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**World Conference on Disaster
Reduction**

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Agenda item 8

Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future

Establishing regional mechanisms on surveillance, prevention and assessment of severe natural disasters

Draft declaration submitted by China

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the World Conference has been requested by the Delegation of the People's Republic of China to circulate the attached documents as an official document of the Conference.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office in Geneva and Other Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in its capacity as the Secretariat of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe, Japan 18-22 January 2005, and has the honour to request the latter to transmit the following messages to the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference and to the Bureau of the Conference when elected.

As the main proponent of the proposal titled "Establishing Regional Mechanisms on Surveillance, Prevention and Assessment of Severe Natural Disasters" submitted to the Secretariat on 11 January 2005, and upon instruction, the Permanent Mission of China would like to inform that vast majority of States are of the view that the proposed special session to be held on 20 January should produce an outcome document in order to send a strong political message. That view has been expressed through various consultations conducted globally and also in Geneva at the working level. The Mission believes that the above-mentioned proposal submitted by China is a good basis for discussion. In view of that, the Permanent Mission of China requests that the Bureau take full note of the above and promptly take an appropriate decision to advise the Conference to adapt its agenda to accurately reflect the above views, commanding a vast majority support. The Chinese delegation to the Conference is always cooperative with a view to pursuing this goal on a consensual basis. Meanwhile, to be serious and responsible to all supporting States and committed co-sponsors, the Chinese delegation may consider calling for action to be taken in Plenary of the Conference on the proposal submitted by China.

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction the assurances of its highest consideration.

Draft declaration

We, participants to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 57/256 of 6 February 2003, 58/214 and 58/215 of 23 December 2003, and 59/233 of 22 December 2004 on natural disasters and vulnerability and international strategy for disaster reduction,

Recalling also the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May, 1994,

Extending our deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims of the recent tsunami disaster and their families and to the people and Governments of those countries who tragically suffered huge loss of life, serious injuries and extensive material damages from the tsunami disaster,

Expressing our deepest concern over the negative economic, social, psychological, environmental and other consequences and impacts of the tsunami disaster on those affected countries,

Commending the international community's prompt and generous support and contributions to the relief efforts, which truly reflect the spirit of solidarity and commitment to addressing challenges facing mankind in a collective and collaborative manner.

Taking note of the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunamis held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, which agreed to establish a regional early warning system such as a Regional Tsunami Early Warning Centre on the Indian Ocean and the Southeast Asia region,

Recognizing that severe natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, typhoons, cyclones, droughts and tsunamis, respect no borders and remain major threats to all mankind in this increasingly interdependent world, which bears an enormous negative impact and hinders social and economic progress, in particular in the developing countries, emphasizing the need of increasing the capacity of countries, in particular the developing countries, to respond to natural disasters, and the need of strengthening international and regional cooperation and coordination in disaster reduction, including through enhanced institutional arrangements for natural disaster reduction at the regional level,

1. *Emphasize* the importance of regional cooperation and coordination in disaster reduction to effectively address the impact of natural disasters;

2. *Recognize* the urgent need, as evidenced by the devastation caused by the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean, to develop regional disaster reduction strategies and establish regional mechanisms for surveillance, early warning, prevention, assessment of natural disasters and for disaster relief, post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction;

3. *Recommend* that necessary regional disaster reduction mechanisms be established as soon as possible, which should include, *inter alia*, specialized collaborative regional centres, networks for information exchange, early warning systems, establishment of databases and knowledge management, utilizing satellite, remote sensing, the Geographic Information System, information technology and meteorology, responding to impacts arising from natural disasters, reducing losses and damages, especially in public health and environment areas; such efforts should also be supported by technical cooperation and capacity building;

4. *Invite* the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations funds and programmes, and other international organizations and institutions to integrate regional disaster reduction strategy into their work programmes and work out concrete initiatives to develop or assist in and support the development of such mechanisms;

5. *Request* the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to prepare a report on the establishment of regional mechanisms on disaster reduction, taking into consideration initiatives and ongoing discussion or arrangements in respective regions and sub regions, if any, and submit it to the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and the sixtieth session of the General Assembly;

6. *Request* the Economic and Social Council to include regional disaster reduction mechanisms into the agenda of the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive session in 2005;

7. *Invite* the Secretary-General to include regional mechanisms for disaster reduction in the agenda of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and to submit a report there on to the General Assembly.