

**JOINT ASIAN-AFRICAN
LEADERS' STATEMENT
ON
TSUNAMI, EARTHQUAKE
AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS**

We, the Heads of State/Government of Asian and African countries, gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22-23 April 2005, expressed our profound grief at the losses of lives and livelihood caused by the earthquake and tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004.

We are cognizant that the earthquake and tsunami disaster is a strong reminder that our two continents are bound together, in that the impact of the devastation was jointly felt by the peoples in both continents.

We noted that this natural catastrophe had generated an unprecedented scale of international response, assistance and empathy. In this regard, we commended the leading role of affected countries and the valuable contributions of the international community, including the Asian-African countries, in addressing the recent earthquake and tsunami disaster by collectively assisting in emergency relief efforts as well as in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

We pledge to encourage the continued development of appropriate measures pertinent to disaster reduction, mitigation and management, which will be supportive of the outcome of the Special ASEAN Leaders Meeting on Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005.

We also took note of the outcomes of various initiatives to address tsunami and other natural disasters, *inter alia* the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe; the Ministerial Meeting on Regional Cooperation on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements held in Phuket; the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction of the Third AU Summit held in Addis Ababa; and other international conferences under the auspices of the United Nations, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg.

We realized that natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunami tidal waves respect no political borders and pose a major threat to all people as well as their livelihood and environment, as their unmitigated impact and aftermath undermines the progress of social and economic development.

We recognized the expertise and experience of countries in the Indian Ocean Rim and the Pacific Rim in addressing the problem of tsunami and earthquake disasters and therefore emphasized the urgent need to invest in the development of proactive, integrated, multi-hazard and multi-sectoral standby arrangements and early warning system to mitigate natural disasters in the Indian Ocean Rim.

To these ends, we are determined to:

1. Establish an integrated strategy for the development of a multi-nodal early warning system with mechanisms for preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response, with a view to minimizing casualties;
2. Establish and upgrade national early warning systems, including those that are based on community participation, while moving towards enhancing cooperation in the development of a coordinated regional system;
3. Explore ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of collective actions through consideration of possible rapid response capacities at the regional and international levels by *inter alia* establishing a standby arrangement for disaster relief and emergency response, creating networks for information exchange, establishing research and database centers, maximizing the use of the latest advances in science and technology, and developing strategies to reduce the risk and impact of natural disasters;
4. Reinforce efforts to create among all levels of Asian and African societies a culture of disaster risk reduction and empower those at risk to achieve protection against disaster impacts by way of enhancing capacity building, promoting public education and awareness as well as community participation in disaster prevention and mitigation;
5. Encourage greater interaction among experts from Asia and Africa in finding practical ways and means, as well as sharing best practices and experiences, on preparing Asian-African countries for the direct impact of disasters and possible secondary effects such as on public health and environmental crises;
6. Encourage the international community to continue efforts to provide disaster affected countries with technical and financial assistance, including in rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

We are determined that, harnessed within a spirit of compassion, sacrifice and endurance, our preparedness and capacity to proactively address the affects of tsunami, earthquake and other natural disasters will prevail to the future betterment of our peoples.

Jakarta, 23 April 2005