

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**STATEMENT BY MR. D. M. MWANGI
HEAD OF DELEGATION**

**On the occasion of the World Conference on
Disaster Reduction**

**(Hotel Portopia)
Kobe, Japan**

18th January 2005

Mr. President, Heads of Delegation, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kenyan Delegation would like to congratulate you Mr. President for being elected to preside over this historic Conference. We would also like to thank the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Secretariat and the Chairman of PrepCom I and II for their efforts in preparing for this Conference.

Mr. President, we would also like to express our gratitude to the Government of Japan for hosting this Conference and also offering support to part of our delegation to participate in this Conference.

Kenya has benefited considerably from the ISDR strategy. We have had an opportunity to participate in the International Conference on Early Warning II in Bonn in October 2003 which developed a comprehensive programme for Early Warning. We also had a chance to participate in PrepCom I and II and also have been on the Drafting Committee.

Mr. President,

The Kenyan Delegation would like to join the other delegates in sending condolences to the nations and communities that lost their loved ones during the Tsunami disaster that struck the countries of Asia, Islands in the Indian Ocean and some countries in Africa. It is also regrettable that settlements and investments that have taken centuries to build were also destroyed in a very short time. This

tragedy only reminds us of the need to rededicate ourselves to the issues that have brought us together in this Conference, that is ensuring that Disaster Risk Reduction is a top priority for all communities and nations.

Mr. President,

If nations in the Indian Ocean had an elaborate Early Warning System and a system of activating local communities to move out of the risk areas, many lives could have been saved.

This Conference is therefore timely and the whole world is watching in earnest and expects more commitment from the National Governments that are expected to rededicate resources to reducing risk. Regional bodies and the International community need to work together with the National Governments to ensure that nations and communities are resilient to disasters. After this tragedy, Disaster Risk Reduction should now be viewed as a high priority if nations are to enjoy sustainable development and this should be reflected in the outcome of this Conference.

The Kenyan delegation supports the view that the lessons learnt in various disasters worldwide should form the basis of the outcome of this conference to shape the way that we handle future disasters at all stages of the disaster cycle.

The best practices cited by various nations and communities should also be concretized in the outcome document with measurable

outputs to ensure that communities and nations are resilient to disasters in the 21st century.

Mr. President,

A lot needs to be done in the next ten years 2005 – 2015 to ensure that most of the resolutions reached by all nations i.e. the Millenium Development Goals, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development are not only adopted by all nations and communities but that they are practiced as this shall have a direct bearing on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Mr. President,

The Kenyan delegation also wants to support the Chinese Government sponsored statement on the need to increase the capacity of developing countries to respond to natural disasters, and the need to strengthen international and regional cooperation and coordination in disaster reduction. This should be done through the immediate establishment of regional mechanisms which should include networks for information exchanges, early warning systems, establishment of databases and knowledge management, utilization of satellite, remote sensing, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Information Technology and Meteorology, responding to impacts arising from natural disasters, reducing losses and damages especially in public health and environment areas. The Kenyan delegation supports the Chinese position that this issue be brought up for discussion in the relevant fora at the UN and supports

the proposal that the Secretary - General should include regional mechanisms for disaster reduction into the Agenda of the 60th General Assembly and submit a report to the General Assembly.

Thank you.