

**Statement by Mr. Akinori Eto**  
**Acting Head of the Japanese Government Delegation**  
**(Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office of Japan)**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of the Japanese government. Japan has developed several constructive proposals in the process of preparing for this conference. Regarding the conference outcome document, the drafting committee has been actively working under the leadership of Chairman Marco. I believe that the committee will compile a meaningful draft of the programme outcome document.

Japan welcomes the identification of future priority actions and the compilation of implementation and follow-up frameworks based on the review of the Yokohama Strategy. We hope that effective outcomes will be developed by the drafting committee.

We also look forward to engaging in serious discussions to ensure that the Hyogo Declaration (Draft) submitted by Japan can serve as a bold message for promoting disaster reduction activities worldwide.

The major themes of this conference are that disasters pose a significant impediment to sustainable development and that it is important to develop a culture of disaster prevention. The unprecedented magnitude of the recent Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami disaster are a tragic reminder of just how important these themes are. But we are not powerless against the threats of nature. Had warning mechanisms like those that exist in the Pacific Ocean been functioning in this region, a significant degree of damage could have been prevented.

Japan has proposed that a special session be held on this topic as soon as possible. At the thematic session that have already been held, we worked with the relevant nations and institutions to develop a report on the development of an early warning tsunami system for the Indian Ocean region, which will be shared at the special intergovernmental session to be held tomorrow. Japan hopes to utilize the knowledge possessed by the specialists in this field to appeal for the prompt establishment of a system.

We are emphasizing the importance of implementing and following up on the conference outcomes, and are proposing the development of a structure for sharing information that we are calling "Portfolios for Disaster Reduction." The

information on Japan's International Cooperation in Disaster Reduction distributed for Prime Minister Koizumi's speech yesterday includes some information on this topic, but today I would like to share several specific examples with you. Later, I invite you to look at our broacher of Best Practices for Disaster Reduction, which was distributed with your Congress bag, and Japan's Catalog of Technologies for Disaster Reduction, which will be distributed at a thematic session on "Implementation Strategies for the Application of Research and Development on Disaster Reduction."

Japan promotes international cooperation in cooperation with regional and international organizations such as the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Kobe Office, and the UN Human Settlements Programme (HABITAT) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Japan also supports safe community development efforts in a community-based approach through the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) based in Japan, and plans to begin the Earthquake Resilient Schools Project this year, by using the Trust Fund for Human Security that it has funded.

One example of Japan's best practices comes from the way that disaster information was provided to residents at the time of the volcanic eruption at Mt. Usu. When Mt. Usu erupted on March 31, 2000, as many as 15,815 people were targeted by evacuation orders and advisories. Based on lessons learned during the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, a joint on-site disaster headquarters comprised of both national and local government officials was established, facilitating rapid response measures by the headquarters. Emergency volcano information indicating "the significant possibility of an eruption within the next several days" was announced based on the advice of the Coordinating Committee for the Prediction of Volcanic Eruptions and other volcanologists, and residents were quickly evacuated. As a result of these measures, no human casualties resulted from this event. Hazard maps were circulated among residents ahead of time and they were informed about the nature of an eruption disaster and the importance of evacuating. This, as well as the fact that the evacuation orders were issued using the hazard map to determine the evacuation area, facilitated an orderly evacuation process.

Japan's Disaster Reduction Technology List on Implementation Strategies contains information on technologies that can have a significant effect even at a low cost based on implementation strategies suited to a local socioeconomic circumstances. These include, for example, "Hundred-dollar retrofitting method for unreinforced masonry / adobe structure.

Portfolios for Disaster Reduction will be meaningful as long as the relevant stakeholders, including the Member States, voluntarily cooperate by providing their information and keeping that information updated.

Although I have only had time to touch on a very few examples today, they speak to Japan's determination to actively contribute to achieving the worldwide goals set forth in the Hyogo Framework for Action. I hope that this conference, by cultivating each country's awareness of the importance of strengthening disaster reduction efforts and reinforcing the solidarity of the international community, will give powerful momentum to worldwide efforts to counter the threats posed by nature.

Thank you for your attention.