

**Morocco's Statement before the African Group at the level of  
experts On the preparatory process of the World Conference  
on Disaster Reduction  
(Kobe-Hyogo (Japan) 18-22 January 2005)  
Geneva, April 30th, 2004**

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to express to you my heartfelt thanks for enabling me to brief the African sisters and brothers on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe-Hyogo (Japan) on January 2005, as well as on the participation of Morocco in this process, in its capacity as the African member of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference.

I would like also to praise the tireless efforts of the Director of the Secretariat of the UN International Strategy on Disaster Reduction as well as his staff aiming at, among others, the promotion and the coordination of activities for the reduction of disaster risks and its integration within the framework of sustainable development. My warm thanks are also addressed to His Excellency the Ambassador Al Magly, the Coordinator of the Humanitarian Segment of the African Group, for his praiseworthy actions and well-appreciated support and to Mr Sobashima from the Embassy of Japan for his assistance of outstanding importance and his availability, without forgetting a special and deep gratitude to our guests for their attendance and valuable contribution.

Mr Chairman,

The world Conference on Disaster Reduction will be held in Kobe-Hyogo (Japan) from 18 to 22 January 2005, in compliance with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/58/214, dated 27 February 2004 during its 58th Session. The draft resolution was presented by Morocco, on November 3rd, 2003 on behalf of the Members States of the Organisation, members of the 77 Group and China, and whose co-authors were Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, Tajikistan and the United States of America.

This resolution as well as the other one on natural disasters and vulnerability, is but a crystal-clear illustration of the great interest and the growing concerns of the international community towards the reduction of disaster's risks, which represent a major impediment to developing countries sustainable development, mainly in Africa. The Kobe Conference aims at the achievement of various objectives among them, the conclusion of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and plan of action, the definition of activities to take and the necessary resources to mobilise for implementing the recommendations of Johannesburg implementation Plan on sustainable development, the exchange of experiences and practices on the matter as well as the awareness raising for the sake of setting better and adequate prevention measures, appropriate mechanisms and the required institutional structures.

**Mr Chairman,**

The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee is composed of five member states representatives, elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation: Ecuador, Germany, Russia Federation, Iran and Morocco. Being the African member of the Bureau, starting 15 Mars 2004 , Morocco has actively taken part in the meetings intended for examining the substance as well as the procedure of the Conference preparatory process.

In this respect, it is worth mentioning that various working documents for the Conference were elaborated by the ISDR Secretariat in collaboration with Bureau members and will be thoroughly examined at the PrepComI. These documents are the annotated provisional agenda, the rules of procedures for the Preparatory Committee and the Conference, based on those used at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development ,the draft annotated outline of the review of Yokohama Strategy and plan of action, the proposed elements for the programme outcome of the Conference, the progress report on the Conference preparatory process and the document on the accreditation and the participation of NGO either in the PrepComs or in the Conference. These documents, should 1 mention, will be subject to a progressive finalisation during the First PrepCom ( 6-7 May) and mainly at the second PrepCom (11-12 October 2004)

In this regard, Morocco has proposed the integration of the following points:

- The creation of an international fund for preventing and dealing with disasters in the developing countries. The fund could assist these countries in reinforcing their capacities with regard to the aspects relating to hazards management mainly the identification, the prevention, public awareness raising, the intervention in the event of disasters and post-disasters rehabilitation.

- The setting up of appropriate modes for ensuring technical and financial assistance for vulnerable developing countries.

- The support for developing countries to set up an institutional and legal appropriate framework , likely to help them better preventing disasters impacts

- The inclusion of locust invasions, illicit traffic of hazardous waste, floods, droughts, desertification and earthquakes in the list of disasters to be tackled by Kobe Conference owing to their disastrous impacts on their socioeconomic infrastructures, environment and the health of the African population.

- The identification, by countries of the gaps and difficulties encountered while implementing the Yokohama strategy and plan of action.

- The setting up of regional networks data exchange on hazards and disasters as well as on mutual assistance to deal with them.

-The elaboration of directives and guiding lines for major hazards management.

As far as the report on the review of the Yokohama strategy and plan of action is concerned , Morocco proposed the following :

-Integrate, in the report, the last ten years achievements all over the world following the adoption of this strategy and plan of action.

-Identify the gaps and the obstacles for the implementation of the plan of action, mainly in the developing countries which are most vulnerable to the impacts of disasters.

-Make a listing of all the disasters occurring in the developing countries, with the view of assessing their vulnerability and help them setting up adequate measures likely to prevent, mitigate and reduce disasters.

Furthermore, the Permanent Mission of Morocco has made a statement before the ISDR Support Group Ad Hoc Meeting on the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, highlighting the serious impact, natural disasters have on the fragile economies and the global environmental resources of African countries, the fact which greatly hamper the achievement of their sustainable development because of the combination of hazards and high vulnerability.

The emphasis was put on the fact that 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 , the reality is still far from being satisfactory and many gaps are still there, which necessitates an interdisciplinary approach and a multi-sectoral strategy.

Moreover, an appeal was made to the financial support group to attach a special attention to developing countries mostly the vulnerable ones in terms of financial and technical assistance for the reinforcement of their capacity building. And because nothing could be further from the truth, the key step of the process goes through the mobilisation of sufficient financial resources for assisting African countries and supporting the participation of their experts in different meetings and conferences on disaster reduction.^

I can not conclude without underscoring the fact that the active participation of African countries in the PrepCom1 , on 6 and 7 May and their presentation of national reporting on the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered while implementing the Yokohama Strategy and plan of action, before June 1Sth,2004, will undoubtedly enable the Conference to draw the necessary conclusions mainly the identification of appropriate solutions.

**Thank you**