

Opening Announcement by the Chairperson for

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2003

Mr. Shigetaro Yamamoto

Director General for Disaster Management, Cabinet Office

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon.

I am Shigetaro Yamamoto Director-General of the Cabinet Office, the Government of Japan. It is a great pleasure for me to be the chair of the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2003 herein today. I highly welcome all participants and guests from not only Asia but all over the world.

This Conference has three major focuses, which we think are the new trends of disasters and challenges in our region. They are the needs to respond to urban disasters, to respond to global climate change, and to promote cooperation among various organizations including NGOs and private sectors.

I believe that discussions on these topics will certainly help us to identify achievements and challenges in our region to propose means of implementation of effective disaster reduction measures for the forthcoming decade.

The outcome of the Conference will be reflected in the ten-year review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. The Yokohama Strategy has served as the guidelines for international disaster reduction cooperation which was adopted in the first World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama Japan in 1994.

Now, I am pleased to launch this important initiative which proves to be the first event to lay a milestone in the ten-year review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. I strongly hope and believe that the participants will have active exchange of views based on your experiences and expertise.

Thank you very much.