

AM ROMANIA

**ADDRESS by Mr. Laszlo BORBELY,
Minister Delegate for Coordination of Public Work and Territory
Management to the World Conference on Natural Disasters**

(Kobe, Japan, 18-22 January 2005)

**Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Japan for its generous offer to host the Conference and for its valuable contribution, as well as those of the other donors to ensure the participation of representatives of all Member States of the UN family to the Kobe Conference.

At the same time, I want to commend the preparatory work so far undertaken by the UN / ISDR, and reaffirm our strong support for the key role it has had in promoting the mainstreaming of disaster reduction actions into sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Romania aligned already with the statement made by Luxemburg on behalf of European Union. But, please allow me to add a few words in my national capacity.

The past weeks confronted us with challenges that show us how vulnerable we are to the natural disasters. We reiterate our deep and profound sympathy and compassion for the victims and their families, damaged by the Tsunami disaster. Romania answered promptly to the calls for aid that followed the earthquake of the 26th of December.

We share the view that providing emergency aid now has to be followed by effective planning for long term reconstruction to make people less vulnerable if such a disaster were to strike again. Governments should be ready to contribute also with expertise, know-how and specialists to assist the rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

We feel that is important for countries in the region **to address the issue of a regional early warning system**. Romania will be among the delegates that would support such an initiative. We also support the European Union initiative to analyse the possibility of **creating a rapid reaction force**, capable to react to the disasters we just have been through.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a **strong link between disaster reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed objectives on sustainable development and poverty reduction.**

Therefore, we would like to see that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction clearly acknowledges **the links between development policies and strategies and disaster reduction plans or programmes.** We also like to underline **the importance of a more preventive approach, aimed at building resilient communities and nations.**

**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Romania supports the key objectives of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. It strongly supports the Political Declaration, the Outcome Document entitled "Building resilience of nations and communities to disasters: Framework for action 2005–2015", and the Review of the Yokohama strategy and Plan for action for a Safer World.

At national level and local level, each country bears the primary responsibilities for organizing itself, with appropriate support from the international community. Local ownership is critical for more effective implementation of disaster reduction initiatives.

Romanian National Policy on disaster risk reduction field is expressed through various legislative documents for different risk types, administrative authorities, public institutions and specialized agencies with responsibilities in disaster prevention and response management.

The main priorities in disaster risk reduction focus on disasters caused by floods, earthquakes, and dangerous meteorological phenomena.

National programmes in the field of reducing the consequences of earthquakes in cooperation with international institutions were set up and are on going. I would like to mention only a few of them for the reason of time:

- National annual programmes for designing and consolidation of high dwelling buildings, which are at high risk for public;
- Safety Program for schools and hospitals in case of earthquakes; Program regarding the development and upgrading of seismological networks in Romania;
- Program regarding the earthquake prevention, protection and relief management.

In implementing these programmes, we cooperate with various countries and financial institutions. It is worth mentioning the Romanian-Japanese project for reducing the seismological risk of buildings and other structures (~~installing and operating specialized equipments, technical expertise from Japanese experts for consolidation projects~~); the Disaster Prevention and Management project and Schools rehabilitation program are under way with World Bank co-financing. At the same time, **Romania, as a country involved** in bilateral and regional cooperation, **also recognizes the important role that can be played by regional organizations**

**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Disasters hit hardest the least developed regions of our world. Yet, the solutions should be at a global level. That is why we are here, to find together, collectively, ways and means, which will help human society to become less vulnerable.

Thank you.