



International Strategy for  
Disaster Reduction

## Announcements

### Linking Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty Reduction

This publication highlights initiatives that have successfully linked poverty reduction and disaster risk reduction and shows how DRR can be integrated into poverty reduction to help reduce the vulnerability of the poor and protect their livelihoods and development gains.

[http://unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/19-Indigenous\\_Knowledge-DRR/Indigenous\\_Knowledge-DRR.pdf](http://unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/19-Indigenous_Knowledge-DRR/Indigenous_Knowledge-DRR.pdf)



### Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction: Good Practices and Lessons Learned from Experiences in the Asia-Pacific Region

Many local communities worldwide have prepared and responded to disasters using indigenous methods passed on from one generation to the next. This publication aims to build awareness for indigenous knowledge as an effective tool for reducing risk from natural hazard-related disasters.

[http://unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/19-Indigenous\\_Knowledge-DRR/Indigenous\\_Knowledge-DRR.pdf](http://unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/19-Indigenous_Knowledge-DRR/Indigenous_Knowledge-DRR.pdf)



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To submit an article or inform us of a new publication, web resource or event, please send your input to: [isdrhighlights@un.org](mailto:isdrhighlights@un.org) by the 20th day of each month.

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# Highlights

August 2008

## APEC agrees on framework to mitigate the impact of natural hazards

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has agreed on a strategic framework to mitigate the impact of natural hazards. Initiated by Peru with support from Australia and Indonesia, the framework focuses on monitoring volcanoes and hydrographic watersheds where the “El Nino” phenomenon is generated. This framework for the “Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness and Response in Asia Pacific region from 2009/2015” was endorsed during the 2nd Emergency Management CEO Seminar 2008 of APEC, 12-14 August, in Lima, Peru. The agreed framework incorporates the Hyogo Framework for Action and is an important step forward in focusing attention on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness in the APEC process. If the proposal is ratified in November at the 16th APEC summit in Lima, Peru, it is expected to enable all 21 APEC member economies to exchange technologies and resources to reduce the impact of disasters and speed up the delivery of aid.

For more information, please contact Christel Rose, [rosec@un.org](mailto:rosec@un.org)

## Academics and Governments join forces to address large-scale disasters

Hong Kong University and Beijing Normal University are partnering to establish a large-scale Catastrophe Management Initiative (CMI) in response to the Sichuan Earthquake. The universities signed a Memorandum of Collaboration on 27 July at a ceremony in Chengdu, Sichuan, with a number of high-ranking government officials in attendance. By synergising the strengths of the two universities, the CMI will be the first of its kind - the most comprehensive, holistic and integrated project that addresses all aspects of catastrophe management, ranging from rehabilitation to reconstruction and redevelopment, at both policy and practice levels. The CMI will serve as a focal point to promote links and synergies between, and the coordination of, Wenchuan earthquake rehabilitation, reconstruction and redevelopment activities in the socio-economic, humanitarian and development fields. The CMI will also support policy integration in all functional areas. Some of the projects currently underway include:

- organizing the first Annual Global Dialogue of the Wenchuan Earthquake;
- developing a pre-school education programme for children; and
- conducting a follow-up survey on earthquake survivors.

For more information, please see <http://www.hku.hk/chinaearthquake/cmi.html>

**International Disaster and Risk Conference begins in Davos**

The International Disaster and Risk Conference (IDRC) 2008 began in Davos, Switzerland on 25 August. In around 100 different events, approximately 1000 participants from 100 countries discussed how to address a wide range of natural hazards, the array of technical and biological risks, terrorism, climate change and pandemics. The slogan of the conference, "100 ideas for action," reflects IDRC's emphasis on tangible and practical results. Every day is dedicated to a different focal theme, such as climate change and the 12 May earthquake in China. The conference closed today on 29 August.

For more information, please see <http://www.idrc.info>

**Switzerland supports National Platform coordination**

Hyogo Framework for Action focal points and other high-level disaster risk reduction (DRR) representatives from Bangladesh, Jordan, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal, and Tajikistan met with their French, German and Swiss counterparts from a European network of National Platforms, during the International Disaster and Risk Conference in Davos, Switzerland. Substantially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) this week-long workshop promoted the establishment and strengthening of National Platforms for DRR. Following UNDP and UN/ISDR secretariat information sessions and country presentations, participants engaged in concrete action planning to improve their national coordination for DRR. The SDC plans to further support national coordination mechanisms in selected countries.

For more information, please contact Franz Stössel, [franz.stoessel@deza.admin.ch](mailto:franz.stoessel@deza.admin.ch)

**Safe Hospitals Campaign launched in Manila**

The WHO-Western Pacific Regional Office held their regional launch of the World Disaster Reduction Campaign: Hospitals Safe from Disaster in Manila, Philippines, on 20 August. Calling on members states to ensure that hospitals are disaster safe, the WHO emphasized the importance of DRR to the WHO Western Pacific Region, which includes much of Asia. "Over the past 10 years, the Western Pacific Region encountered 127 major disasters from natural hazards or 23% of all disasters worldwide," said Dr. Soe Nyunt-U, WHO Representative to the Philippines. "The Philippines is the most disaster-prone country in the Region, exceeding China and Vietnam. This is the reason why we need hospitals and health facilities that will not collapse in disasters, killing patients and staff."

For more information please contact Dr. Art Pesigan, [pesigana@wpro.who.int](mailto:pesigana@wpro.who.int)

**Kingdom of Bahrain holds national DRR workshop**

The Kingdom of Bahrain, in collaboration with the UN Country Team and ISDR regional office for West Asia and North Africa, organized a national disaster risk reduction workshop in Manama, Bahrain 18-19 August.

This initiative was held with the goal of enhancing national coordination mechanisms on risk reduction and ensuring effective progress on Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) implementation, monitoring and reporting. More than 70 participants representing ministries, governmental agencies, the private sector and civil society engaged in a multi-stakeholder dialogue on global, regional and national disaster risk reduction trends, and the needs,

**WEB RESOURCES****Maplecroft interactive risk maps**

<http://maps.maplecroft.com/>

Maplecroft interactive maps provide a highly visual starting point for those interested in understanding environmental, social, economic and political issues within a global context and the correlations between them. Maplecroft online climate change risk report contains risk analysis and mapping for 168 countries that can be used to assess, quantify and compare climate change risks and develop strategies to mitigate them.



Risks relating to emissions from energy and land use, unsustainable energy use and climate change regulation are covered. A risk mapping service is also available to assess risk for specific cities and regions at the sub-national level.

**UNCCD Focus on Land and Climate page**

<http://www.unccd.int/science/soilandclimate/menu.php>

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has launched a new webpage on the interrelationship between land and climate. The webpage highlights that soil can make a difference in addressing climate change issues, and presents information on land and climate change, land degradation and poverty, energy security, food security, and UNCCD processes to address climate change and soil.

**China Earthquake: HKU Action portal**

<http://www.hku.hk/chinaearthquake/>

This is a one-stop information-sharing portal where details of the university community's wide range of activities and responses to the 12 May Sichuan earthquake can be found. This resource contains a variety of documents on the actions taken by Hong Kong University in response to the disaster. Among the available resources are fund raising drives, round table discussion summaries, media interviews given by members of the academic community. Most documents are written in Chinese, but many are also in English.

**The PHREE-Way portal**

<http://www.phree-way.org/>

PHREE-Way is a global action-learning consortium of organizations working together to expand education and strengthen capacity for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action towards sustainable development and human security. The portal is a highly flexible and robust set of website modules, allowing users to browse, edit and add content based on certain permissions. The aim of the PHREE-Way portal is to make the process of searching for disaster risk reduction resources and information easier for individuals.

challenges and priorities facing risk reduction in Bahrain. As requested by the government, UN/ISDR secretariat provided technical support and guidance to national stakeholders on strengthening national coordination mechanisms on disaster risk reduction and providing guidance on the implementation, monitoring and reporting of HFA at the national level.

For more information, please contact Luna Abu-Swaireh,

[abu-swaireh@un.org](mailto:abu-swaireh@un.org)

### Norway and ISDR system ask IPCC to write DRR and Climate Change Adaptation report

In preparation for the 29th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), scheduled 31 August-4 September 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland, the ISDR system and the Government of Norway have asked the IPCC to write a special report on "Managing the Risk of Extreme Events to Advance Climate Change Adaptation." The request is based on the recognition of the linkages between disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change, as well as the need to learn from risk reduction experience in order to guide the adaptation activities of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change parties. According to the written request, the relevance of disaster risk reduction to advance adaptation has been widely acknowledged; however, no comprehensive assessment of the disaster risk reduction and management policies and measures that can inform climate change adaptation has been carried out. The request then describes how the special report would comply with the IPCC framework and criteria for establishing priorities for IPCC reports, and provides an outline of the proposed assessment.

The proposal is available online at [http://www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/climate-change/docs/IPCC\\_Norway\\_ISDR\\_system\\_Proposal.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/climate-change/docs/IPCC_Norway_ISDR_system_Proposal.pdf)

### DRR issues discussed at World Water Week

World Water Week, an annual venue for discussing global water issues organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute, took place in Sweden 17-23 August. Two days of presentations, workshops and discussions focused on issues related to the relationship between water and climate change. The connection between climate change and changing water availability was highlighted by many experts. During one

session, World Wildlife Fund freshwater researcher Jamie Pittock used case studies from four continents to show how measures to improve the health of stressed water systems, such as restoring the flood holding and drought proofing services of flood plains and wetlands, can improve our ability to cope with projected climate impacts.

For more information, please see <http://www.worldwaterweek.org>

### Climate Resilient Cities Primer launched in Thailand

The Climate Resilient Cities Primer was launched in July during the Green Cities Workshop held in Pattaya, Thailand. The World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and UN/ISDR secretariat teamed up to produce the Primer *Climate Resilient Cities: A Primer on Reducing Vulnerabilities to Climate Change Impacts and Strengthening Disaster Risk Management in East Asian Cities*. The primer serves as a tool for city governments in the East Asia region to better understand how to plan for climate change impacts and impending natural disasters through sound urban planning to reduce vulnerabilities. It gives local city managers information to actively engage in training, capacity building, and capital investment programs that are identified as priorities for building sustainable, resilient communities. Global and regional examples from 20 cities undertaking sound practices in mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction are offered as practical lessons of experience.

The primer is available online at <http://www.worldbank.org/eap/climatecities>

### DRR workshop held in Panama City

UN/ISDR-Americas hosted and co-organized a bilingual (Spanish and English) workshop 11-13 August in Panama City focusing on how to build and keep alive Early Warning Systems in Central America and the Caribbean. The workshop was organized in the framework of Working Group IV – "Preparedness, Readiness and Resilience," of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. Community preparedness leaders and planners from across the region shared their experiences in developing community-based programmes for dealing with coastal hazards, including tsunamis. This initiative supports the development of Caribbean-wide early warning systems for tsunami and other coastal hazards. The workshop produced recommendations for capacity building and strengthening at the regional and national level, pointers for the development of standard operational procedures, and concrete steps to move forward based on current initiatives.

For more information, please contact Sophia Scherer, [sscherer@eird.org](mailto:sscherer@eird.org)

## REGIONAL NEWS

For more information about disaster risk reduction activities at the regional level please visit these weblinks:

Africa: [www.unisdr.org/africa](http://www.unisdr.org/africa)

Asia & the Pacific: [www.unisdr.org/asiapacific](http://www.unisdr.org/asiapacific)

Europe: [www.unisdr.org/europe](http://www.unisdr.org/europe)

Latin America & the Caribbean: [www.eird.org](http://www.eird.org)

West Asia and North Africa: [www.unisdr-wana.org](http://www.unisdr-wana.org)

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

Conferences, Trainings and Events  
September 2008 - October 2008

DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
September		
15 - 17	Coventry, UK	Health Protection 2008
16 - 19	Suva, Fiji	United Nations regional UN-SPIDER workshop: building upon regional space-based solutions for disaster management and emergency response for the Pacific region
17 - 19	Paraguana, Venezuela	III Seminario internacional: Involucrando a la comunidad en los programas de reducción de riesgos Centro de Investigación de Riesgos
17 - 19	Toledo, Spain	International conference on modelling, monitoring and management of forest fires Wessex Institute of Technology
18 - 19	Graz, Austria	Climate Change in South Eastern European countries III: causes, impacts, solutions Joanneum Research
21 - 27	British Columbia, Canada	International Snow Science Workshop, Whistler 2008
26 - 30	Vorarlberg, Austria	11th Interpraevent congress : protecting living space from flooding, debris flow, avalanches and mass movements Interpraevent Research Association and the Forest Technical Service for Torrent and Avalanche Control
28 - 4 Oct	Ruimsig, South Africa	Disaster project management training course Monash University South Africa campus
October		
8	<b>Worldwide</b>	<b>International Day for Disaster Reduction</b>
8 - 9	Western Cape Province,	Disaster risk reduction workshop Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa
9 - 10	Chisinau, Moldova	Regional scientific and technical conference on the role of the NMHSs in prevention and mitigation of natural hazards impact World Meteorological Organization
10 - 14		WBI distance learning program on natural disaster risk management World Bank Institute
14 - 15	London, UK	International disaster and emergency resilience conference 2008 International Disaster and Emergency Resilience
18-22	Manila, Philippines	Third congress on women in politics and governance: focus on gender, climate change and disaster risk reduction, CAPWIP

See [www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events](http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events)

**Library Corner**

**Survival of the fittest: Pastoralism and climate change in East Africa**

<http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/bp116-pastoralism-climate-change-0808>

Oxfam International, 2008, 48 pages  
Climate change is having a destructive impact on many groups around the world. Pastoralists in East Africa have been adapting to climate variability for millennia and their adaptability ought to enable them to cope with this growing challenge. This report explains the policies required to enable sustainable and productive pastoralist communities to cope with the impact of climate change and generate sustainable livelihoods.

**Disaster risk financing: Reducing the burden on public budgets**

[http://www.swissre.com/pws/research%20publications/risk%20and%20expertise/focus%20reports/focus\\_report\\_disaster\\_risk\\_financing.html](http://www.swissre.com/pws/research%20publications/risk%20and%20expertise/focus%20reports/focus_report_disaster_risk_financing.html)

Swiss Reinsurance Company Ltd., 2008, 8 pages

In 2005, despite a record insurance payout of more than USD 83 billion world-wide, uninsured direct losses of USD 150 billion had to be carried by individuals, companies and the public sector.



In this report, Swiss Re explores new forms of public-private partnership that can make societies more resilient by addressing the rising cost of disaster relief and reconstruction. Examples of new financial risk transfer products are given that allow stakeholders to manage disaster expenses more efficiently by funding them before – instead of after – a catastrophe occurs.

**Humanitarian implications of climate change: Mapping emerging trends and risk hotspots**

<http://www.climate-l.org/2008/08/ocha-commission.html>

UN OCHA & CARE International, 2008, 30 pages

This report identifies the most likely humanitarian implications of climate change for the next 20-30 year period. Geographical Information Systems is used to map specific hazards associated with climate change, place them in relation to factors influencing vulnerability, and identify hotspots of high humanitarian risk under changing climatic conditions.