Australian Statement to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

Mr President, distinguished delegates.

The work of this conference has been brought into sharp relief by the tragic consequences of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.

In the wake of this tragedy, the Australia Government has committed to date one billion dollars to the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development, 60 million dollars to other regional relief efforts, and a half million dollars to the flash appeal to assist the Seychelles.

We were also able to respond quickly and practically on the ground, deploying medical and victim identification teams, defence force field hospitals and rescue teams.

Furthermore, there has also been an outpouring of support from the Australian people, with private donations to the relief effort well over one hundred and fifty million dollars.

Sadly, there will inevitably be further natural disasters. Once again it might be a tsunami. It could happen again in the Indian Ocean. Or it might be in the Pacific or elsewhere. Or we might need to respond to a cyclone, volcanic eruption, drought or flood. Just a few days ago
own experience with preparing for and responding to disasters.

May I share briefly, several perspectives that flow from Australia's
recovery from major cyclones and flooding, eruption and in the Pacific and South-East Asia we have helped with Cymea respond to a tsunami, droughts, and the Rabaul Volcano region. For example, in the last decade we have helped Papua New region in disaster risk reduction and response, both domestically and in our disaster risk reduction and response, both domestically and in our

It follows from this that we have a long and very diverse experience in droughts and bushfires—some well as tsunamis. prepared for a range of natural disasters from cyclones and floods, to the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. As a country we must be we have many remote communities. Our shores are lapped by both some of the harshest and most variable weather in the world. And with a range of natural disasters. As an Island continent we face Australia is a country with a unique perspective on, and experience with, the mitigation response that can cover all consequences.

In many different places and that there is no one single prevention and remember that disasters come in many forms that they strike in the Indian Ocean tsunami. We are obliged at this conference to so, while quite properly the international community is focused on casualties and destruction, tragedy struck in Australia where bushfires wrought a sad toll in.
First, technical responses are necessary, but alone they are not enough in disaster reduction.

Technical solutions must go hand in hand with the development of good policy, political commitment, institutions, capacity building and importantly – the development of community based responses.

Second, natural disasters respect no borders, which of course means regional and multilateral cooperation is critical. Ultimately, it is individual countries that are best placed to know their own priorities and capacities, what they can manage, and what they can maintain over the longer term.

Third, the institutional interface is critical to success. The international system needs to mesh with the regional; the regional with the national; the national with the provincial or sub national; right the way down to the village level.

Fourth, disasters have major consequences for the long-term development prospects of countries. Disasters strike all countries and that means, for example, while the recent tsunami disaster has riveted attention on those countries of the Indian Ocean, we must not overlook the very particular challenges and unique needs of Pacific Small Island Developing States in disaster risk management. In particular, Australia will continue to support these countries through capacity building initiatives that reinforce existing national institutional capability.
Many countries around the globe are willing to pledge financial and technical support to establish an Indian Ocean system. In developing the Indian Ocean system, an effective and durable (humanity early warning system for Australia has proposed and strongly supports an international effort to address the need for a human early warning system. In closing, I would briefly return to a matter to be discussed in a special session here, namely the need for a humanity early warning system. Increase their individual capabilities for disaster reduction. Good governance is ultimately the best way in which countries can fulfill and fulfill, ultimately contribute economic growth and development and what, where, and how things are reconstructed. The environment. We all must be smarter and more innovative in and improve those ongoing maintenance costs or do not damage facilitating that dramatically cut the cost of electrically for air conditioning. Australia has constructed cyclone resistant buildings in the environment in which people can live and work. For example, the rehabilitation phase needs to help countries produce better infrastructures that are labor intensive, thereby reducing poverty.
a system, Australia believes it must be tailored to the specific geological circumstances of the Indian Ocean and the individual requirements of regional countries. And it must be the regional countries themselves that determine the shape and nature of the system.

The Pacific system operated by regional countries under the auspices of the IOC, provides a sound model for the Indian Ocean. Australia looks forward to discussing the Indian Ocean proposal at the upcoming IOC meeting.

Australia thanks the Government of Japan, the prefecture of Hyogo and the city of Kobe for hosting the conference.

Australia looks very much forward to a productive Conference.
Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. President.

I will be brief.

In the immediate aftermath of a disastrous event, it is essential to establish early warning systems to inform regional and national authorities about the specific circumstances of the individual countries. It follows that each country needs to develop its own national tsunami warning system. Such systems should be managed and supported by the Secretariat.

The Pacific region, in particular, should develop a useful model for the rest of the world. The Secretariat is preparing a statement for common support. Thank you.