

Statement from Middle East and North Africa
Mr. Fawzi Mohammed
Director, Crisis and Disaster Management Sector

1. The Middle East and North Africa is a region vulnerable to various natural hazards such as earthquakes, drought, flood and landslide. Some major disasters of the world occur in this region from time to time. Climate change, urban risk and road accident are among key concerns of the countries of the region.
2. The countries of the Middle East and North Africa had already started processes for planning long-term mechanisms for disaster prevention, but after the Kobe Conference and adoption of the HFA, the countries of the region began to develop more systematically their capacities from disaster management to longer-term disaster risk reduction and prevention. Many countries of the region started implementation of the recommendations of HFA based on its five priorities for action.
3. At regional level, the Middle East and North Africa Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction and Hazard Risk Management, which was organized by UN/ISDR and the World Bank and hosted by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Cairo from 18 to 21 April this year, has been a major step for building partnership on disaster risk reduction in the region. Some 14 countries and 20 regional and international organizations as well as several experts participated in the Cairo Workshop and discussed various issues, needs, priorities and capacities on disaster risk reduction at the national and regional level. The documents of the Cairo Workshop are available on the UN/ISDR website.
3. Some key issues raised in the Cairo Workshop are:
 - raise the profile of disaster risk reduction
 - embed disaster risk reduction in institutional arrangements
 - strengthen collaboration
 - increase financial sustainability and budgetary support
 - better understand disaster risk
 - identify existing or develop financial instruments
 - identify obstacles.
4. The UN/ISDR and the World Bank have jointly started a programme to support DRR activities in the region, which includes a number of actions and steps, the first of which was the Cairo Workshop. In preparation for the discussion in the Cairo Workshop, a review on hazards and risks in the MENA region was prepared and presented to the Workshop. A copy of this study is available at this session and also on the UN/ISDR website. It is hoped that in the course of the coming months and years in this partnership, and based on reports and feedback forms countries of the region and various institutions, a more comprehensive report on DRR in the Middle East and North Africa region can be prepared.

5. Disaster risk reduction is high on the agenda of the countries of the region, which welcome any cooperation in this regard which may lead to reducing risks and saving the lives of people.

6. It is hoped that with the establishment of the UN/ISDR regional outreach office in Cairo for West Asia and North Africa, the efforts of the countries of the region can be further supported through regional and international partnerships and cooperation. Finally, the countries of the region express their sincere appreciation and thanks to the UN/ISDR and its secretariat for their valuable support to the efforts of the countries of the region in disaster risk reduction.

Thank you.