

Terms of Reference
IATF Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Background

Over the last several years, a general consensus has emerged among the scientific community regarding the fact that the earth's climate is changing due in part to anthropogenic factors. While the search for ways to contain the rate of climate change through measures such as reduction of greenhouse gas emissions continues, it is also being recognized that the reductions in emissions over the next several years cannot be achieved at a rate that is sufficient. There is increased emphasis now on anticipating the potential impacts of climate change across various geographical scales, locations and sectors and devising ways and means of adapting to these changes. Hence increasing attention is now being given to enhance adaptive capacities of populations at risk. Referred to as "adaptation" within the climate change community, work in this area has gained prominence over the last five years. A number of conceptual frameworks have been suggested to outline how adaptation might work at different geographical levels and across different sectors.

Meanwhile, the disaster management community has developed over many decades a significant body of knowledge and technique for managing climate related risks associated with natural variability in the climate system especially for the storms, floods, droughts and extreme weather and climate events that are of greatest concern in a change future climate. Hydro-meteorological hazards lie at the heart of about 80% of all disasters. As the discussion on adaptation to climate change moves from a conceptual to a more operational level, it is being recognized that a lot can be gained from this disaster management experience, and equally, that disaster reduction goals can be strengthened by the raised concern about climate change.

Recognizing the need for greater integration between approaches to adaptation to climate change, disaster reduction and sustainable development, the Inter-Agency Task Force of the ISDR at its ninth meeting constituted a Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Reduction. The Working Group is jointly chaired by UNDP and WMO.

2. Objectives

The IATF Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction will advise the IATF and the broader disaster reduction community on the needs to

promote a greater integration between adaptation to climate change, disaster reduction and sustainable development, both at national and international levels.

The WG will review existing institutional mechanisms in the international policy arena to provide recommendations on how to promote an integrated approach to dealing with the climate related risks.

The activities of the WG will build on, and contribute through its findings to existing programs and projects led by different IATF members as well as other partners, the WG itself is not expected to manage projects.

3. **Key activity areas**

The Working Group's timeframe is 2004-2005. Within this period the following activity areas have been identified for the Working Group:

- *Facilitate a process of consultations to develop a Policy Paper on adaptation to climate change, disaster reduction and sustainable development.*

The consultative Policy Paper on inter-linkages between adaptation to climate change and disaster reduction that was initiated under the ISDR framework is now being prepared and supported by the Vulnerability and Adaptation Resources Group (VARG). The Policy Paper is expected to provide guidance to institutions and professionals working at the policy level towards an integrated approach to climate risk management. The Paper will draw upon earlier conceptual work in this area as well as on a series of consultations. The Working Group will facilitate these consultations and draw inputs from these consultations to contribute to the Policy Paper.

- *Prepare a systematic inventory of regional, national and where possible sub-national initiatives that aim at building capacities for adaptation to changing climate extremes.*

Communities around the world are already adapting to climate extremes as well as to local manifestations of climate change. Almost in all parts of the world, a number of national and sub-national initiatives are underway to deal with climate related risks – both associated with natural climate variability as well as change. In addition, there is much relevant activity in the meteorological and disaster management community that is not ordinarily identified as adaptation-related. It is important that the experience of this ongoing work is reflected in the policy formulation process. At the same time an exchange of ideas and experiences amongst these initiatives can be of immense value. A systematic inventory of these initiatives will help facilitate this.

- *Make recommendations at the IATF12 to strengthen the integration between adaptation to climate change and disaster reduction at policy, program design and operational levels through existing institutional mechanisms.*

Based on the two proposed activities above the WG will develop a set of recommendation to be presented and discussed between the IATF members at IATF12.

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