



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

**Timeline of developments of relevance to  
the Early Warning Conference II (EWC-II)**

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- 22 Dec 1989** Adoption of the United Nations *General Assembly resolution 44/236* by which the Decade was proclaimed. Special attention was given to the establishment of early warning systems. Targets to be attained by all countries by 2000, as part of their plans to achieve sustainable development, included ready access to global, regional, national and local warning systems and broad dissemination of warnings.
- 1990 – 2000** *International Decade for Disaster Reduction* commenced. Early warning was an important focus of its attention.
- 14 Jun 1992** *Agenda 21* was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.
- 23-27 May 1994** *Yokohama World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction* convened. This resulted in the *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World*. The resulting Strategy for the year 2000 and beyond included the need for improved risk assessment, broader monitoring and communication of forecasts and early warnings. It also emphasized community-based approaches and participation of people in disaster reduction, prevention and preparedness to improve risk management. One of its Principles states that early warnings and their effective dissemination are key factors to successful disaster prevention and preparedness.
- 9 Oct 1995** *Secretary General report A/50/526* provides a review on early warning capacities of the United Nations system with regard to natural disasters. It states that early warning is a universally pursued and self-evident objective in determining disaster reduction strategies.
- 3 Nov 1997** *Secretary General report A/52/561*. The 1997 report on improved effectiveness of early warning systems with regard to natural and similar disasters contains important elements on the further development of disaster reduction strategies, including early warning systems.
- 1997** Publication of the *Guiding Principles for effective early warning*, which are accompanied by principles for the application of early warning at the national and local community levels and Principles for early warning systems at the international and regional levels.

- 7-11 Sep 1998**      The *International Conference on Early Warning Systems for the Reduction of Natural Disasters (EWC'98)*, in Potsdam, Germany, confirmed early warning as a core component of national and international prevention strategies for the 21st century. It identified accomplishments and experiences best suited to improve organizational relationships and practical effectiveness for early warning into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and major strengths and weaknesses in early warning capacities around the world. It stressed that effective early warning depends upon a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration among all concerned actors. Although based on scientific and technology, early warning must be tailored to serve people's needs, their environments, and their resources. Its conclusions are used as a basis for early warning activities.
- 9-13 Nov 1998**      *International Seminar on the 1997-1998 El Niño Phenomenon: Evaluation and Projections*, Guayaquil, Ecuador. This meeting reviewed this major event and made concrete recommendations on the predictability and warning of El Niño events, disaster response plans and mitigation strategies.
- Jul 1999**              The strategy *A Safer World in the Twenty-First Century: Risk and Disaster Reduction* and the *Geneva Mandate on Disaster Reduction* were adopted at the *IDNDR Programme Forum*, the closing event of the decade. Relevant elements of the strategy include community participation and increase of partnership activities, improvement of early warning capacities and establishment of early warning systems as integrated processes, with particular attention to emerging hazards such as climate change. Regional and international approaches and collaborative and organizational arrangements were called for, as well as links with the Agenda 21 implementation process for enhanced synergy with environmental and sustainable development issues.
- 6-8 Jul 1999**        *WMO/UNESCO Sub-Forum on Science and Technology in support of natural disaster reduction* was held. A special contribution to the above Forum was a review of the various way in which science and technology contribute to the disaster reduction process, including the operation of integrated early warning systems. It recognised the advances during the last decade and made recommendations for future actions.
- 1 Jan 2000**          *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)* launched. The successor arrangement of the IDNDR, it inherited two mandated tasks relevant to early warning (i) strengthen disaster reduction capacities through early warning, and (ii) continue international cooperation to reduce the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon. It also aimed at managing risk through the integration of risk reduction into sustainable development.
- 8 Sep 2000**          *Millennium Declaration* was unanimously adopted by the member states of the United Nations. The General Assembly later recognized the *Millennium Development Goals* as core feature for implementing the Millennium Declaration.
- 9-10 Nov 2001**      First meeting of the *ISDR Working Group 2 - Early Warning*, in Nairobi, Kenya

- 19 Dec 2001** The Secretary General's report, *Implementing Agenda 21*, E/CN.17/PC.2/7 refers to disaster prevention and reduction in detail. ISDR presented a background paper entitled *Natural Disasters and Sustainable Development: Understanding the links between development, environment and natural disasters* at WSSD PrepCom 2. This develops elements for the development of policies to reduce vulnerability to disasters, including the need to strengthen global, regional, national and local early warning systems.
- 21 Dec 2001** General Assembly confirms the mandates of the institutional arrangements of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in General Assembly resolution 56/195, paragraphs 3 and 6.
- 21 Dec 2001** *UN General Assembly resolution on the implementation of ISDR (A/56/68)* confirms the importance of early warning to reduce vulnerability. It identifies early warning as a priority area for action and reaffirms the need to strengthen the international framework for the improvement of early warning systems. It endorses the recommendations of the Secretary General with regard to the 10-year review of the Yokohama conference process.
- 11-12 March 2002** *Expert Meeting on Early Warning and Sustainable Development* held in Bonn, Germany under the auspices of the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV), within the framework of the ISDR.
- 24-25 June 2002** Second meeting of *Working Group 2 - Early Warning* held in Potsdam, Germany. The group designated a drafting team (ISDR, DKKV, DMC, CDERA) to develop a proposal for the EWC-II.
- 26 Aug to 4 Sep 2002** The *World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD)* will take place in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002. It will not renegotiate Agenda 21 but will discuss further issues, which have emerged during the past ten years. Coming up with detailed commitments for the implementation of Agenda 21 will be the major challenge of the event. Two outputs are expected, a Plan of Action within the framework of Agenda 21 and regional, sub-regional and inter-regional Initiatives/Commitment/Partnerships