



**Report of  
the Workshop on Plans for ISDR  
Early Warning Platform and Program**

**Marshall Room, Haus Carstanjen, United Nations Campus, Bonn  
12-13 February 2004**

1. The workshop was convened by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UN/ISDR) to follow up on the recommendations of the Second Early Warning Conference (EWC-II) concerning an expanded and sustained dialogue on the use of early warning to reduce disasters, particularly to provide advice on the nature, mandate and activities of an ISDR early warning platform to support this dialogue. There remains an identified to follow up on EWC'98, EWC-II and beyond.
2. Guidance material for the meeting, providing background information, a list of participants and the initial agenda for the meeting, may be found in Annex I.
3. Papers presented to the meeting included a paper on the purpose of the Workshop and a suggested agenda; the summary output documents of EWC-II; a briefing paper on the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), 18-22 January, Kobe-Hyogo, Japan; and draft material from the project proposal for the platform currently being prepared by the ISDR Secretariat. The workshop also heard a briefing on the outcomes of the Workshop on Early Warning Systems: Do's and Don'ts, Shanghai, China, 20-23 October and its planned follow-up activities.
4. Opening comments from the organizers and the participants related the historical origins of the platform and noted the need to develop greater clarity in the functions, timing and capacities of the early warning platform and better integration of global and regional needs, with a special focus on Africa and drought in particular. Progress toward developing an ISDR platform capacity in Bonn was described.
5. The overall purpose of the platform was agreed to be to build on the momentum and interest generated by EWC-II to create a sustainable process to integrate early warning as an effective part of socio-economic development, with particular emphasis on the recommendations of the conference. Meeting participants emphasized the need for the platform to produce practical, concrete results.

6. Specific suggestions included the needs to explore synergies with other Bonn-based institutions such as the UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security, the UN climate change and desertification secretariats.
7. The Workshop covered ground in identifying what would be some of the expectations of major actors and stakeholders of the platform, what would be the functions of such a platform and identified specific priority activities to be carried out. Finally participants discussed the role of the platform in facilitating the early warning inputs into the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), 18-22 January, Kobe-Hyogo, Japan.
8. The views of the workshop will inform the development of the platform project proposal being prepared and will guide the approach and activities of the platform once set up. Current expectations are that up to 500,000 euros per year will be available for 4 years as core funding, although the platform may also seek additional resources for specific activities. The participants were informed that staff will be based in Bonn by the middle of the year and will aim to draw in other partners over time. For example, an application for a UN Junior Professional Officer has already made. Other institutions will be invited to place visitors, secondments and interns.
9. Participants agreed that about three staff would be needed initially in Bonn to support the activities of the platform. The team would focus on coordination and facilitation rather than project implementation, and would need to work closely with and through existing institutions and partner organization in order to achieve the intended goals, and would need to make good use of consultants when appropriate.
10. The meeting concurred that the platform would require an advisory committee mechanism to link it to its major stakeholders and help guide its work. It was agreed that further thought was needed to ensure that this mechanism was tailored to the platform's specific needs and was in harmony with existing contexts of institutional guidance. The ISDR Secretariat was requested to develop a suitable mechanism and terms of reference.
11. It was agreed that a broad range of stakeholders needed to be involved in the platform from many sectors, including from UN institutions, academic, NGO community, local authorities etc., although the first stakeholders to be involved should be those that are specially interested and want to be actively involved. The platform should differentiate between stakeholders and partners; stakeholders are those who have a stake in early warning and platform goals, while partners are those who engage in specific joint activities to support the platform. Partners are a subset of the stakeholders.
12. The participants discussed the use of the term "platform" and agreed that the meaning needed to be better defined and articulated, including to emphasize its role of facilitating coordination and action. The scope of the platform should be global and based within the UN, but it was agreed that its activities do not have to be only international and can be carried out at other levels, depending on resources and priorities of the ISDR.
13. The workshop identified many potential areas of activities, as listed in Annex II. It was recognized that these (and other ideas) would need to be prioritized and accorded time

frames in due course as the platform's work program became established. The main general areas of work for the platform were seen to be:

- i. Information compilation and dissemination, particularly as an initial step toward establishing an initial base of credibility and recognition for the platform.
  - ii. Identification of best practices and standards in early warning, developing guidelines for implementation of early warning and for its integration into policy processes, and monitoring progress thereon.
  - iii. Networking and partnership support, including promotion and support of early warning in policy contexts.
14. In the first year (2004) the two overall priorities were agreed to be (1) to get the platform up and running with some visible products and activities, and (2) to actively support the input of early warning perspectives to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR). It was recognized that it was a big job to get a new entity developed and that the platform should be realistic about what can be achieved.
  15. There was some uncertainty among participants about whether the platform should attempt to coordinate a special session by early warning partners at the WCDR; it was agreed that it was desirable to have a good early warning impact at the conference, but some doubts existed about whether the platform could pull this off.
  16. The workshop discussed the idea of developing policy targets as part of the program document that is expected to result from the WCDR, but it was clear that more thought and work was required to generate these.
  17. It was agreed that the ISDR Secretariat would follow up on the recommendations of the workshop, both with a view to long-term needs and short-term results and products, the latter being essential to keep up the momentum. The Secretariat through the early warning platform will continue to build linkages with partners and a strong team to support the implementation of the early warning program set out at the EWC-II. It will use these linkages with other institutions and partners to develop specific activities to support early warning development. These will be set out in an annual work plan.
  18. The Secretariat thanked the participants for their contributions and said it would continue to keep them informed of progress. The support of the UNV hosts in supporting the meeting was also gratefully acknowledged.

## **Annex I: Workshop guidance: background, participants and initial agenda**

### **Background**

This meeting is the next step in the process initiated by the Second Conference on Early Warning (EWC-II), held in Bonn, 16-18 October, 2003, to develop an expanded dialogue and programme of action on early warning of disasters – encompassing all aspects including awareness, policy, community engagement and technical capacities.

EWC-II provided a strong framework of directions for the programme including the need for a platform to support the dialogue and programme. Since then the ISDR Secretariat with the support of the German Government has taken steps toward developing an organizational capacity in Bonn, and this is expected to become operational in the next quarter. An important task now is to elaborate the platform's modalities, principles and practical activities.

### **Purpose and format of workshop**

The Workshop will consider and provide guidance to the ISDR Secretariat on options and priorities concerning the following matters:

- The role of the platform in supporting stakeholders and their programmes, and in stimulating the broader programme on early warning sought by EWC-II
- Specific platform activities and services, and particularly the activities necessary to capitalize on the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, January 18-22, 2005
- Networking, partnerships and advisory mechanisms

The format will be that of a workshop, identifying issues and options and seeking to refine these toward specifics and priorities. Sessions will be recorded as appropriate on flip charts, and breakout groups will be employed to deal with particular topics. Formal presentations will not be required of participants, except for those noted in the programme. However, on some topics 5-minute informal briefings may be desirable. UN/ISDR Secretariat staff will take notes and will assist the workshop in the preparation of a report of the meeting, most of which we hope will be finalized during the workshop.

### **Participants**

The workshop participants have been drawn from a pool of key leaders and participants in the EWC-II and members of the former IATF/DR Working Group on Early Warning. Those invited, and the status of their participation, are as follows.

**Kenneth Davidson**, World Meteorological Organization, Switzerland, Davidson\_K@gateway.wmo.ch,

**Johann Goldammer**, Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC), Germany, jggold@uni-freiburg.de

**Michael Glantz**, National Center for Atmospheric Research, USA, glantz@atd.ucar.edu, jan@ucar.edu

**Henri Josserand**, FAO, Italy, Henri.Josserand@fao.org

**Erich Plate**, Karlsruhe University, German, erich.plate@bau-verm.uni-karlsruhe.de

**Katharina Thywissen**, Geosciences Consultants, France, k.thywissen@hotmail.com,

**Le-Huu Ti**, Water Resources Section, Environment and Sustainable Development Division  
UNESCAP, Thailand, ti.unescap@un.org

**Etsuko Tsunozaki**, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Japan, tsunozaki@adrc.or.jp (alternate to ADRC Director, Satoru Nishikawa)

**Juan Carlos Villagrán**, consultant, VILLATEK, Guatemala, villatek@hotmail.com

**Seth Vordzorgbe**, consultant, Ghana, sethov@hotmail.com

**Karl-Otto Zentel**, German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV), Germany, zentel@dkkv.org,

**Jochen Zschau**, GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam, Germany, zschau@gfz-potsdam.de, (Uncertain yet if able to attend)

The head of the new Bonn-based UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security, Janos Bogardi, bogardi@ehs.unu.edu, has been invited to address the meeting, and Peter Platte, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Berlin, will be able to join the meeting for a time.

Those unable to attend are Robyn Betts, Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner, Australia, Robyn.J.Betts@justice.vic.gov.au; Norberto Fernandez, United Nations Environment Programme, Kenya, norberto.fernandez@unep.org; Maureen Fordham, University of Northumbria, United Kingdom, maureen.fordham@northumbria.ac.uk; Slobodan Simonovic, Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR), Canada, simonovic@uwo.ca. Workshop documents will be circulated to these colleagues.

The workshop will be supported by the following ISDR Secretariat staff.  
 Sálvano Briceño, Director, UN/ISDR, Switzerland, briceno@un.org  
 Reid Basher, Senior Advisor, UN/ISDR, Switzerland, reid.basher@un.org  
 John Harding, Programme Officer, UN/ISDR, harding@un.org

#### Agenda and documents

A draft workshop agenda with sessions and suggested chairs is given below (draft of 2 February). This is open to revision and change at any time. It can be adjusted over the two days to suit our needs. The workshop will start at 11am on Thursday 12 February and will conclude at 3pm on Friday 13 February. Please refer to <http://www.ewc2.org> for the three documents that resulted from EWC-II, especially the Early Warning Programme document (see list at bottom of the web page). Copies also will be available at the workshop. The Secretariat will also table a draft document describing plans and progress so far on the development of the ISDR Secretariat organizational capacity in Bonn, and a briefing document on the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

*[Note: The agenda actually followed was not as closely structured as this draft.]*

<b>Thursday, 12 February</b>		
Time	Topic	Suggested Chairs
11.00	<u>Session 1: Setting the scene</u> Welcome (Sálvano Briceño), introductions, and purpose of the workshop, logistics.	Karl-Otto Zentel
11.30	Review of the context, outputs and promise of the Second International Conference on Early Warning (EWC-II), plus briefing by M Glantz on Shanghai meeting.	Karl-Otto Zentel
12.30	Lunch break (a cafeteria service is available)	
2.00	<u>Session 2: The wider view of EW</u> Briefing by Janos Bogardi on UNU-EHS and its potential role in respect to the EW Platform	Mickey Glantz
2.10	Discussion of the wider view of EW: extending beyond conventional hazards and their timeframes, but also setting reasonable bounds to the platform's focus.	Mickey Glantz
3.00	<u>Session 3: Partnerships and WCDR</u> What the major actors/stakeholders want from the platform, and what the platform need of them.	Henri Josserand
3.45	Briefing on World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Jan 18-22, Kobe, Hyogo, and discussion on how the EW	Henri Josserand

	community can contribute to and gain from the preparatory processes and the Conference	
4.30	Breakout groups to identify and propose specific activities to support (i) preparatory processes, (ii) the Conference, and (iii) content for Programme of Action (e.g. EW targets.).	Reid Basher
5.30	Groups report back and discussion thereon	Reid Basher
6.00	Dinner, campus cafeteria (see details below)	
7.30	<u>Session 4: Envisioning the future</u> Envisioning of future platform, what it will look like in 5 years - modes of operation and partnerships, concrete things delivered, targets achieved, etc. Open brainstorming with inputs developed over dinner!	Seth Vordzorgbe
8.30	Distillation of envisioning - implications for plans and action by platform and partners	Seth Vordzorgbe
9.00	Conclusion and wrap up of the day. Taxis or walk to hotels	Reid Basher
	<b>Friday, 13 February</b>	
Time	Topic	Leader/Chair
9.00	<u>Session 5: Measuring up</u> Review of previous day. Report draft. Plan for current day	Katharina Thwyssen
9.15	Benchmarking – a methodology	Katharina Thwyssen
9.25	Quantitative approaches – assessing the value of early warning, cost/benefit analysis, practical benchmarks and their implementation.	Katharina Thwyssen
9.45	Break out groups to define action on quantitative approaches, with reference to the guidance laid out in the EW-II programme documents	Reid Basher
10.30	Groups report back and discussion thereon	
11.00	<u>Session 6: Products</u> Products to support EW – publications, guidelines, indexes, website, newsletters, databases, etc – what are the priorities?	Ken Davidson
12.30	Lunch break (a cafeteria service is available)	
1.30	<u>Session 7: All wired up</u> Maintaining networking and supporting the dialogue. Regionalization of platforms. Linkages to national entities and national platforms for disaster risk reduction. Promoting EW in UN and other forums.	Le-Huu Ti
2.00	Linkages to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR). Advisory mechanisms	Le-Huu Ti
2.30	Summary of workshop, review of available report materials, concluding remarks	Sálvano Briceño
3.00	Closure	

## **Annex II: Potential platform activities proposed at the workshop**

This annex captures the many important potential activities that participants considered the platform could undertake, but without consideration of prioritization or time frames.

### **1. Information compilation and dissemination, particularly to develop a good initial base of credibility for the platform**

- Develop a pamphlet/brochure on the early warning platform brochure to promote its function and activities, with a clear mention of the mission statement and goals extracted from the EWC-II.
- Develop a website to support information compilation, dissemination, and exchange.
- Produce state-of-the-art reports, on themes to be developed by the platform.
- Develop an information collection and dissemination system including metadata and improve the existing database on early warning systems. Explore incentives for inducing partners and countries to contribute to the process.
- Conduct a meeting to review the EW Inventory (currently with DKKV) as an active tool for EW information and monitoring and identify a long-term mechanism to host, maintain and develop it.

### **2. Networking and partnership support**

- Identify existing networks and promoting the platform as a basis for information exchange and dialogue.
- Develop the platform as a forum for monitoring advancements of technique and good practices.
- Encourage the identification and exchange of good and bad practices.
- Facilitate development and linkages between local, national and regional networks.
- Stimulate links to regional networks and establish platform as the prime mover at the global level.
- Establish criteria for various networks to be involved in the program.
- Identify good practice in early warning networks such as TEMPUS.

### **3. Development of knowledge and standards in early warning**

- Promote and facilitate mechanisms through which good practices on early warning systems are identified and exchanged.
- Compile information on procedures, blueprints and success stories.
- Promote standardization of early warning processes, and develop glossaries, standard terms, and reference lists.
- Collect and document standard methods based on good (and bad) practices, assess them and develop systematic guidelines and blueprints for the design and development of early warning systems. A specific group should be identified to do that.
- Coordinate an on-line discussion on early warning system definitions, framework and issues of scale, with a view to identify elements of effective early warning systems.
- Develop methodologies to assess cost-effectiveness of early warning systems.
- Facilitate and review studies on how early warning systems performed following disasters and draw and summarize lessons learned.
- Develop guidelines for the implementation of effective early warning systems.
- Develop guidance in support of necessary policy development for early warning.
- Develop gender-relevant policies and guidelines for early warning.
- Promote research and development on critical or poorly understood features of early warning systems, including on social/communication factors, and for hazards that do not have well-developed forecasting systems such as landslides and new epidemic diseases.
- Promote risk assessment as a key tool for early warning.

#### **4. Monitoring progress in the implementation of early warning systems**

- Promote internationally accepted standards for the implementation and monitoring of effective early warning systems, as appropriate to different situations and types of systems.
- Develop guidelines for assessing system effectiveness.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) manual for practitioners.
- Based on the recommendations of the EWC-II, establish milestones and benchmarking, and encourage countries to develop their own monitoring capacity, using regional mechanism for support.
- Support the integration of standards and targets into policy processes.

#### **5. Specific activities in preparation of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR)**

- Translate and disseminate EWC-II outcomes and policy guidelines.
- Produce promotional material for the early warning platform.
- Run an information stand at the conference.
- Look into the opportunity of organizing a side event at the WCDR.
- Run an awareness creation drama session (e.g. by Japanese theatre groups).
- Ensure that WCDR processes, including the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action and updated Living with Risk publication, make good use of EWC-II documents (including compilation of regional findings).
- Assist in ensuring early warning experience is properly addressed in the summary of findings of the current national reviews of risk reduction for the WCDR.
- Other specific questions to be developed at Kobe: can early warning be an ongoing education activity for communities? What is the balance of responsibility between governments and communities for early warning? How can early warning and DRR be integrated into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)? These issues could be drafted as targets.