

**Morocco's statement during the ISDR support Group Ad Hoc Meeting on the
WCDR (Geneva, April th, 2004)**

At the outset, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude for inviting Morocco, in its capacity as a member of the Bureau of the preparatory Committee of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to attend this meeting of an outstanding importance.

I would like also to seize this opportunity to welcome the valuable and tireless efforts you carried out for the achievement of a very noble objective, that of disaster reduction, and through giving more prominence to the praiseworthy activities of the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

There is no doubt that natural hazards and disasters have a serious impact on the socio-economic infrastructure and the global environmental resources of all countries. However, the heavy burden of long-term consequences is shouldered by vulnerable developing countries, the fact which hampers the achievement of their sustainable development.

In Africa, hazards and disasters are most important in terms of frequency. Tough natural environment, modest economic and social infrastructure and fragile economies are but congruous ingredients for disasters. The combination of hazards and high vulnerability determines the outcome.

Although many African countries have started national preparedness, mitigation and prevention planning, and invested valuable efforts for the reduction of major hazards in the spirit of the Yokohama strategy and plan of action, the reality is still far from satisfactory and many gaps are still there, which necessitates considerable work at effective disaster prevention, interdisciplinary approach and multi-sectoral strategy, capacity building, partnership arrangements and educational and promotional campaigns.

Therefore, a special attention should be attached to developing countries, mostly the vulnerable ones, in terms of technical and financial assistance and the reinforcement of their capacity building. The key step of the process is the mobilisation of sufficient financial resources for assisting them and enabling their experts to attend relating meetings and conferences.

Thank you