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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE TO FIRST GLOBAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL
SEARCH AND RESCUE ADVISORY GROUP (INSARAG)**

Kobe, 14 September 2010

It is a pleasure to greet all the participants in this first-ever Global Meeting of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. I thank the Government of Japan for hosting this meeting, and I stand with the Japanese people as they mark the 15th anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Japan is to be commended for how much it has taught the world about disaster preparedness and reconstruction.

This year has also been marked by terrible disasters. I visited Haiti in the aftermath of the January earthquake, and saw the devastation. Yet I also witnessed many moving examples of bravery and selfless devotion to duty. Your impressive work saved many lives, including those of UN colleagues trapped under the rubble.

I welcome your decision to come together for the first time to further professionalize your work and better coordinate with each other. You have come a long way since the creation of INSARAG in 1991. There is great scope for sharing lessons learned and using modern technology to provide even more effective support to affected communities and governments.

You can count on my full commitment, and that of the United Nations. We look forward to working together with you, and building on our successful cooperation. Please accept my best wishes for constructive discussions during your time in Kobe.