

2.3. Strategic Information for Knowledge Management and Policy Guidance

Strategic guidance on many issues developed by the UN/ISDR secretariat, in collaboration with experts and other ISDR partners, is increasingly being used as 'standards' for DRR matters. The HFA is, of course, the landmark document. Equally, there is a growing use of ISDR terminology cited in many national plans, international documents and academic papers.

The UN/ISDR secretariat developed a number of key guidance documents in 2007, drawing on expertise from countries and agencies, to guide HFA implementation, the ISDR System at different levels, and for thematic or region-specific purposes.

2.3.1. Monitoring, Assessing and Reporting on Risk Status and Progress in HFA Implementation

The HFA calls on the UN/ISDR partners and secretariat to prepare periodic reviews of progress and to identify gaps in implementation. In response, the UN/ISDR secretariat developed a reporting and assessment process, with initial guidance from the Inter-Agency Task Force in 2005, and subsequently by expert groups, online consultations and the June 2007 Global Platform session. In 2007, progress in this direction focused on:

- Improved procedures and standardized methodologies and tools for collecting, measuring and reporting on progress;
- The development of a database to capture and monitor information provided by countries on HFA implementation, building on existing initiatives and capacities of PreventionWeb, as an online reporting platform for DRR and the ISDR System (more details on PreventionWeb are provided below under 2.3.3.); and

- Global assessment reports.

Results include:

- Methodologies and tools: Dissemination of the 'Guidelines for Reporting on Progress on the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action: Measuring Progress in Disaster Risk Reduction' in early 2007 in preparation for the Global Platform session. A guidance document on indicators, benchmarks and reporting – 'Indicators of Progress: Guidance on Measuring the Reduction of Disaster Risks and the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action' - was finalized by the end of 2007.
- The web-based 'HFA Monitor': This tool is part of an online database for national progress reporting on HFA implementation - using learning from previous reporting processes and generic HFA indicators - developed in 2007 by the UN/ISDR secretariat as an ISDR System-wide monitoring and review mechanism. The tool has been available through PreventionWeb country pages since mid-May 2008. The first phase involved a pilot test conducted with 6-8 countries in early 2008 and ISDR System partners in the regions were engaged to assist countries in preparing their national reporting processes. These processes already proved to be useful to articulate multi-stakeholder national platforms and in support of national stock-taking and self assessment to identify gaps and set national priorities and goals.
- Global Review 2007 on DRR: The secretariat presented the draft Global Review 2007 to the first session of the Global Platform in June 2007. It combines an overview of current data on global hazard risk and vulnerability, as well as a trend analysis drawn from national reports on the status of HFA implementation. It concludes with a gap analysis identifying areas which need further



strengthening at country and regional levels for the ISDR System. Oxfam quoted statistics and analysis from the ISDR Global Review 2007 in its 2007 release 'Climate Alarm – Disasters Increase as Climate Change Bites'. The UNDP Human Development Report 2007 on Climate Change also quoted the Global Review 2007.

- The 'Global Assessment Report' (working title only) aims to be a periodic landmark report from the ISDR System to coincide with the sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. It will be based on thorough analysis of achievements and gaps, that will provide a foundation for future priorities and policy on DRR, as well as an important advocacy tool at all levels. It will be developed as an integral part of the ongoing progress monitoring by the ISDR System and UN/ISDR secretariat. UNDP contributes to the report with a Senior Advisor seconded to the UN/ISDR secretariat and with resources to GRIP (Global Risk Indexing Programme) and some country case studies. The World Bank contributes partial resources from the GFDRR, with technical guidance on risk update and with issue input papers. The 2009 edition of the Report will contain:
 - A global risk update, providing a baseline on patterns and trends in global disaster risk against which progress in reducing disaster risk can be assessed;
 - A thematic analysis of a key disaster reduction issue: the 2009 Report will focus on exploring the link(s) between disaster risk and poverty with due attention to urbanisation, climate change, economic growth, capacity development and gender issues; and
 - A review of progress in HFA implementation at all levels, identifying gaps and challenges and providing analysis and guidance for the establishment of ISDR System joint priorities.

The World Bank, the UN/ISDR secretariat, UNEP-GRID, UNDP and university partner institutions began the preparation of a global risk update in the latter part of 2007, based on previous work of the World Bank on 'hotspot countries' and UNDP/UNEP Disaster Reduction Index, among others. This update is carried out under the auspices of the UNDP-hosted Global Risk Indexing Programme (GRIP) and partly funded by UNDP. WMO and UNESCO serve as peer reviewers of hazard data. The work will be ongoing on receipt of funding against pledges. The update and creation of methodologies for hazard modelling includes six types of hazards (namely drought, cyclones, floods, earthquakes, landslides and tsunamis). A series of technical meetings to review interim results for most hazard types being examined were initiated in 2007 and will conclude by mid-2008. Online discussion forums have been set up on the PreventionWeb by the UN/ISDR secretariat since November 2007 for each of the hazard types for selected experts to advise institutions developing methodologies and updating relevant datasets on next steps. Simultaneously, a number of countries with support from UNDP in Asia and Latin America are developing 'case studies' of how risk trends analysis can be usefully applied across national and regional risk contexts with NGO involvement.

The second component of the Global Assessment Report 2009 consists of a thematic analysis of links between poverty reduction and DRR practices. Many technical institutions, the World Bank and UNDP contribute with in-depth studies and issues papers focusing on different angles of this theme.

The third component will draw on national, regional and thematic reporting from national platforms (using the HFA Monitor tool), thematic ISDR platforms and the work of the UN/ISDR secretariat and the ISDR System Joint Work Programme. Distribution of tasks was agreed upon by the different partners in 2007 as well as agreements with them on their contributions.

Regional review processes in 2007

UN/ISDR secretariat regional teams facilitated analysis of DRR capacities and organized and supported regional consultations, partly supported by the GFDRR.

In [Africa](#), the risk reduction status report was ready for publication and provided a first comprehensive description of the current disaster risks in the region as well as a description of the current institutional arrangements and capacity for disaster risk management. It also estimates key institutional capacities and financing gaps at country and regional levels and presents a review of good practices in DRR across the region. The status report serves as a benchmark by countries and development partners.

In [Asia/Pacific](#), the UN/ISDR secretariat supported the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) secretariat in compiling a regional analysis of DRR implementation in Southeast Asia and supported ASEAN member states in preparing national reports. This process also included a joint UN/ISDR, AUSAID (Australian Agency for International Development) and UNESCO/IOC (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) assessment mission to review the

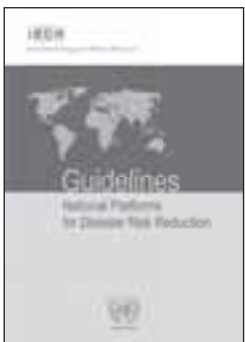
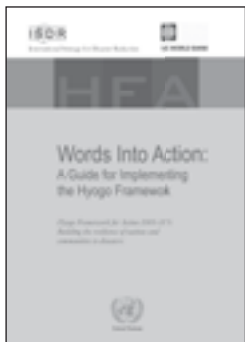
capacity of the Government of East Timor in DRR and tsunami early warning system (TEWS). Subsequent recommendations were presented to the Government of East Timor. A Baseline Status Report on Disaster Reduction in Asia and Pacific, designed to support regional and national resource centres, was drafted in 2007 and a final revised draft will be ready for the Asia Ministerial Conference on DRR in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2008. The report, developed with GFDRR funding together with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), features a collection and analysis of regional data on hazards, vulnerabilities and DRR measures. The report covers approximately 32 countries in East Asia and Pacific, West and Central Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. It provides a benchmark against which partners and countries can monitor, assess and develop indicators for the status of DRR in the region at the start of the HFA decade.

From the [Americas](#), a first regional report and comprehensive risk and action matrix was tabled at the Global Platform in June 2007, compiled by UN/ISDR Americas. It draws from contributions of sub-regional organizations and forums in Central America and the Greater Caribbean.

In [Europe](#), the UN/ISDR secretariat, in collaboration with the German national platform (DKKV), prepared a progress overview report for Europe focusing on institutional frameworks and national platforms in Europe. In addition, with GFDRR support, consultants prepared a 'South Eastern Europe Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Initiative: Risk Assessment for South Eastern Europe Desk Study Review'. While having some methodological challenges compared to GAR methodology, this report serves the region by providing a risk base line to work from.

In [West Asia and North Africa](#) (WANA), the UN/ISDR secretariat, in partnership with the World Bank, initiated a preliminary regional stocktaking of natural hazard risk and disaster management capacity in the Middle East and North Africa in early 2007. This included a regional review of hazards and risks in the region as well as a Middle East and North Africa Regional Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction and Natural Hazard Risk Management held in Cairo from 18 to 21 April 2007. The outcome of the regional review, which was presented to the Cairo Workshop as well as to the first session of the Global Platform, served as input to the Global Review 2007 and reflected the overall picture of hazard risk and DRR in the region.

2.3.2. Generating and Documenting Knowledge for Policy Guidance



On the initiative of John Holmes, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Chair of the Global Platform, an “Assessment on the Economics of Disaster Risk Reduction” has been commissioned jointly by the World Bank and UN/ISDR secretariat and supported by GFDRR. The assessment aims to evaluate economic arguments related to DRR through providing an analytical, conceptual and empirical examination of related themes. The assessment intends to provide effective policy guidance for disaster risk management to ensure development gains in low and middle-income countries prone to disasters. The UN/ISDR secretariat prepared for the consultations and initial draft outlines of the study in 2007, created a workspace on PreventionWeb to support the assessment, collected relevant literature in the workspace, and established a relationship with partners such as IIASA and CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters). The World Bank identified the lead economist, who was engaged in January 2008. Many high-profile economists are associated with the assessment. The economic assessment will also draw on relevant studies prepared for the Global Assessment Report 2009 and will be released in the latter part of 2009. Interim results include the results from two seminars exploring the economic challenges for the impact of climate change and links to DRR conducted at the World Bank in early 2008.

Related to the same subject, the UN/ISDR secretariat commissioned a working paper on costs and benefits for disaster reduction for the Global Platform session (see www.unisdr.org/WCDR).

In 2007, the UN/ISDR secretariat also contributed to a book on economic impact from disasters coordinated by CRED, which will be published in 2008. This book mainly targets students and an academic audience and is complementary to the economic assessment. In summary, the UN/ISDR secretariat produced a series of guidance

material and policy notes to orient the main priorities of 2007 (some of them referred to elsewhere in this Report) as outlined below and available on the UN/ISDR secretariat’s web site (www.unisdr.org):

- 'Towards an ISDR System Planning Framework': a document prepared for clarifying roles and relations among all the whole components of the ISDR System in planning processes and for supporting the coordination role of the Global Platform. This served as the basis for the ISDR System global-level Joint Work Programme process with the ISDR Inter-Agency Group.
- Policy Note on Thematic Platforms to set out criteria for the induction of entities and to outline the process for initiating and maintaining thematic platforms.
- A consultation version of a draft guidance note on 'Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into CCA (Common Country Assessment)/ UNDAF' developed with UNDP and other agencies, and shared with key partners for supporting the efforts of the UN for mainstreaming DRR at country level (draft 2006 prepared jointly with UNDP).
- The 'Guidelines for national platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction', revised at a meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, in October 2006 by 14 national platforms and other national coordinating authorities from all continents, with participation from UNDP-BCPR and OCHA that were gathered for the first time. The UN/ISDR secretariat translated, published and widely disseminated the guidelines into the six UN languages, with Government support.
- 'Words into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework' launched at the June 2007 Global Platform session as HFA implementation guidelines for UN Member States. The UN/ISDR secretariat finalized this policy guidance document in

English, and translated it into Spanish with the help of the Spanish Foundation DARA in 2007, after feedback and consultation process with stakeholders and experts. Each chapter of the revised Guidelines give practical advice on how to manage 22 selected tasks grouped around the five priorities for action of the HFA. Each chapter also includes a set of suggested indicators. The secretariat distributed the guidelines to National Governments worldwide, to HFA focal points and to national platforms for DRR.

- 'Indicators of Progress: Guidance on Measuring the Reduction of Disaster Risks and the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action' (only English in its first version) to help national, regional and international actors measure progress in HFA implementation and DRR. In addition, an expanded and complementary guide on preparedness indicators was developed by an IASC task group, supported by OCHA and the UN/ISDR secretariat, and will be published in 2008.
- 'Drought Risk reduction Framework and Practices: Contributing to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework' was launched in a preliminary version for the Global Platform session as a guide for understanding better drought patterns, vulnerabilities to drought and options to address drought. It discusses drought policies and governance, risk identification and early warning, education and awareness-raising options, and is illustrated with practical examples and background information. A network of drought experts contributed and a revised version will be published in 2008, together with two complementary publications on good practices and policy guidance, in collaboration with the China-based International Drought Reduction Centre.
- Several concept notes and input papers on climate change for disaster risk reduction and climate change in support of the UNFCCC processes (see previous section on climate change).

Regional publications and guidance notes

The region-specific ISDR Informs magazines were produced and disseminated once per year in Africa and Asia/Pacific in 2007, while the Americas published their regular two issues per year.

In Asia/Pacific, a series of 'Technical Notes on Hazard and Disaster Risk Management' was prepared in 2007, targeting policy makers on and practitioners of sustainable development. The technical notes highlight a number of key messages to influence disaster risk-sensitive decision making and they will be published in 2008. UN/ISDR Asia/Pacific spearheaded the preparation of the notes in partnership with experts from Kyoto University (Japan) and ADPC, together with the GFDRR and World Bank team in Southeast Asia. These may be adapted to other regions and sectors in 2008-2009, particularly to target climate change adaptation.

In Africa, information products and background papers for regional meetings were oriented to support advocacy and guidance efforts in priority themes for the region, in particular related to drought, coastal hazards and education. Some of these will be published and disseminated in 2008.

UN/ISDR Americas successfully supported the GFDRR and CEPREDENAC to develop the conceptual basis for a Central American Probabilistic Risk Assessment (CAPRA) tool through workshops, as part of a sub-regional regional consultation. CAPRA promises to develop into a powerful tool to guide decision makers on public investment for DRR in 2008-2009. The first phase will only focus on Nicaragua.

A new book on the 'state of the art' of DRR in the region, presented as a toolkit for Spanish-speaking Latin America - 'Disaster Risk Management Today: Global Contexts, Local Tools' – was published. It is available on UN/ISDR Americas' web site (www.eird.org).

In Europe, several base studies were prepared for South Eastern Europe in 2007 in collaboration between the UN/ISDR secretariat and the World Bank, as an initial phase of the regional programme of the GFDRR in the region. They are available on the regional UN/ISDR website (www.unisdr.org/europe):

- 'South Eastern Europe Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Initiative: Risk Assessment for South Eastern Europe Desk Study Review';
- 'Mitigating the Adverse Financial Effects of Natural Hazards on the Economies of South Eastern Europe: A Study of Disaster Risk Financing Options'; and
- 'Strengthening the Hydro-meteorological Services in South Eastern Europe' (with WMO).

In West Asia and North Africa (WANA) focus in 2007 was given to basic ISDR and DRR material to be translated and disseminated in Arabic. A DIPECHO funded project for Central Asia also provided for the development of school manuals and stories in Russian prepared on the major hazards in that region addressing primary school.

2.3.3 An Information Platform for Disaster Risk

Reduction and the ISDR System: PreventionWeb One priority since long for the UN/ISDR secretariat has been to provide an effective information platform for DRR practitioners and members of the ISDR System, with special relevance for national actors. Following several user surveys and in-house research, a prototype of PreventionWeb (www.preventionweb.net) was launched in June 2007. It aims to provide a common platform for institutions to get connected, exchange experiences and share information on DRR. The system is designed to allow distributed data entry as well as to provide options for content syndication. It is an 'information platform' – an online facility making existing knowledge more widely available and accessible worldwide and providing workspaces for new knowledge brokering, and development and networking.

The site is updated daily, with partners at local, national and international levels being able to use the architecture and list services in an interactive way. A set of databases with expertise, contacts and initiatives is the backbone of the site, as well as country profiles and direct links. It contains news, DRR initiatives, event calendars, online discussions, contact directories, policy and reference documents, training events, jobs, terminology, country profiles, fact sheets as well as audio and video content.

Future functionality includes providing web-based support to established and emerging networks. The development of the site included a detailed study of

user tasks of DRR practitioners as well as national focal points. Information architecture development included several sessions of usability testing with stakeholders. The ISDR virtual library and resource centre are linked to PreventionWeb.

The UN/ISDR secretariat web site (www.unisdr.org) remains the institutional site and is being redesigned in 2008 based on user surveys and compatibility with PreventionWeb. PreventionWeb will feature as the main portal for the ISDR System and generally for DRR practitioners, while it will include the UN/ISDR secretariat's web site with UN/ISDR-specific information and archives. Two sites will be fully integrated by common search engines and databases.

Regional information clearinghouse

As part of the 2006-2007 plans, the secretariat was committed to providing regional information clearinghouse functions to:

- Facilitate identification and exchange of good practices and lessons learned from national implementation;
- Conduct public awareness activities; and
- Maintain regional web information (as part of PreventionWeb) for increasing regional access to regional information and related knowledge on DRR.

All UN/ISDR regional units are actively contributing to PreventionWeb - while also keeping their regional UN/ISDR sites - to post information on

events, publications and organisations. Three UN volunteers were recruited to start, in 2008, to support information collection in Africa, the Americas and Asia/Pacific. In Asia Pacific, an agreement to institutionalize PreventionWeb in the IFRC is also under way. In addition, each UN/ISDR regional unit maintains its own regional website sites/pages: www.eird.org (for the Americas); www.unisdr.org/asiapacific (for Asia/Pacific); www.unisdr.org/africa (for Africa); www.unisdr.org/europe (for Europe); and www.unisdr.org/wana (for the West Asia/North Africa region).

In Latin America, the UN/ISDR regional Unit is developing the 'HFApedia' to support exchange of information and reporting processes on DRR and HFA implementation within the region. HFApedia's main portal (<http://www.eird.org/hfa.html>) is now ready to be promoted as the gateway to HFApedia (for both English and Spanish systems). It is functioning as an interactive system for facilitating information exchange and improving reporting. A tailored-made section for UN Resident Coordinators (RCs)/UN Country Teams (UNCTs) was also developed on the regional pages of the web site.

The UN/ISDR secretariat and PAHO continue to be the most active members in support of the services of the Centre of Disaster Information for Latin America and the Caribbean (CRID), hosted by the National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica (see www.crid.or.cr)

Box 9

PreventionWeb Workspaces in Support of ISDR System Knowledge Development and Networking

The UN/ISDR secretariat is actively engaged in supporting several thematic platforms and networks in disaster risk reduction. The secretariat is providing online communication tools such as facilities to host e-mail groups (listserv) and online workspaces with collaborative tools to facilitate interaction among network members. There are more than 20 e-mail groups - with approximately 2,500 subscribers in various thematic areas - currently hosted by the secretariat through PreventionWeb (www.preventionweb.net). Statistics show that more than 28,000 messages are exchanged between members every month. Most of the e-mail groups are owned and managed by partner organizations. Some of the e-mail groups have very large participation and are extremely active in their day-to-day communication, in particular during the aftermath of major disasters. This is currently happening to promote Safer Schools programming in China following the Sichuan Earthquake, and in Myanmar following the Tropical Cyclone Nargis.



Some of the notable networks are the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative with 124 members; Children, Youth and Disasters Network with 275 members; the Thematic Platform on Knowledge and Education Network with 775 members; Gender-and-Disaster Network with 574 members; the Global NGO Network with 571 members; and the recently established Health and Disaster Reduction Network with 88 members.

In addition, PreventionWeb also supports the ISDR System's own working processes, such as a working group on economics of DRR; several workspaces for the Global Assessment Report 2009 related to different hazards and disaster risk analysis; several peer scientific review groups on earthquakes, floods, cyclones, drought, landslides and tsunamis supported by the UN/ISDR secretariat; a workspace for the ISDR Inter-agency Group in support of joint work programming for the ISDR System; a workspace for the ISDR Support Group; one for the Thematic Knowledge and Education Platform interim organizing committee; and one for public-private partnerships for DRR.

Also in 2007, information management tools and technical assistance on web development were provided into several thematic platforms, such as for the International Recovery Platform in Kobe.



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Sra. JEANNE GOUBA

MINISTRO DA
ADMINISTRAÇÃO INTERNA

Sr. ALCIDIO TAVARES

Sra. NOROARISOA

Sr. LARS BERND