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**STATEMENT BY MR. UKHNAA KHURELSUKH,
MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENT, MEMBER OF
THE GOVERNMENT AND MINISTER OF MONGOLIA
AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION**

Mr. President,
Distinguished guests and participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The more and more increasing vulnerability and exposure of our planet to natural disasters, caused by the negative impacts and dramatic consequences of global climatic and ecological changes, presents critical difficulties and vital challenges to the further existence and survival of the human civilization and social and economic development.

The recurrence of these disasters reminds us of how small the world is; how big and huge our responsibility for saving and preserving the world and protecting human lives, properties and cultural heritages is; and how important the readiness and willingness of nations and states for helping each other and the timely actions and appropriate response, which meet the international requirements, of professional agencies and units are.

There are clear examples which are the consecutive earthquakes occurred in Japan in 2004; the horrible disaster, which has shocked and disturbed the world community, in which thousands of people died and perished in the coastal areas of several countries of South East Asia, Africa and Oceania by the tsunami emerged from the strong and devastating earthquake occurred in Aceh in Indonesia; and the latest typhoons and floods occurred in the USA and some countries in Europe.

Let me express my condolences on behalf of the Government and people of Mongolia to the Governments and the people of the countries affected by the disasters.

Our National Report to WCDR reflects clearly and discusses in detail the types and varieties of disasters like drought, dzud (The Dzud is a Mongolia – specific natural disaster characterized by a particularly harsh, long-lasting winter with heavy snowfalls and freezing temperature), steppe and forest fires, flood, human and animal infectious diseases and severe snow, dust storms and desertification which occur in Mongolia, their harmful consequences and difficulties in fighting them.

The international cooperation and concerted actions in disaster prevention and mitigation are required, considering the fact that disasters occur worldwide and in all countries and natural hazards and industrial accidents and their destructive consequences and calamitous after-effects are not always confined within the boundary of a single country but they can affect the regional and global safety and security and economic development.

In this regard, the Yokohama World Conference on Disaster Reduction of 1994 has played an important role and become a milestone in the international efforts in this field.

Mongolia has made the following reforms in its disaster management structure:

- The Law on Disaster Protection, drafted by changing the Law on Civil Defense according to the international standards and requirements and approved by the Parliament of Mongolia on 20 June, 2003, has strengthened its legal environment of disaster protection. This new law has improved and reinforced the disaster management structure and accurately defined the duties and responsibilities, competences and framework of the activities of disaster management units of the country while reflecting the common measures of disaster reduction and international advanced practices that fit and ensure safety and security of the Mongolian people. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team, who visited Mongolia last year, also evaluated the new law as well prepared and complied with the international standards.
- In the implementation framework of the Law on Disaster Protection, the Government of Mongolia established the National Emergency Management Agency in January 2004 by merging the State Board for Civil Defense, Fire Fighting Department and State Reserve Agency that previously carried out similar activities in the field of disaster prevention and response. The establishment of the National Emergency Management Agency has greatly extended and promoted disaster reduction activities in the country.
- The assignment of the new position of Minister in Charge for Disaster Management by the Government of Mongolia, established as a result of Parliamentary Election in 2004, has further strengthened the activities and competences of the agency.
- At the request of the Government of Mongolia and the UN Representative Office in Mongolia, a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team visited Mongolia, conducted an assessment of the national capacity to respond to disasters and provided 33 recommendations on the measures to be undertaken, which has become a substantial support in improving the disaster protection structure and capacity of Mongolia. It should be noted that this mission was the first experience in which the UNDAC ever sent its team to a country not affected by a disaster, considering the fact that the UNDAC usually sends its teams to disaster sites. Let me express again my sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to the UNDAC from this honorable platform.
- The International Community pays a special attention and gives an active support to strengthening and promoting the disaster management structures and their professional units of all nations and states, in particular developing countries. Many projects and programs in various fields, including public

health, desertification and poverty reduction, among them two projects of disaster reduction have been implemented in Mongolia. I am pleased to note that the project MON/02/305 "Strengthening the Disaster Mitigation and Management System in Mongolia" funded by the UNDP and the project "Improvement of Fire Fighting Equipments and Maintenance Workshop in Mongolia" implemented by the development aid of the Government of Japan played an essential and vital role in strengthening the disaster management capacity of the country. I would like to emphasize that all these projects, programs and assessments implemented through the international cooperation have made an important contribution to increasing the capacity of the disaster management organization of Mongolia.

The Government of Mongolia is planning to undertake the following activities in the next four coming years. These are as follows:

- Develop disaster studies as a science and build up a public and professional training system of disaster protection;
- Improve its disaster information and communication network and establish a disaster database;
- Promote cooperation with the international community;
- Build up an advanced system for managing the available material and human resources and rationalize the items, quantities and location of the state and local reserves in order to undertake responsive and quick actions and operations of disaster prevention and preparedness; search and rescue; and liquidation of disaster consequences and recovery;
- Supply rescue, fire-fighting and recovery units with required equipments and train the personnel in search, rescue and recovery skills;
- Develop a disaster management based on community involvement.

I believe that the resolutions and recommendations of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe will give a valuable input to the implementation of the above-mentioned objectives.

As head of the Mongolian delegation, I support the draft resolution on the Establishing Regional Mechanisms on Surveillance, Prevention and Assessment of Severe Natural Disasters submitted by the People's Republic of China among other recommendations, initiatives, and resolutions of this conference.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Mongolia, I wish every success for your efforts in the implementation of the decisions adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and in strengthening the global, regional and national capacities of disaster management.

May the mankind live safe and sound without fear and threats of disasters on our planet!