

## CLUSTER 4: REDUCING THE UNDERLYING RISK FACTORS

### REPORT OF THE CHAIR TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION OF WCDR 22 January 2005

Romania had the pleasure to chair this cluster 4 of the thematic segment of the WCDR. I would like to thank the UN agencies which took a lead role in this cluster namely UNEP, WHO, UNCRD and the support given by UN-ISDR Secretariat.

I would also like to thank the high level panelists for their excellent presentations and outstanding contributions.

The discussion paper prepared by these agencies identified the key issues and the way forward in this area. It greatly contributed to the enhancement of the fruitful debate in the plenary, giving us the appropriate guidance.

The final version of the discussion paper will benefit from the relevant outcomes of the ten sessions of the Cluster 4, which covered areas such as health, financing disaster risk, environment, community based disaster management, post-disaster recovery, protection of critical facilities, gender and sustainable livelihoods.

**Reducing the underlying risk factors** is indeed a critical cross-cutting issue that runs through all stages of the disaster management cycle and there is a evident linkage with the four other clusters namely Governance, Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning, Knowledge management and education, and Preparedness for effective response.

There are a number of causal factors of disaster risk, arising from and associated with urban and rural development, such as land management, integrated resources management, industrial and economic development, health risks, and building and construction aspects. Social issues relevant at the community level, as well as gender issues, also play a role in understanding and reducing risk.

A number of key factors that compound the risk were identified: (a) development processes and the risk that they pose – for example, natural resource exploitation, urban development, environmental degradation, caused by a number of factors, such as soil erosion and deforestation; (b) structures exposed to disaster risk – for example, public infrastructure, residential housing, critical facilities such as hospitals, heritage assets; (c) institutional and financial framework and social setting – for example, building codes, financing and insurance

