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Statement from John H. Marburger III, science advisor to the President and director, Office of Science and Technology Policy to recognize International Day for Disaster Reduction:

Every year, natural disasters in the United States cause hundreds of deaths and cost an estimated \$20 billion in the form of disaster aid, disrupted commerce, and destroyed public and private properties. Already in 2004, more than 40 major disasters — floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and wildfires — have struck the United States. We note our Nation's vulnerability to disasters even as we enhance our resilience through science and technology.

Today is International Day for Disaster Reduction, an occasion to acknowledge the substantial research and development efforts and the associated partnerships that have resulted in countless lives saved. We see our science and technology advances in smart building materials that protect our citizens in their homes and at work, in predictive models that enable response crews to pinpoint areas of vulnerability to flash flooding, and in mapping technologies that are supporting effective land management decisions. These successes, and thousands like them, save lives and reduce economic loss.

The United States recognizes October 13, 2004 as International Day for Disaster Reduction and proudly shares in the international commitment to promote hazard mitigation. We recognize the shared weaknesses and strengths of societies in the face of hazards and disasters. We note that a vital source of America's strength is our consistent progress in science and technology and the application of both to enhance our resilience. We reaffirm our commitment to reducing the disastrous effects of hazards. Together, improved prediction, preparedness, and response enhance our safety and economic well-being.

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