

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix – Travail – Patrie

MINISTERE DE L'ADMINISTRATION  
TERRITORIALE ET DE LA DECENTRALISATION

DIRECTION DE LA PROTECTION  
CIVILE



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace- Work- Fatherland

MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL  
ADMINISTRATION  
AND DECENTRALIZATION

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL  
PROTECTION

**2<sup>nd</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE ON  
DISASTER REDUCTION  
(WCDR – II)**

**Kobe-Hyogo (Japan)  
17 - 22 January 2005**

**DECLARATION OF  
CAMEROON DELEGATION**

*January 2005*

*Mr Chairman,*

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, we would like to seize this opportunity to address this forum. It is a unique occasion for the promotion of international awareness on the importance of the prevention of the risks of disasters, the integration of this theme in a holistic approach to development, and a greater dynamism to national and international resilience to disasters.

It is also an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a decade of the globalisation of resistance to disasters, through the adoption of a coordinated procedure for the implementation of concrete actions by all components of the international community.

Conscious of the importance to study the Yokohama Strategy and plan of action aimed at evaluating our on-going progress, shortcomings and future challenges, the Government of Cameroon was represented at both sessions of the organizing committee of the World Conference of May and October 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland. It also prepared a document for the forum on its political commitment and institutional features in the domain of disaster prevention.

The Government of Cameroon expresses its sincere gratitude to the Secretariat General of the International Strategy for Disaster Prevention, for the key role it played and continues to play within the framework of the forum, as well as the promotion of actions towards disaster prevention.

Our special thanks go to the Government of Japan, not only for so generously hosting this Conference, but also for the enormous assistance Cameroon received for the Lake Nyos Disaster. To this day, the degassing of the lake Nyos and Monoun is closely supervised by Japanese scientists.

Besides Cameroon's contribution in the preparatory activities of this important gathering, it equally intends to present its views as regarding the methodology for the efficient implementation of the Yokohama plan of action within the framework of the 2005/2015 programme of action.

*Your Excellencies, Distinguished Invitees, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Cameroon has recorded close to a hundred cases of disasters that left several thousand victims and over 200 million euros in damages.

As a follow-up of this forum, and in response to these emergency situations, Cameroon intends to elaborate and implement a strategy based on five (05) essential points:

1. on prevention, the activation of the National Risks Observatory (NRO) responsible for the collection, analysis and broadcast of information on risks ;

2. on intervention, the publication of a practical handbook on disaster management, meant for administrative authorities, local communities and the activation of the national contingency plan ;
3. on rehabilitation and socio-economic reinsertion, the implementation of the Initiative for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of disaster stricken communities and border councils project, that is intended to considerably strengthen State action in this sector ;
4. on international prospects ; besides the convention that is under finalization with UNICEF, we also envisage the setting up of a Sub-Regional Centre for Civil protection in Cameroon through the assistance of the International Organization for Civil Protection (IOCP), the United Nations Development programme, and other international organisations.
5. On communication, we arrived at a decision last year to assess, assemble and publish all the elements of government actions in matters of civil protection in an annual report.

## **CAMEROON'S PROPOSALS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 2005-2015 PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

*Mr Chairman,*

In line with the five major objectives of this conference, our wish is that at the end this meeting, disaster prevention in the world should go beyond declarations and rhetoric, through the organization of preventive measures, a more efficient coordination of intervention and assistance, and a closer look at the particular situation of developing countries, notably through the strengthening of regional and sub-regional mechanisms for disaster prevention.

### **A. Organization of preventive and assistance measures**

The Government of Cameroon recognizes that it is important to improve the reliability of information on disasters, get closer to the public and disaster management organs in all regions, in conformity with the provisions of the "Johannesburg Implementation Plan".

However we would like to stress the importance of putting into place an international management system, through the setting up of an international risks observatory. Cameroon is ready to host such a mechanism through its national risks observatory.

Intervention and assistance actions could follow the same principle in order to avoid the dispersion of efforts noted in the management of some recent crises.

With appropriate international legislation, these measures should undoubtedly enable the community of nations to efficiently utilize its resources during emergency situations.

#### **B. Consideration for the extreme vulnerability of developing countries**

Human casualties and socio-economic impact of disaster in developing countries in general, and Africa in particular are preoccupying. Of course, there is no zero risk anywhere, but in the next decade, developing regions will constitute the Achilles' heels of the programme, if nothing is done to strengthen their prevention structures and policy framework.

Between 2000 and 2001, approximately 35 million people, that are about 13% of Africa's population, were affected by natural disasters.

Their fragile economies and extreme poverty of the people are the fundamental causes of this level of vulnerability. This already precarious situation is aggravated by AIDS, epidemics and conflicts.

The Government of Cameroon fully adheres to the position of its African counterparts, and would like to stress that special consideration should be given to this continent, as stated in the recommendations of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction, adopted by the African consultative body for risk prevention under the auspices of the African union, and the African Regional Bureau of the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, that held in Johannesburg from 2-3 June 2004.

*Mr Chairman,*

Prior to this Conference, other international meetings have been held during which several declarations were made. But for various reasons, the reactions of the international community, though quite significant with regard to pledges and assistance to victims, have not been up to expectation.

The 2005-2015 decade should enable us to make up for these inadequacies through sustained commitments and a new approach towards developing countries.

Cameroon on its part is aware of the stakes. There is the political will, strengthened by highly laudable initiatives, but which are jeopardised by inadequate human, material and financial resources.

My country is among African nations that present an exhaustive annual report on disasters.

For Government action to be sustained, international mobilization through sub-regional and regional programmes is indispensable.