



SUMMARY OF THE FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION: 6-7 MAY 2004

The first session of the Preparatory Committee meeting for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) met at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, from 6-7 May 2004. The preparatory process of the WCDR is supported by the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which has been designated as the Conference Secretariat. Approximately 200 participants attended the meeting, including representatives of permanent missions to the UN in Geneva, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The meeting represents the first of two meetings of the Preparatory Committee, whose role is to review the organizational and substantive preparations, approve the WCDR programme of work and propose rules of procedure for the Conference. In addition, two outcome documents are to be negotiated by the Preparatory Committee for adoption at the WCDR: a political declaration with a strategic vision to reduce risk and vulnerability to natural and technological hazards in the period 2005-2015, and a programme document containing elements for policy measures to implement the strategic vision set out in the declaration. An on-going review of the implementation of the 1994 Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action is intended to provide background to these documents.

The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee addressed procedural issues, including the adoption of the provisional rules of procedure of the WCDR, organization of work and suggested arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and the WCDR. Delegates also heard a progress report on the preparatory process of the WCDR, and discussed the draft annotated outline of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action and the proposed elements for the programme outcome of the WCDR. Negotiations of the outcome documents are expected to continue at the second Preparatory Committee meeting, scheduled to convene in October 2004.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN DISASTER REDUCTION INITIATIVES

In recent years, disaster reduction has become an increasingly important issue in the international arena. Disasters caused by the impacts of natural and technological hazards on vulnerable human beings have increased, due to factors such as global population growth and urbanization, rising poverty and the onset of global environmental changes, including climate change, desertification and loss of biodiversity. The prevalent view is that disasters are increasing in number and intensity. Most policymakers and academics acknowledge that vulnerability due to poor planning, poverty and other factors contributes as much to the magnitude of disasters as do the natural hazards themselves. Action to reduce risk is now considered necessary in order to safeguard sustainable development efforts and human lives.

INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION: An increase in human casualties and property damage in the 1980s motivated the UN General Assembly in 1989 to declare the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) (resolution 44/236). The aim of the IDNDR was to address disaster prevention in the context

IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|---|
| A Brief History of the UN Disaster Reduction Initiatives . . . | 1 |
| Preparatory Committee Report | 2 |
| Progress Report on the WCDR Preparatory Process . . . | 3 |
| Draft Annotated Outline of the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. | 3 |
| Proposed Elements for the Programme Outcome of the WCDR | 3 |
| Arrangements for the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee. | 6 |
| Other Matters | 6 |
| Closing Remarks. | 6 |
| Things to Look For Before the WCDR | 6 |

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*© <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Alice Bisiaux <alice@iisd.org>, Dagmar Lohan, Ph.D. <dagmar@iisd.org>, and Lisa Schipper <lisa@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom (through the Department for International Development - DFID), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Germany (through the German Federal Ministry of Environment - BMU, and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation - BMZ), and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2004 is provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Government of Australia, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Swan International, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES) and the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute - GISPRI). Funding for translation of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* in French has been provided by the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF) and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-212-644-0217 or 212 East 47th St. #21F, New York, NY 10017, USA.



of a range of hazards, including earthquakes, windstorms, tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, wildfires, grasshopper and locust infestations, and drought and desertification.

YOKOHAMA STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION: One of the main outcomes of the IDNDR was the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action, adopted in 1994 at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan. The Yokohama Strategy sets guidelines for action on prevention, preparedness and mitigation of disaster risk, based on a set of principles, which stress the importance of: risk assessment; disaster prevention and preparedness; capacity to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters; and early warning. The principles note that preventive measures are most effective when all levels of stakeholders are involved and that vulnerability can be reduced by applying proper design and patterns of development focused on target groups. The principles also note that the international community should share technology to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, and demonstrate a strong political determination in the field of disaster reduction.

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION: In 1999, at its 54th session, the UN General Assembly decided to continue activities on disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction carried out during the IDNDR, and established the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), supported by the scientific and technical expertise and knowledge accumulated during the IDNDR. An Inter-Agency Secretariat and an Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF) for the implementation of the Strategy were also established (resolution 54/219 and 56/195, respectively). Among its mandated tasks, the IATF is to convene *ad hoc* meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction.

WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION: In February 2004, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 58/214, in which it decided to convene the WCDR. It noted that the objectives of the WCDR should be to:

- conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the 21st century;
- identify specific activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management;
- share best practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of attaining sustainable development and identify gaps and challenges;
- increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies to facilitate and promote the implementation of those policies; and
- increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions, as set out in the relevant provisions of the JPOI.

The WCDR is scheduled for 18-22 January 2005, in Kobe-Hyogo, Japan.

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Amb. Hernan Escudero (Ecuador), Chair of the Preparatory Committee Bureau, opened the meeting on Thursday, 6 May 2004, and said the WCDR represents a milestone event that will raise the international profile of disaster risk reduction, which is an integral component of sustainable development. He observed that the Conference provides a chance to reflect on progress made since the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy, and that it will promote a more collaborative and coherent approach to reducing risk and vulnerability to hazards.

Amb. Shigeru Endo (Japan) noted that casualties caused by natural disasters have tripled and economic loss increased eight-fold from 1970 to 2000, despite current efforts, and highlighted the importance of the WCDR. He stressed the need to share lessons learned in addressing natural disasters and expressed his country's honor to host the event.

Tadashi Haradi, Deputy Director-General for Disaster Reduction, Japan, suggested that outcomes of the WCDR include clear objectives and targets, follow-up activities, and a list of techniques and best practices. He highlighted effective measures for promoting disaster prevention, including: providing know-how to mainstream disaster reduction into national development planning; supporting the development of recovery and reconstruction plans with a focus on preventing future disasters; and establishing early warning systems.

Tomio Saito, Vice-Governor, Hyogo Prefectural Government, Japan, outlined the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake of 1995, including the importance of community and human bonds. He said the WCDR is an opportunity for his Prefecture to thank countries for their support following the earthquake and share lessons learned. He invited participants to visit the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution and other disaster-related organizations based in Kobe.

Sálvano Briceño, Director, ISDR Secretariat, noted the advances in science and technology in disaster reduction since Yokohama but also the rapid increase in human vulnerability. He said that development assistance fails to offset the losses caused by disasters and informed delegates that the analysis and review of the Yokohama Strategy will form the basis for discussions. He stressed that the ISDR has called for the creation of national programmes for disaster reduction and the adoption of an integrated approach and has set up a special unit to assist governments to prepare for the Conference.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE: The Secretariat announced the Bureau's decision to elect Amb. Hernan Escudero as Chair of the first session of the Preparatory Committee. Shigeru Endo was elected Co-Chair, and Seyed Mohammad Sadati Mejad (Iran) was elected Rapporteur.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Delegates adopted the agenda of the first session of the Preparatory Committee without amendment (A/CONF.206/PC(I)/1).

OPENING STATEMENTS: Ireland, on behalf of the EU, pointed to a link between early warning, disaster reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). She urged consideration of the impact of HIV/AIDS on capacity to



respond to risk, and highlighted the importance of integrating a gender perspective in risk reduction strategies. Outlining issues for consideration by the WCDR and in its proposed programme outcomes, she noted the International Meeting on the Ten-Year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (IM), and the importance of climate change for disaster reduction and mitigation. She said setting targets and voluntary timetables is in line with the implementation approach guiding the review process, which should be compatible with existing processes, such as the MDGs and the JPOI. She emphasized that the review process should allow for regional and national ownership.

Iran called on donor countries to provide additional financial resources to assure wide participation of developing countries in the preparatory process and in the WCDR. He suggested that the WCDR focus on implementing relevant intergovernmental agreements on natural disaster management and give equal consideration to all types of natural disasters. He said implementation of the reviewed Yokohama Strategy will contribute to achieving the MDGs. He highlighted the importance of establishing regional collaborative centers for natural disaster management.

The US said the WCDR presents an opportunity to review and share lessons learned. She called for discussions to focus on, *inter alia*: the importance of community engagement; the role of women in disaster prevention; the inclusion of vulnerable populations in disaster prevention; environmental degradation; the strengthening of evacuation modeling; and the role of communication.

Morocco, on behalf of the African Group, noted the high degree of vulnerability of African countries. He called for: African governments to prioritize disaster reduction; the integration of disaster policies into national development planning processes; the study of the effects of disasters on human trafficking; the establishment of partnership mechanisms in disaster reduction; the fostering of national ownership in disaster reduction; and the creation of an international fund to assist developing countries in disaster risk management and response.

PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE: Co-Chair Endo then proposed the adoption of the provisional rules of procedure. The US requested bracketing several paragraphs containing reference to participation of the European Community (EC), and suggested addressing these concerns in separate consultations. The EU also proposed amendments to language regarding the EC's participation. The US suggested that these be considered during the consultations as well.

On Friday morning, the US reported that no agreement had been reached on the matter, despite consultations with the EU. He proposed that the disputed elements of the rules of procedure remain bracketed, and that the rules be adopted provisionally only. The Russian Federation said all delegations should discuss the issue, and noted his disapproval of the existing language regarding the EC. Chair Escudero proposed the rules of procedure be adopted with the understanding that the disputed elements would remain bracketed until the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee, taking note of the observations made by the US and Russian Feder-

ation. The EU noted, for the record, that the General Assembly had decided that the rules of procedure of the WCDR should be based on those applied during the WSSD.

ACCREDITATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PREPARATORY PROCESS AND THE WCDR: The Secretariat introduced the document on suggested arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and in the WCDR of relevant NGOs and other major groups (A/CONF.206/PC(I)/INF.1). Delegates adopted the document without amendment.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: The Secretariat pointed to the General Assembly's resolution on an international strategy for disaster reduction (A/RES/58/214) and outlined the meeting's organization of work. Delegates agreed to the organization of work without amendment.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WCDR PREPARATORY PROCESS

The Secretariat reported on progress of the WCDR preparatory process. He informed delegates that the publication "Living with Risk" will be available for sale in June 2004, and that national reports are expected to be submitted by permanent missions to the UN in Geneva by 15 June 2004. He noted that the Conference will be composed of intergovernmental, thematic and public components.

DRAFT ANNOTATED OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW OF THE YOKOHAMA STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION

The Secretariat introduced the draft annotated outline of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action (A/CONF.206/PC(I)/3) and informed delegates that the work on the review is on-going and the document will be finalized for the second session of the Preparatory Committee. Noting that the draft mainly reflects experts' views on the subject and will later incorporate national inputs, he explained that it identifies major trends and gaps in disaster reduction efforts as well as emerging issues.

The US suggested that the Secretariat should ensure that the tentative conclusions contained in the draft are clear and relevant. Norway expressed concern regarding the short time-frame for providing national reports on progress on the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy by 15 June 2004. Noting that such information is available in several sources, the Secretariat said the request had been made in February 2004, but the process is on-going and national submissions are integrated as they are received. Costa Rica suggested that national submissions should be more substantial, and may therefore require more time. Thailand recommended that the Secretariat outline the preliminary conclusions and relevant guidance contained in the review.

PROPOSED ELEMENTS FOR THE PROGRAMME OUTCOME OF THE WCDR

Delegates considered a document containing a summary of the proposed elements for the programme outcome (A/CONF.206/PC(I)/4), and a supporting working document prepared by the Secretariat. The Secretariat outlined the outcomes of relevant meetings of the IATF. Noting that the IATF had emphasized the need to set priorities, he stressed the importance of regional policies, and



recognized the importance of follow-up mechanisms and capacity building. He said the IATF had identified six core objectives, including the need to:

- incorporate risk reduction into national policies;
- identify and monitor risks and vulnerability;
- build a culture of prevention;
- reduce underlying disaster risk factors;
- strengthen disaster preparedness and contingency planning; and
- sustain international support for local and national activities.

Congo called for assistance to developing countries for producing national programmes of action. The Dominican Republic highlighted the relationship between population size and disaster risk.

Colombia welcomed the call by the Secretariat for funds to support the participation of developing countries in the second Preparatory Committee meeting.

Australia underlined the importance of participation by Pacific Island States in the process to ensure that the voices of those most affected by natural disasters are heard. He said the WCDR should provide useful and practical guidance for policy, planning, programmes and activities in relation to disaster reduction and underscored the need to empower local communities and share lessons learned. With the US, he expressed skepticism as to the value of adopting global time-bound targets for disaster reduction. He suggested extending the length of the second Preparatory Committee meeting by one day.

On the seven core priorities proposed as elements to guide the objectives and targets for the programme outcome, the US suggested referring to mitigation efforts in the section on contingency planning, and including a reference to regional efforts in the section on international support. She recommended adding language on the involvement of local communities and said the process should not be expanded to technological risks.

The Russian Federation stressed advanced technologies in reducing risk and expressed support for linkages between natural disasters and technological aspects of risk.

Mauritius, on behalf of small island developing States (SIDS), emphasized that the review of the Yokohama Strategy should establish emergency funds and insurance schemes. He stressed that a broad spectrum of climate events be considered, and underscored the obstacles to rehabilitation. He highlighted the need to improve building codes, disaster predictions, land-use and coastal-zone planning, and build capacity in national disaster units. He also noted the necessity to: improve the understanding of causes and effects of hazards at national and regional levels; strengthen community resilience by combining traditional with scientific and technical knowledge; facilitate partnerships with international agencies; and further investigate cost-effective insurance and re-insurance schemes.

Canada cautioned against underestimating the time needed to address relevant issues before the WCDR, and welcomed on-going consultations as a way to ensure successful outcomes. She recommended that outcome documents build on existing resources and

commitments, rather than create new ones. She asked how the Secretariat would plan its work, given the new responsibilities expected to emanate from WCDR.

Supporting the SIDS statement, Papua New Guinea outlined numerous natural and other hazards to which SIDS are exposed, including civil unrest and HIV/AIDS. He reviewed risk reduction initiatives in the Pacific Islands, but said capacities to respond and recover need to be strengthened. He said the IM and the WCDR processes should work together closely, and welcomed partnerships for the effective use of existing resources. He highlighted a meeting planned for June 2005 in Papua New Guinea to examine how the WCDR outcomes could be integrated into national strategies and plans.

Japan said the role of communities in disaster reduction should be reflected more explicitly in the language of the programme's objectives and targets for disaster risk reduction. While he acknowledged the importance of prevention, he suggested that disaster relief activities should also be discussed.

South Africa encouraged all African governments to participate in two upcoming regional meetings in Johannesburg and prepare national reports on the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy to this end. He underscored the vulnerability of the majority of the African population to hazards and the interrelation between the impact of disasters and other health or environmental threats.

The UK welcomed the working document on elements for the programme outcome, and supported the adoption of a cross-cutting approach and the assumption that strategies are more efficient if implemented through existing mandates and programmes. She urged that the WCDR results should be consistent with the MDGs and asked the Secretariat clarify the adoption of global and national targets.

Noting that 10% of its GDP is lost on an annual basis due to natural disasters, China underlined its efforts in putting disaster reduction at the forefront of its national agenda.

India noted the need to recognize developing countries' limited capacity for preparedness, response and mitigation, and called for strengthening international cooperation. He stressed the importance of assessing the financial costs of achieving objectives in the WCDR's outcomes. He supported maintaining the Yokohama Strategy's approach not to require additional reporting. He prioritized preparedness, public participation and awareness, specialized training in search and rescue, and implementation of national laws.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) prioritized early warning systems as an outcome of the WCDR. He underscored the importance of socioeconomic studies to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of investments in natural disaster reduction. He said the WMO Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation programme, approved by the WMO Congress in 2003, will contribute to identifying major threats and adequate measures. He suggested that the WCDR be used as an opportunity to achieve a target of halving the fatalities associated with disasters by 2015.

Bangladesh said the WCDR process should be participatory and transparent, include broad consultations and employ a comprehensive disaster management approach. She welcomed the possi-



bility of intersessional consultations to allow for sufficient time to complete negotiations before the WCDR, and stressed the need for an effective follow-up mechanism.

Romania described his country's experience in seismic disaster reduction. He highlighted the strengthening of fragile buildings and relevant legislation, adoption of building codes, and the creation of financial instruments and a national seismic policy. He stressed the importance of donor assistance in financing such projects and of the synergy between international and national actions in seismic initiatives.

Switzerland noted the short time-frame for preparing for the WCDR and urged increasing the number of donors. Announcing her country's willingness to contribute to the Conference, she said it should give concrete directives, clear and concrete guidelines, and share success stories. She suggested adding to the list of objectives the fact that disaster reduction is not a sectoral but a global issue.

Barbados emphasized the inherent vulnerability of SIDS. She expressed regret that traditional criteria for indicating levels of development do not take vulnerability into account. She outlined national and regional measures adopted to address risk and highlighted remaining restraints, including lack of financial resources, institutional capacity and capacity to predict disasters. With Trinidad and Tobago, she called for strengthening resilience and making available affordable insurance and re-insurance arrangements to SIDS. She expressed concern over the limited time scheduled for the Preparatory Committee meetings.

Noting that his country is prone to disasters, Indonesia said that it has endeavored to implement the Yokohama Strategy despite limited capacity. He suggested that the WCDR's outcomes address: disaster prevention and response; the interrelation between economic factors and environmental aspects; cooperation in expanding early warning systems; and the sharing of information. He requested the Secretariat to make available documents that will be the basis of negotiations at the WCDR prior to the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

Morocco pointed to a new national dialogue on risk prevention, and urged the UN to prioritize disaster prevention. She called for establishing a funding mechanism to enable developing countries to set up relevant national programmes and strengthen institutional and legal capacities. She called for an international convention on disaster prevention and risk management, and emphasized the importance of operational emergency plans, and raising public awareness. She expressed hope that the WCDR would generate tangible conclusions.

Congo requested that human trafficking be referred to in the document.

Norway expressed support for the decision to convene the WCDR at an expert, rather than political level, and welcomed the establishment of the ISDR unit that focuses on the preparatory process for the WCDR. She urged donors to respond generously and rapidly to support the WCDR and relevant follow-up activities.

Recalling that his country has been active in the preparatory phase, Germany reiterated its support for the WCDR. He supported the six core priorities for action proposed in the working document. He proposed a number of thematic areas for consideration by the WCDR:

- the elaboration of an international disaster reduction regime;
- good governance in disaster risk management;
- economic modeling of costs;
- enhancing national platforms within ISDR;
- addressing future risk, disaster risk assessment and development; and
- enhancing early warning systems.

He encouraged other donors to follow Germany's example of contributing 5-10% of funds earmarked for humanitarian aid to disaster reduction.

The UK and the US urged the Secretariat to postpone the deadline for national reporting by two months and said delegates need to decide whether to adopt overarching targets, and if so, what these should be. She suggested that the Secretariat provide guidelines for setting national targets, especially on the role of civil society in contributing to setting these targets.

The US called for agreement on the priority areas and suggested the following amendments:

- on ensuring that disaster reduction become a national priority, she proposed adding a reference to implementation;
- on the monitoring of risks, she suggested including a reference to assessment;
- on education, she urged replacing the word "information" by "knowledge;"
- on disaster preparedness, she proposed emphasizing the community level; and
- on international support, she suggested adding language to reflect the importance of regional action.

The WMO requested that the 14th World Meteorological Congress be added to the sources listed as recommending the objectives of the WCDR programme outcome.

Responding to organizational questions on the consultative process between the first and second sessions of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretariat explained that it will integrate all comments and recommendations received from the IATF and the first preparatory session into a document by the end of May. Reminding participants that the deadline for submitting national reports was set in late February, he noted the difficulty of postponing the deadline by two months, but welcomed reports submitted after the deadline. He said informal consultations will be held, and the revised draft circulated by 9 August. He added that the Secretariat will provide an inventory of all documents.

Regarding feedback on the documents on the proposed elements for the programme outcome, he noted that the divergent views on global targets will need to be addressed in the coming months. On follow-up to the WCDR, he said that the Secretariat is working with partner agencies, including IATF members.

On the proposed timetable, Canada preferred receiving the revised draft of the document before August, noting that it is a holiday period. Supported by Bangladesh, Thailand and Costa



Rica, she urged convening informal consultations on the elements of the outcomes before the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee. South Africa suggested that informal negotiations could take place after the second session of the Preparatory Committee, if needed. Canada said previously scheduled consultations should address preparatory issues only. Costa Rica said the deadline for submitting national reports by 15 June 2004 left little time, but supported Canada that the revised draft should be circulated before August. Regarding the time-frame for completing consideration of the documents, Bangladesh said that governments will need additional time. Costa Rica urged documents to be translated into all languages. In response, the Secretariat noted that it did not have the funds to translate all documents, but would endeavor to raise additional funds for that purpose.

Australia requested the Secretariat to prepare a document identifying the main documents for the WCDR with a clear indication of steps and timetables necessary to finalize their consideration. The Secretariat recalled that the General Assembly resolution provides for convening a third day of the second session of the Preparatory Committee, or to hold a one-day third session of the Preparatory Committee immediately prior to the WCDR. The US cautioned against an extension of the second Preparatory Committee meeting, preferring to hold an additional day of negotiations prior to the WCDR. Japan urged the acceleration of the preparatory process.

Regarding the ISDR support group, the US underlined that this should not be a negotiating forum. The Secretariat confirmed that it is mainly a forum for sharing experiences.

Morocco called on UNDP to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries to prepare their national reports. The Secretariat informed delegates that UNDP had already agreed to do so. Noting that many developing countries are unlikely to meet the deadline for submitting their national reports, South Africa urged the Secretariat to include all inputs in the document on the programme elements.

The Secretariat informed delegates that it will distribute a new draft of the documents at the end of May, which will include inputs received during the IATF meeting and at this session of the Preparatory Committee.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Costa Rica emphasized the importance of engaging civil society and suggested that the Convening Letter be disseminated broadly to raise awareness of the Conference among community-based organizations. He appealed to donors to consider financing stakeholders to enable their participation in the WCDR process.

OTHER MATTERS

The Secretariat reminded delegates that the approval of the conference logo is a prerogative of the Preparatory Committee. Since the next session of the Committee will take place in October, he suggested that the Bureau decide on the logo in order to be able to use it as soon as possible.

CLOSING REMARKS

Co-Chair Endo summarized the meeting, recalling that delegates had agreed upon the proposed officers. On the provisional rules of procedure, he said that pending the consultations between the US and the EU, the rules proposed by the Secretariat would be adopted provisionally and the bracketed text would remain in place until final agreement had been reached. He noted the meeting's adoption of the arrangements for accreditation of NGOs and major groups. He reminded delegates that the deadline for submitting national inputs is 15 June, but that reports will be accepted after that date. He noted that the Preparatory Committee had reached broad agreement on the Conference outcomes and that the Secretariat had proposed a timetable for informal consultations until the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

According to the timetable, the deadline for submitting national reports is 15 June, an on-line conference on the conclusions of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and future objectives will be held from 15 June to 16 July, and the revised draft, incorporating inputs from the first session of the Preparatory Committee, consultations, and the review of the Yokohama Strategy, will be complete by 9 August. Consultations with the ISDR Support Group and briefings with permanent missions to the UN in Geneva and New York will also take place during this period. Co-Chair Endo said he was satisfied with the progress made during the meeting, especially considering the tight timetable before the WCDR.

The US observed that delegates had not formally agreed on the targets and objectives for the WCDR.

The meeting closed at 12:55 pm.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE THE WCDR

TIEMS 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: This conference will take place from 18-21 May 2004, in Melbourne, Australia, and is sponsored by the International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS). For more information, contact: TIEMS, tel: +61-03-9294-6703; fax: +61-03-9294-6703; e-mail: registration@tiems.org; Internet: <http://www.tiems.org>

THE MEDIA AND CLIMATE: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WORKSHOP: This workshop will take place from 3-4 June 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand, and is sponsored by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). For more information, contact: Lolita Bildan, ADPC; tel: +66-2-516-5900-10; fax: +66-2-524-5350; e-mail: lolita@adpc.net; Internet: http://www.adpc.net/crm/about_crm.html

14TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT: This conference will take place from 20-23 June 2004, in Toronto, Canada, and is sponsored by the Canadian Center for Emergency Preparedness. For more information, contact Alysone Will, Conference Co-ordinator; tel: +1-416-595-1414 ext. 224; fax: +1-416-979-1819; e-mail: coord@wcdm.org; Internet: <http://www.wcdm.org>

2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE: RISK MANAGEMENT (ETR2A): This conference will take place on 24-25 June 2004, in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. For more information, contact the



ETR2A Conference Office; tel: +44-191-241-4523; fax: +44-191-227-4217; e-mail: info@etr2a.org; Internet: http://etr2a.raki.enigmainteractive.net/page/events_conference.cfm

IX INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LANDSLIDES:

This symposium will take place from 24 June - 4 July 2004, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. For more information, contact: Secretariat 9 ISL-Rio 2004; tel: +55-21-562-7200; fax: +55-21-2280-9545; e-mail: 9isl@geotec.coppe.ufrj.br; Internet: <http://www.quattri.com.br/isl/interior.html>

SMART STRUCTURES TECHNOLOGY AND EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING: This symposium will take place from 6-9 July 2004, in Osaka, Japan. For more information, contact: Ma Hua, Osaka University; e-mail: mahua@arch.eng.osaka-u.ac.jp; or contact the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation; tel: +1-510-231-9557; fax: +1-510-231-5664; Internet: <http://www.nees.org/info/SE041119.pdf>

DISASTERS AND SOCIETY: FROM HAZARD ASSESSMENT TO RISK REDUCTION: This conference will take place on 26-27 July 2004, in Karlsruhe, Germany. For more information, contact: Dörthe Malzahn, Karlsruhe University; tel: +49-721-608-7456; fax: +49-721-695 245; e-mail: disasterandsociety@uka.de; Internet: <http://www.disasterandsociety.uni-karlsruhe.de>

13TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING (13WCEE): This conference will take place from 1-6 August 2004, in Vancouver, Canada. For more information, contact: 13th WCEE Secretariat; tel: +1-604-681-5226; fax: +1-604-681-2503; e-mail: congress@venuewest.com; Internet: <http://www.13wcee.com>

GENDER EQUALITY AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION WORKSHOP: This workshop will take place from 10-12 August 2004, in Honolulu, Hawaii, US. This workshop is sponsored by the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the US Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction with assistance from the University of Hawaii Social Science Research Institute, the East-West Center, members of the Gender and Disaster Network, and others. For more information, contact: Cheryl Anderson, University of Hawaii Social Science Research Institute; tel: +1-808-956-3908; fax: +1-808-956-2884; e-mail: genderdisaster@yahoo.com; Internet: <http://www.ssri.hawaii.edu/research/GDWwebsite/index.html>

30TH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION: ONE EARTH, MANY WORLDS: This congress will take place from 15-20 August 2004, in Glasgow, Scotland, UK. For more information, contact: Meeting Makers; tel: +44-141-434-1500; fax: +44-141-434-1519; e-mail: igc2004@meetingmakers.co.uk; Internet: <http://www.meetingmakers.co.uk/igc-uk2004/index.html>

32ND INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS: This congress will take place from 20-28 August 2004, in Florence, Italy. For more information, contact: Chiara Manetti, Borgo Albizi; tel: +39-055-2382146; fax: +39-055-3361350; e-mail: casaitalia@geo.unifi.it; Internet: <http://www.32igc.org/home.htm>

URBAN FLOOD MITIGATION COURSE: This course will take place from 28 August - 3 September 2004, in Manila, the Philippines, and is sponsored by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). For more information, contact: ADPC; tel: +66-2-516-5900-10; fax: +66-2-524-5360; e-mail: audmp@adpc.net; Internet: <http://www.adpc.net>

MITIGATING VOLCANIC CRISES: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: This conference will take place from 31 August - 2 September 2004, in London, UK. For more information, contact: Benfield Hazard Research Center, Department of Earth Sciences, University College London; tel: +44-20-7679-3449; fax: +44-207-679-2390; e-mail: info@benfieldhrc.org; Internet: http://www.benfieldhrc.org/Site-Root/activities/events/chris_2004.htm

SECOND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE WCDR: The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the WCDR will take place from 11-12 October 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: UN/ISDR; tel: +41-22-917-2529; fax: +41-22-917-0563; e-mail: isdr@un.org; Internet: <http://www.unisdr.org>

FIFTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DISASTER AND EMERGENCY READINESS FORUM: This Forum will meet from 14-15 October 2004, in Moreton-in-Marsh, UK. For more information, contact: Simon Langdon, Insight Consulting Ltd.; tel: +44-1932-241-000; fax: +44-1932-244-590; e-mail: simon.langdon@insight.co.uk; Internet: <http://www.andrich.com/ider>

ASFPM ARID REGIONS FLOOD AND RIVER RESTORATION CONFERENCE: This conference will take place from 16-19 November 2004, in Mesa, Arizona, US, and is sponsored by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM). For more information, contact: Tom Loomis, Arizona Floodplain Management Association; tel: +1-602-506-4767; fax: +1-602-506-4601; e-mail: trl@mail.maricopa.gov; Internet: <http://www.azfma.org>

WCDR: The World Conference on Disaster Reduction will take place from 18-22 January 2005, in Kobe-Hyogo, Japan. For more information, contact: UN/ISDR; tel: +41-22-917-2529; fax: +41-22-917-0563; e-mail: isdr@un.org; Internet: <http://www.unisdr.org>