopted by the WCDR. As the Committee considers other drafting work as specified in paragraph 1.1. above, this should be at the request of one or more of the participants in the Conference, to the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee who will keep the Chairman of the Bureau informed.

2.3. The Chairperson of the Drafting Committee will present the final texts of the outcome documents to the President of the Conference, at the latest on the last day of the Conference, 22 January 2005.

3. Composition of the Drafting Committee

3.1. Representatives may participate in the deliberations of the Drafting Committee. Observers from intergovernmental regional organizations active in the areas of disaster reduction are invited to participate in the Drafting Committee, in accordance with the provisional application of the "Provisional rules of procedure".

3.2. Delegations that wish to be members of the Committee should notify the secretariat, which will inform the Chairperson of their participation.

3.3. The work of the Committee will be led by a Chairperson nominated by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, with the approval of the Bureau and the endorsement of the Preparatory Committee.

3.4. The secretariat will keep a register of members of the Drafting Committee. Delegations that have not chosen to be part of the Committee when it is established may become members at any time by notifying the secretariat.

3.5. The secretariat will participate in the meetings of the Drafting Committee and provide such support as requested by the Chairperson.

3.6. The Chairperson of the Drafting Committee will keep the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and the Bureau informed of the progress of the Committee's work. After final review and approval of the documents by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee will submit the documents to the President of the Conference.

4. Working arrangements

4.1. Until Friday 14 January 2005, the Drafting Committee will meet at the United Nations Office in Geneva at the invitation of its Chairperson. From Monday 17 to Saturday 22 January 2005, the Committee will meet in Kobe, Hyogo (Japan), on the premises of the WCDR. Notifications of meetings will be made by the secretariat.

4.2. The Chairperson, with the support of the secretariat, will decide on frequency, duration and agenda of the Committee's meetings.

4.3. The Chairperson will inform the members of the Committee of the manner he/she wishes to conduct the business of the Committee, with regard to statements and other interventions, points of order, etc. It is understood that this will be within the modalities of functioning of the Preparatory Committee and its provisional rules of procedure.

4.4. The Drafting Committee will meet with a minimum quorum of one delegation from each of the 5 regional groups. While encouraging Member States to have at least two countries of each regional group in the Committee, Bureau members will ensure that one Member State of their group is a member, and will promote participation in such a way that the Drafting Committee may meet as scheduled with an appropriate quorum.

4.5. The secretariat will provide full support to the Drafting Committee, as and when requested by the Chairperson. In particular, the secretariat will ensure timely and appropriate reflection in the text of the evolving drafts of the decisions and conclusions made by the Committee's Chairperson.

4.6. The secretariat will ensure timely circulation of the draft documents to the members of the Committee. Delegations as defined in point 3.1. above that are not members of the Committee may ask the secretariat to receive the documentation produced by the Committee.

5. Completion of work

The work of the Drafting Committee will be deemed completed when its Chairperson submits the final texts of the outcome documents to the President of the Conference, who accepts them.