



## SUMMARY OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION: 11-12 OCTOBER 2004

The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) met at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, from 11-12 October 2004. Over 400 participants attended the meeting, including representatives of 106 UN Member States, as well as UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Preparatory Committee was established to review the organizational and substantive preparations for the WCDR, approve its programme of work and propose rules of procedure for the Conference. In particular, the Preparatory Committee is charged with the preparation of two outcome documents 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, tentatively entitled "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005-2015" (referred to as the "programme of action"). An ongoing review of the implementation of the 1994 Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action is intended to provide the context for these documents.

Building on discussions at the Preparatory Committee's first session and intersessional activities, delegates to the second session considered a new version of the draft programme of action. Discussion on the political declaration is expected to begin once further progress on the programme of action has been achieved. In addition, delegates attending the Preparatory Committee addressed: the accreditation of NGOs and other major groups to the preparatory process and the WCDR; the provisional rules of procedure for the preparatory process and the WCDR; the proposed format and draft agenda of the WCDR; and the proposed "partnerships mechanism." Delegates also heard a progress report

on the preparatory process of the WCDR and discussed the draft review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action.

At the conclusion of the second session, participants agreed to establish an open-ended drafting committee to continue working on the draft programme of action, which will meet regularly in Geneva until Friday, 14 January 2005. The drafting group will also consider the draft political declaration.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN DISASTER REDUCTION INITIATIVES

In recent years, disaster reduction has become an increasingly important issue on the international agenda. Disasters caused by the impacts of natural and technological hazards on vulnerable communities have increased, due to factors such as population growth and urbanization, rising poverty and the onset of global environmental changes, including climate change, desertification and biodiversity loss. 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 essential in order to safeguard sustainable development efforts and human lives.

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## 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 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 held in Yokohama, Japan. The Yokohama Strategy sets guidelines for action on prevention, preparedness and mitigation of disaster risk. These guidelines are based on a set of principles that stress the importance of risk assessment, disaster prevention and preparedness, the capacity to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, and early warning. The principles stem from the recognition that preventive measures are most effective when stakeholders at all levels are involved, and that vulnerability can be reduced by applying “proper design” and “patterns of development” focused on target groups. The principles also state that the international community should share technology so as to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, and demonstrate a strong political determination in the field of disaster reduction.

## INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER

**REDUCTION:** At its 54th session in 1999, the UN General Assembly decided to continue the activities on disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction carried out during the IDNDR. The General Assembly established the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which is 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* expert meetings on issues related to disaster reduction. Its tenth meeting was held in Geneva from 7-8 October 2004.

## WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION:

In February 2004, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 58/214, in which it decided to convene the WCDR. The objectives of the WCDR are 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 in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD);
- share best practices and lessons learned to support and facilitate 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 preparatory process of the WCDR is supported by the ISDR Secretariat, which has been designated as the Conference Secretariat. The WCDR will be held from 18-22 January 2005, in Kobe-Hyogo, Japan.

**PREPCOM I:** The first session of the Preparatory Committee of the WCDR met in Geneva from 6-7 May 2004. The meeting 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. The second session of the Preparatory Committee was tasked with continuing to address these issues and preparing for the WCDR. The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* summary report of PrepCom I can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/isdr/wcdr/prepcom1/>.

**INTERSESSIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:** Since PrepCom I, numerous relevant regional and thematic meetings have taken place, including events in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These meetings have contributed ideas and recommendations for the WCDR. The Secretariat has prepared a compilation of the outcomes of these meetings (IATF10/ISDR/Information doc/Nr.3).

## PREPARATORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Preparatory Committee Chair Amb. Hernan Escudero (Ecuador) opened the meeting on Monday morning, 11 October 2004. Pointing to recent disasters around the globe, he noted growing awareness about the impacts of natural hazards. He said this concern underscores the necessity for the WCDR, which should produce viable, practical and concrete results. He suggested that the proposed programme of action for 2005-2015 focus on reducing losses resulting from disasters, integrating disaster risk concerns into sustainable development programmes and plans, and developing institutions, mechanisms and communities to build capacity and resilience to natural hazards. Chair Escudero reminded participants that at the first session of the Preparatory Committee Shigero Endo (Japan) and Seyed Mohammad Sadati Mejad (Iran) had been elected Co-Chair and Rapporteur, respectively.

Amb. Masaki Konishi (Japan), as representative of the WCDR host country, stressed the importance of building resilience to natural hazards based on a combination of economic, social and environmental policy measures. He highlighted three proposals to support the targeted actions outlined in the draft programme of action. First, he suggested creating a portfolio of disaster reduction actions, a “gallery” of best practices and lessons learned from previous disasters, and a catalogue of technologies for disaster reduction. Second, he proposed a mechanism to increase social resilience to disasters during the reconstruction process. Finally, he



noted the importance of capacity building and knowledge sharing on a local level. Amb. Konishi suggested that implementation of the WCDR outcomes can be monitored and evaluated effectively by mobilizing the resources and capacities of existing organizations.

Sálvano Briceño, Director, ISDR Secretariat, reported on progress made since the first session of the Preparatory Committee in May 2004. He noted that over 90 countries have prepared national reports on progress and challenges in risk reduction. He also briefed delegates on recent regional and thematic consultations held in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific. He highlighted some of the recommendations made at the meetings, and at the recent session of the IATF, for measurable goals and targets to reduce risk and vulnerability significantly by 2015.

Delegates then adopted the agenda for the meeting (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/1).

**GENERAL STATEMENTS:** Morocco expressed hope that the WCDR would produce a framework for international cooperation on disaster prevention, which could take the form of a multilateral convention. He also proposed that the WCDR evaluate any potential shortcomings of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with regard to disaster reduction, and establish a special fund to finance activities supporting disaster prevention in the most vulnerable countries.

Iran said the WCDR represents a milestone in raising the international profile of disaster risk reduction as an integral component of sustainable development. Recalling that 31 of the 40 recognized natural hazards pose a risk to Iran, he outlined the work of the Iranian national committee for disaster reduction and called for international cooperation to minimize the vulnerability to natural hazards. He also supported the establishment of a specialized regional center for disaster research.

Sudan, on behalf of the African Group, observed that the JPOI calls for actions to assist Africa in dealing effectively with disasters induced by natural hazards and conflicts, within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). He noted the recommendations of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and indicated the African Group's support for, *inter alia*:

- a study on the feasibility of an international convention on disaster risk reduction;
- increased support for the ISDR;
- transfer of technology and financial assistance to developing countries;
- the reinforcement of capacities for observation and early warning; and
- the establishment of a follow-up mechanism after the WCDR.

The US said countries are individually responsible for assessing their vulnerabilities and preparing for and mitigating disasters to the best of their abilities; they also have a joint responsibility to share knowledge on risks. He stressed the importance of a collective effort to reduce disasters by engaging industry, academia, and private voluntary agencies, and highlighted the role of public-private partnerships. He suggested topics to be discussed at the WCDR, including: early warning; drought; the engagement of minorities, indigenous peoples and women in the planning stage;

the effective use of building codes and insurance programmes; the prevention of the spread of disease; and the protection of historic and culturally significant sites.

The Netherlands, on behalf of the EU, suggested that the WCDR should specify ways of bridging the gap between the current situation and the principles of the Yokohama Strategy. To this end, he said the WCDR should take into account the Millennium Declaration and its goals, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Sustainable Development Strategies, as well as the ten-year review of the implementation of Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). He said the Conference Statement resulting from the Second Conference on Early Warning held in October 2003 should be reflected in the WCDR outcomes. He suggested that targets to be set at the WCDR should be compatible with existing ones, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the JPOI. He added that any target should also allow flexibility for regional and national adaptation, and should foster ownership. He said the ISDR should engage all relevant UN institutions in monitoring the implementation of the WCDR outcomes, given the difficulties and cost of developing appropriate monitoring mechanisms.

Australia said the WCDR should minimize "general rhetoric" and produce practical guidance for programmes, planning and activities that can be implemented cost-effectively. He urged delegates to avoid setting global targets, questioning their relevance at the local level, and warning that they can create "unrealistic expectations" of additional aid flows.

Algeria drew attention to NEPAD and its disaster risk reduction strategy, which he said requires international support. He urged the WCDR to strengthen the financial and technological capacities of developing countries by establishing a financing mechanism for disaster prevention. He also supported a regional or subregional network to facilitate information exchange, and championed the creation of a global observatory to monitor and study disasters.

The Dominican Republic supported the proposal by Amb. Konishi of Japan to create a portfolio of lessons learned, and underscored the importance of prevention, mitigation, early warning mechanisms and ongoing monitoring.

Fiji, on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum Group, underlined the link between the SIDS process and the WCDR and urged subregional and interregional groups to meet during the WCDR so that the specific needs of SIDS can be reflected in its outcomes. He outlined the guiding principles behind the Pacific region's position paper and called for a broader definition of disasters to include social, environmental and technological hazards. He underscored the importance of comprehensive hazard management and the role of gender and youth in risk reduction.

Venezuela outlined his country's national disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, highlighting their multidisciplinary approach to disaster management.

Colombia suggested that industrialized countries should assist developing countries in risk management through debt reduction.





The European Space Agency stressed the role of the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, of which the UN recently became a member institution. She said the Charter contributes to the protection of the environment through its monitoring and information dissemination capabilities.

UN Volunteers (UNV) highlighted the significant contribution made by volunteers to economic and social development. He drew attention to UN General Assembly resolution 56/38, which deals with the issue of volunteering, and singled out disasters as one of the key areas for volunteers' participation. He suggested volunteerism as a topic for discussion at the WCDR, noting that most disaster relief efforts rely on a large number of ordinary citizens, but that this untrained resource has to be managed properly to be effective. He also noted an upcoming UN Development Programme (UNDP)/UNV meeting in Orissa, India, which should result in a programme for South-South collaboration on community-based disaster and response mechanisms.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) urged a greater focus on local communities and activities, including the involvement of local governments, the issue of local resilience, and the need to better understand how local communities respond to hazards.

A representative of Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, host of the WCDR, briefed delegates on preparations for the Conference, describing the meeting's venue and transportation arrangements, and drawing attention to various ceremonies and exhibitions planned to mark the tenth anniversary of the 1995 Hanshin-Awaji earthquake.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said disaster reduction activities should be practical, focus on the poor and vulnerable, be "bottom-up" in their implementation, and engage children and women. He called for mainstreaming disaster reduction issues concerning children and women and stressed the importance of a "child-safe" environment with regard to educational facilities.

The UNFCCC Secretariat underlined the link between disaster reduction and climate change and said the tenth Conference of the Parties in December 2004 will present an opportunity to provide input to the WCDR.

Nepal described his country's disaster reduction plan and underscored the importance of implementing the Yokohama Strategy at all levels. He called for public-private partnerships and assistance to least developed countries (LDCs) in order to achieve the MDGs.

Norway welcomed the draft programme of action and said it should: address the role of NGOs and local communities as well as the importance of good governance; include a gender perspective; be harmonized with existing relevant intergovernmental agreements such as the MDGs and the UNFCCC's Kyoto Protocol; and be accompanied by financial, human and technological assistance to developing countries.

Jamaica highlighted the vulnerability of SIDS to natural hazards and noted the linkages between the multilateral processes for the WCDR and SIDS, which are running in parallel and will both culminate in high-level conferences in January 2005.

Congo raised the need to understand countries' specific vulnerabilities, integrate disaster response and reduction strategies into poverty and development goals, and identify policy gaps and priorities. He called for technical assistance, training and information exchange on best practices as ways to reduce vulnerability.

China called for strengthening the ISDR Secretariat as a platform for ongoing dialogue, information exchange, training and research.

Highlighting text in the draft programme of action on the role of the IATF and ISDR Secretariat, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) drew attention to its involvement in the IATF, which includes more than two dozen UN agencies, regional organizations, and civil society groups.

**ORGANIZATION OF WORK:** Delegates approved the proposed organization of work of the Preparatory Committee and endorsed five new intergovernmental organizations that had requested participation in the WCDR (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/INF.2). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also highlighted its participation in the IATF, and stressed the importance of collaboration within the UN system.

**ACCREDITATION TO THE WCDR:** John Horekens, Conference Coordinator, noted applications for accreditation from 55 NGOs and other major groups (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/7). Delegates accepted the applications.

**PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE:** Regarding the provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the WCDR, Chair Escudero noted that agreement had not yet been reached on all changes proposed at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee in May. He encouraged the continuation of consultations between the parties concerned, and requested that the results of these discussions be reported to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

#### **PROGRESS REPORT ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE WCDR**

John Horekens summarized preparatory activities carried out since July, when the most recent progress report on the process was completed (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/5). He noted progress in arrangements for information dissemination on the WCDR to governments, media and other interested groups.

#### **PROPOSED FORMAT OF THE WCDR**

John Horekens provided an update on the three components of the WCDR, namely the intergovernmental segment, the thematic segment, and the public forum (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/6).

Commenting on the proposed format, India underscored the relevance of the five thematic panels proposed for the thematic segment.

The UK, with Australia and Algeria, supported a suggestion by the IATF to reduce the number of thematic sessions scheduled for the WCDR. Papua New Guinea stressed the need to set aside time for regional discussions at the WCDR to ensure that the specific needs of SIDS are reflected in the WCDR's outcomes. The Cook Islands outlined his country's national strategy for disaster reduction, stressing the importance of capacity building, early warning mechanisms, education and awareness programmes, and the development of risk reduction tools. Uganda emphasized the importance



of the regional discussions scheduled for the WCDR, and supported addressing national policies and linkages to subregional and regional platforms.

Responding to delegates' comments, Horekens said suggestions on the proposed format of the WCDR would be taken into account. Observing that it would not be easy to reduce the number of thematic sessions, he welcomed assistance and guidance on this matter. Delegates approved the proposed format, taking into account the suggestions made.

#### **PROPOSED PARTNERSHIPS MECHANISM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WCDR**

Chair Escudero invited the Preparatory Committee to review a document outlining a "proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the WCDR" (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/9). Noting that the WSSD process had launched more than 200 voluntary partnerships, Horekens explained that some are linked to disaster management and vulnerability. He noted that 36 relevant partnerships have been registered with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which is the designated focal point for partnerships. Horekens observed that the WCDR presents a valuable opportunity for new partnerships to be launched or for updates on existing partnerships to be presented. He encouraged all new partnerships to register with the CSD.

India looked forward to further discussions on partnerships in the lead-up to the WCDR and noted that in his country's experience bilateral partnerships were often more successful than regional approaches.

#### **PROPOSED DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE WCDR**

John Horekens presented the draft agenda of the WCDR, noting that it includes the establishment of a Main Committee as part of its organization of work. The proposed draft agenda was approved by delegates without further comment or amendment (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/8).

#### **DRAFT REVIEW OF THE YOKOHAMA STRATEGY**

Sálvano Briceño provided an overview of progress in reviewing the 1994 Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. He noted that information had been received through national reports and an online dialogue, as well as through research carried out in producing the ISDR publication, "Living with Risk." He invited delegates to comment on the draft review (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/3).

The US cautioned against overburdening governments with reporting requirements. He suggested that the ISDR Secretariat undertake some of this work and provide guidance to governments on the necessary information for assessing the implementation of the WCDR's outcomes. In response, Briceño agreed that the Secretariat can provide greater assistance in information collection and distribution.

Germany suggested referencing activities and networks on early warning more extensively in the review document, along with lessons and recommendations from the international conferences on early warning held in 1998 and 2003. He queried the role of the "Recommendations for the Future" section included in the review document, noting his understanding that additional recommendations will be the basis for the WCDR programme of action. He

cautioned that the recommendations from the review document should not prejudice the recommendations contained in the programme of action, which is the only document that is currently the subject of ongoing discussion by governments.

Switzerland suggested that the review document establish a clear distinction between what has been achieved in the past ten years, the current status, and where the gaps lie. He urged a stronger link between the review document and the draft programme of action, and noted that many statements in the review document are not reflected in the draft programme of action.

In response, Briceño suggested that the review document "recommendations" should be viewed instead as "conclusions." He said they would be reviewed more carefully to ensure that they are aligned with the text of the draft programme of action. He added that the statements from the review document could not all be reflected in the draft programme of action due to space restrictions imposed by UN translation policies.

#### **DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR 2005-2015**

On Monday afternoon, John Horekens introduced one of the key draft outcome documents proposed for the WCDR, tentatively entitled "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action, 2005-2015" (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/4). He explained that the current draft of the programme of action incorporates comments received from delegations, the IATF, and international organizations since the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, as well as recommendations and conclusions from preparatory regional meetings.

Briceño noted that the three overall goals listed in the draft programme of action are consistent with relevant processes and that the monitoring mechanism is linked to the CSD, which is addressing risk management as a cross-cutting issue.

**GENERAL STATEMENTS:** Chair Escudero then invited general statements from delegates on the draft programme of action. Approximately 50 delegations commented on the document, starting on Monday afternoon and concluding the following day. Participants raised a wide range of issues, including: the question of specific WCDR targets, time-frames, and commitments; reporting requirements; linkages with other multilateral processes and agreements; financial issues; capacity building; regional matters; the scope of discussions at the WCDR; and the process that should be followed in the lead-up to the WCDR.

**Targets and time-frames:** On the issue of setting targets and time-frames at the WCDR, India cautioned against quantifiable targets, and Australia expressed concern about including global targets that were too burdensome in terms of the resources required. Australia added that this might hinder the implementation of WCDR outcomes for some countries, noting the burden that "heavily prescriptive" language might impose, particularly on smaller States. While some countries might wish to set time-bound targets, he cautioned that these should be "realistic" and "practicable." With Fiji, he said targets should take into account countries' specific circumstances. Canada, supported by the US, suggested encouraging voluntary rather than obligatory targets.

UNDP supported a "set of objectives and priority actions with concrete and measurable targets" that identifies responsibility for implementation and establishes appropriate time-frames. However,



he said this should take into account countries' and other actors' capacities and circumstances. The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) supported practical targets. Sweden suggested that the draft programme of action include clear targets, which in turn would enable countries to report on progress and implementation after the WCDR. Japan favored practical measures to implement the WCDR's outcomes, and El Salvador suggested the use of indicators to prioritize actions to implement WCDR outcomes. The FAO added that clear objectives, priorities, frameworks and indicators are the keys to effective implementation.

**Commitments and obligations:** Brazil noted that, while each country bears the responsibility to assess its own vulnerabilities and respond to disasters, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities applies. She highlighted developed countries' obligations under the UNFCCC and other treaties to provide financial and technical assistance, and said the WCDR's programme of action should reflect this commitment.

The UK supported strengthening the proposed text of the draft programme of action, expressing concern that it "steps back from the level of commitment made at the Yokohama conference." She called for text to bolster implementation of the ISDR.

**Reporting requirements:** A number of speakers raised the issue of the reporting requirements to help monitor progress in implementing any agreements reached at the WCDR. India argued that any reporting requirement should not be too onerous, since countries are already overburdened in this respect. Brazil added that this applies in particular to developing countries. Norway underlined the need for a set of indicators to assess and monitor risk reduction. The FAO said the framework and scope of work of the IATF should be clarified for the purpose of follow-up and monitoring.

**Linkages with other multilateral processes and agreements:** Several countries, including the UK, Germany, Sweden, Bangladesh and Nigeria, supported aligning the WCDR outcomes with broader development processes. These included the MDGs, JPOI, and the Johannesburg Declaration. The Dominican Republic suggested including a reference to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Mozambique drew attention to linkages with the UNFCCC, suggesting that it could provide opportunities for partnerships with financial institutions and development agencies.

Many countries discussed SIDS-related issues and the ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action, scheduled to take place in Mauritius in January 2005. Papua New Guinea, Belize and Barbados highlighted linkages and synergies with the SIDS process and the special case of SIDS with regard to vulnerability and resilience. Belize supported special provisions for SIDS in the WCDR programme of action. Trinidad and Tobago said a clear link was needed in the follow-up to the two processes. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) welcomed the linkage between the WCDR and SIDS processes. He also encouraged the realignment of the programme of action to address gaps and opportunities identified in the review of the Yokohama Strategy.

**Financial issues:** Bangladesh said commitments made at the WCDR should be accompanied by the resources to implement them, and suggested drafting a separate section on financial mobili-

zation. Kenya and Bolivia expressed hope for further support to developing countries after the WCDR, and Cambodia argued that donor support for disaster reduction should be secured as a priority. Germany informed participants that it dedicates 10% of its aid to disaster reduction and that investment in disaster reduction should be considered a cost-effective option. Barbados suggested strengthening links to the UNFCCC's financing mechanism, the Global Environment Facility, and engaging the private sector. Jordan urged support for developing countries to help cope with natural disasters. Zambia called for both public and private institutions and investors to help developing countries build their capacities in disaster reduction.

Uganda and Nepal emphasized the particular needs of LDCs and called for the inclusion of text supporting LDCs as an objective in the draft programme of action. Uganda noted the need to strengthen LDCs' national platforms and the role of the ISDR in this regard. Nepal stressed the importance of supporting developing countries through the mobilization of resources to assist in disaster risk reduction.

**Capacity building:** Noting that countries' capacities to cope with disasters can vary significantly, Morocco supported strengthening developing countries' capacities, and proposed periodic intergovernmental meetings following the WCDR to monitor progress on implementation.

UNDP observed serious shortcomings with respect to many developing countries' national capacities, and suggested that a major commitment was required by the UN system, complemented by member States. Indonesia stressed the need for capacity building to reduce vulnerability. Nigeria supported sharing technical knowledge with developing countries, and cooperation among regional organizations in generating and sharing information on disaster risk management.

**Regional issues:** Iran underscored the important role of regional cooperation in disaster management. Bangladesh stated that regional partnerships should be promoted and Germany supported specific references in the text to regional initiatives. Nepal and Mexico underscored the role of regional organizations and institutions in risk management. Greece emphasized the importance of agreeing on common terminology for disaster risk reduction to ensure effective cross-border cooperation.

Ecuador presented the outcomes of a regional preparatory workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean held in September 2004, which included recommendations to:

- take into account the WCDR's thematic meetings;
- integrate disaster risk reduction policies in development planning;
- facilitate debt exchange or reduction in the region;
- acknowledge the responsibility of industrialized nations in the increasing number of man-made hazards;
- request a specific focus on disasters resulting from the most critical hazards in the region; and
- reinforce the inclusion of consistent risk reduction in public and private investment policies.

Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador and a number of other speakers endorsed the outcomes of this workshop.





Cambodia drew attention to a regional workshop it had hosted on disaster reduction in February 2004. Sudan supported a focus on regional and subregional cooperation on disaster prevention and impact mitigation. Underscoring the need for regional and subregional workshops and seminars, he expressed his country's willingness to host this type of event.

Fiji emphasized Pacific Island countries' vulnerability and need for international assistance. With Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, he said sufficient time should be set aside at the WCDR to ensure that SIDS' specific concerns and needs are reflected in the WCDR outcomes.

**Early warning systems:** The Philippines urged more detail on the enhancement of a culture of prevention, placing added emphasis on pre-disaster activities like risk assessment and early warning systems. The Czech Republic, Colombia, New Zealand and Nigeria agreed that the draft text should give greater attention to early warning systems. New Zealand and Greece added that early warning systems are critical to the technical aspects of risk reduction. Germany proposed building on the outcomes of the Second Early Warning Conference held in October 2003. The Russian Federation said the draft programme of action should make more specific reference to disaster prevention and the use of new technologies. The EC called for the development of instruments for early warning, supporting improved hazard forecasting and risk management. Indonesia favored hazard mapping.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) also underscored the need to strengthen early warning systems and risk assessment, and emphasized the economic benefits of investing in early warning. He noted the WMO's commitment to the WCDR follow-up process through its Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme, and the WMO target to halve the ten-year average in fatalities from meteorological, hydrological and climate-related disasters for the period 2010-2019.

**Scope of WCDR discussions:** Several countries, including the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation, preferred to go beyond natural hazards and also address man-made or technological issues. Trinidad and Tobago supported considering climate change and other non-natural hazards, and Nepal favored consideration of anthropogenic hazards. However, Iran argued that the WCDR should concentrate on natural hazards.

**Format of the WCDR:** On the format and organization of the WCDR, the US supported a proposal from the UK seeking a practical approach to the number of thematic sessions, and suggested reducing the number of speakers. However, he preferred retaining all the topics on the proposed agenda.

**Information sharing:** Canada, Sweden and Kenya said the WCDR should focus on the sharing of best practices and take a practical approach. Canada added that this sharing of lessons learned should be conducted within existing mandates and organizations. Iran emphasized the critical role of sharing lessons learned and information in risk reduction. Greece underlined the need to understand the ways communities address risks.

**Other issues:** Among the other issues raised relating to the draft programme of action, South Africa and Zambia proposed that the WCDR reflect the significant impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa on communities' resilience to disasters. South

Africa also suggested text urging the inclusion of disaster risk reduction components into post-conflict reconstruction programmes.

India highlighted several issues for inclusion in the draft programme of action, including disaster preparedness, volunteering, search and rescue training, and public awareness. Mexico suggested specific amendments to the draft programme of action on text referring to technical capacity, resource availability, territorial integrity, and programmes to reintegrate ex-combatants into civil life. Bangladesh and Peru called for text on food security. Peru added that priority should be given to safeguarding hospitals and health-service infrastructure from natural hazards.

New Zealand urged language on the importance of good governance in risk reduction, and the EC supported the integration of disaster reduction policies into wider development strategies.

Turkey indicated that the draft reflected most of its particular concerns, and highlighted the issue of disaster preparedness and vulnerability to earthquakes. UNITAR supported the use of earth observations and other relevant satellite applications, and noted plans to hold a thematic session on the issue during the WCDR. Trinidad and Tobago stressed the importance of information and communication, suggesting text on information and communication technologies and a reference to the World Summit on the Information Society.

Sweden, supported by Canada, proposed including a reference to equal gender participation as well as age balance in the preamble of the draft programme of action. Colombia and the UK raised the issue of community participation in disaster reduction initiatives. Ukraine called for enhanced cooperation in disaster reduction and prevention.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A DRAFTING COMMITTEE:** On the issue of further preparations for the WCDR, India suggested establishing an open-ended drafting committee to work on the programme of action if delegates were unable to finalize the text at this meeting. The UK welcomed the idea of a drafting committee, and Indonesia said it should begin its work as soon as possible.

Chair Escudero noted agreement to establish a drafting committee to advance the work on the draft programme of action. John Horekens read out the draft terms of reference for the drafting committee, which Chair Escudero said would be finalized by the Bureau. He noted that Marco Ferrari (Switzerland) had been selected to Chair the drafting committee. He also explained that the drafting committee will be open-ended and will hold its first meeting on a date to be determined by Chair Ferrari. He indicated that discussions will be based on a new draft of the programme of action that will incorporate comments received during this second session of the Preparatory Committee. The revised draft will be circulated to participants before the first meeting of the drafting committee.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Sálvano Briceño thanked participants for their contributions and noted the Secretariat's ongoing commitment to the WCDR process. He hoped that the WCDR's outcomes would be productive, meaningful and significant.



John Horekens observed that the meeting had generated significant and valuable material, and thanked participants for their support.

Chair Escudero provided an overview of the outcomes of the second session of the Preparatory Committee and thanked participants for their contributions. He noted that the third and final session of the Preparatory Committee will be held in January 2005, at a date to be determined. He closed the meeting at 5:41 pm.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

**17TH ANNUAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONFERENCE:** This conference will take place from 25-27 October 2004, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. For more information, contact: Conference Secretariat; tel +1-604-665-6097; fax: +1-604-654-0623; e-mail: [info@epconference.ca](mailto:info@epconference.ca); Internet: <http://www.epconference.ca>

**INTERNATIONAL ALL-RISK SYMPOSIUM:** This symposium will be held from 26-28 October 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland, US. For more information, contact: Audrey Kindred; Oklahoma State University; OSU/FPP; tel: +1-405-744-2919; fax: +1-405-744-2929; e-mail: [coordinator@osu-iars.org](mailto:coordinator@osu-iars.org); Internet: <http://www.osu-iars.org>

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS 52ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE:** This conference will be held from 5-11 November 2004, in Dallas, Texas, US. For more information, contact: Beth Armstrong; tel: +1-703-538-1795; fax: +1-703-241-5603; e-mail: [info@iaem.com](mailto:info@iaem.com); Internet: <http://www.iaem.com>

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION:** The conference and exposition will be held from 17-20 November 2004, in San Diego, California, US. For more information, contact: Stephen Schuldenfrei; tel: +1-301-354-1813; fax: +1-301-340-7136; e-mail: [sschuldenfrei@accessintel.com](mailto:sschuldenfrei@accessintel.com); Internet: <http://www.emergencyresponseshow.com>

**FIRST ANNUAL CANADIAN RISK AND HAZARDS SYMPOSIUM – RISK REDUCTION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP:** This symposium will meet from 18-20 November 2004, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. For more information, contact: CRHNet Secretariat; tel: +1-204-474-8954; fax: +1-204-261-0038; e-mail: [crhnet@ms.umanitoba.ca](mailto:crhnet@ms.umanitoba.ca); Internet: <http://www.crhnet.ca>

**COPING WITH RISKS DUE TO NATURAL HAZARDS IN THE 21ST CENTURY:** This workshop will meet from 28 November to 3 December 2004, in Ascona, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Stefanie Dannenmann; tel: +41-81-417-02-01; fax: +41-81-417-08-23; e-mail: [cenat@slf.ch](mailto:cenat@slf.ch); Internet: <http://www.cenat.ch>

**HAZARDS 2004 – TENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED HAZARDS AND THIRD WORKSHOP OF THE INTERNATIONAL**

**UNION OF GEODESY AND GEOPHYSICS COMMISSION ON GEOPHYSICAL RISK AND SUSTAINABILITY:** This symposium will be held from 2-4 December 2004, in Hyderabad, India. For more information, contact: Conference Secretariat; tel: +91-40-23434700; fax: +91-40-23434651; e-mail: [sec-loc@hazards2004.org](mailto:sec-loc@hazards2004.org); Internet: <http://www.hazards2004.org>

**TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC (COP-10):** UNFCCC COP-10 will be held from 6-17 December 2004, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DAM ENGINEERING:** This conference will meet from 8-20 December 2004, in Nanjing, China. For more information, contact: Qingwen Ren; tel: +86-25-3787781; fax: +86-25-3739219; e-mail: [qingwenren@yeah.net](mailto:qingwenren@yeah.net); Internet: <http://www.dam04.com>

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON WATER AND DISASTERS:** This workshop will be held from 13-14 December 2004, in London, Ontario, Canada. For more information, contact: Sandra Doyle; tel: +1-519-661-3234; fax: +1-519-661-4273; e-mail: [sdoyle@uwo.ca](mailto:sdoyle@uwo.ca); Internet: [http://www.iclr.org/pdf/First\\_Announcement\\_2004.pdf](http://www.iclr.org/pdf/First_Announcement_2004.pdf)

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION:** The International Meeting is scheduled to take place from 10-14 January 2005, in Port Louis, Mauritius. For more information, contact: Diane Quarless, UNDSO, SIDS Unit; tel: +1-212-963-4135; fax: +1-917-367-3391; e-mail: [Mauritius2004@sidsnet.org](mailto:Mauritius2004@sidsnet.org); Internet: <http://www.sidsnet.org>

**WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION:** The WCDR will meet from 18-22 January 2005, in Kobe-Hyogo, Japan. For more information, contact: UN/ISDR Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-2529; fax: +41-22-917-0563; e-mail: [isdr@un.org](mailto:isdr@un.org); Internet: <http://www.unisdr.org>

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