



KOBE REPORT (draft)

Regional meeting: AFRICA

“Informal information sharing session”

1. Summary of the Panel / Meeting’s presentations and discussions

The panelists of this sessions were **Dr. Feng Min Kan**, UN/ISDR Regional Coordinator for Africa, **Kenneth Westgate**, UNDP and **Mr. Svein Tveitdal**, UNEP.

The session was chaired by **Dr. Klaus Töpfer**, UNEP.

The objective of this informal session was to hear and discuss mutually beneficial issues on the environment and disaster risk reduction in Africa.

Mrs. Feng explained ISDR activities in Africa which range from having developed and adopted Africa’s Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy in 2004 and developing sub-regional strategies in 2004, creating a plan of action, formulating guidelines for mainstreaming disaster reduction into development to providing tools for implementation of Africa’s Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, developing nine ISDR platforms on a national level, enhancing multi-sectoral collaboration, pushing for joint action from all stakeholders and publishing the Annual Journal for Disaster Risk Reduction available in three languages. Furthermore the ISDR has established different networks for disaster risk reduction with national government officials, journalists and sub-regional organizations (NGO, experts).

The momentum gained in Africa in the past two years must be kept going.

UNDP offices all over Africa have supported governments to establish an agenda for disaster risk reduction and encouraged them to mainstream disaster risk reduction into main development policies.

2. Primary issues

- The African Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy has been adopted at the African Unit summit in 2004. What is urgently needed now is fast implementation through a plan of action (which timeline on which issues?)
- The Kobe WCDR is an opportunity to raise awareness in all African governments.
- African concerns must be included in final Program Outcome Document.
- Cameroon supports the idea to create an early warning system and offers to host a regional observatory.
- A collaborative network is suggested in order to build a knowledge base and share information.
- Silent disasters like HIV/Aids must not be forgotten just because they do not attract as much media attention as other disasters.
- Africa needs a strong statement of what kind of support African countries want the international community to give. Unfortunately NEPAD and the AU are not represented at the WCDR but many African countries are, so it was pleaded that these countries use this opportunity now to voice their statements so they can be incorporated into the disaster management programs of the international organizations (UNEP, UNDP, ISDR, etc.) present at the conference.
- In order to achieve a substantial success in the area of disaster reduction, commitments and efforts have to be made by both sides, UN agencies and civil society on one side and

African governments on the other side. Many governments have yet to enforce the African Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy.

- The role of women in environmental protection and implementing the ISDR was emphasized.
- Disaster risk reduction must be linked to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.
- Unless the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction intends to involve various African organizations, it will be very difficult to implement it.
- There is still a strong need for information sharing and collaboration. The ISDR has a major role to play here by creating actionable programs.

3. Lessons Learned, Good Practice, Institutionalized Experience

- UN agencies stand ready to support disaster reduction activities at all levels. The potential is there, the capacity is being developed, resources can be mobilized. Now that the UN have knocked on their door repeatedly, it is up to African governments and institutions to open that door.
- Nine national platforms have already been set up in Africa. The Kenyan national platform is already meeting once a month, Uganda managed to get a regular budget for disaster risk reduction and Djibouti developed a national strategy for disaster risk reduction.

4. Suggested indicators to measure accomplishments

- African countries have to ensure that one of the very strong targets stated, having an international early warning system within 10 years (Jan Egeland), goes into the final Program Outcome Document of the WCDR.
- The African countries should try and come up with a statement to be forwarded to the Drafting Committee.
- Creation of additional national ISDR platforms based on written requests made by African governments.

5. Partnerships

The UNDP works very closely with ISDR, OCHA and UN HABITAT and will also collaborate more with UNEP in the future.

ISDR and national governments work together in setting up national platforms

ISDR assist NEPAD and the AU in implementing Africa's Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy.

6. Additional sources of information

www.unisdr africa.org

www.acds.co.za

www.sardc.net

www.umvoto.com

www.fews.net

Name of Rapporteur

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