The second World Conference on Disaster Reduction will represent a milestone event to increase the international profile of disaster risk reduction and promote its integration into development planning and practice in order to strengthen local and national capacities to address the causes of disasters which continue to devastate and impede the development of many countries. A Programme of Action for the decade, 2005-2015, is expected to be produced by the Conference.
Contents

1. Context- what is at stake ..............................................................3
2. Why hold another World Conference on Disaster Reduction? .................................................5
3. Objectives .....................................................................................5
4. Expected outcome of the Conference .................................................................6
5. Format of the Conference ..............................................................6
6. Preparatory process ........................................................................7
7. Related process to link up with ..........................................................7
8. Regional and thematic meetings and other events contributing to the Second World
   Conference on Disaster Reduction during 2003-2004 .......................................................8

Annex 1: From the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)
   to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) ..............................................10

Annex 2: Tentative Thematic Areas for the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction . 11
1. Context - what is at stake

Human and economic losses due to natural disasters have continued to increase despite efforts undertaken by Governments and the international community to raise awareness on risk reduction needs, in particular fostered by the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR, 1990-1999). Global summaries for 2002 report the occurrence of over 500 disasters, with over 10,000 people killed, 600 million people affected, US$ 55 billion in total damages and US$ 13 billion in insured losses.

Developing countries are disproportionately affected, with their losses rising to about five times higher per unit of GDP than for the rich countries, sometimes exceeding a year or more of hard-won and desperately needed economic development.

The underlying problems of growing vulnerability to hazards are largely an outcome of development activities and in particular to poverty. Every day development decisions being made at local and international levels, are more often increasing the vulnerability to hazard than reducing risk. More work is needed to improve social protection targeting vulnerable communities in pursuance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

On the occasion of the mid-term review of the IDNDR, the first World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was held in Yokohama in 1994. In the intervening period, the “Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation” and its Plan of Action, have served as the international blueprint for disaster reduction.

The UN General Assembly adopted the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in December 1999 to follow up on the IDNDR achievements and facilitate the implementation of disaster reduction worldwide. Progress is being made and disaster reduction is now recognized as crucial for sustainable development in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPol) issued at
Natural disaster prevention and mitigation ranks among the top twenty most important and urgent global issues of the twenty-first century.

“The issue has taken on such proportions and brings so much suffering that global disaster prevention and mitigation measures seem to be a must...These disasters have grown so in scope and frequency that they imply responsibilities for the global community.”

Reducing world poverty is arguably the main global challenge of the next twenty years. Why? First, for moral reasons, and for the sake of justice and balance. It has become clear that poverty means more than lack of income: it includes isolation and powerlessness, insecurity, lack of services, and lack of control over one’s future...and feeling constantly exposed to catastrophic risks.”


Natural disaster prevention and mitigation ranks among the top twenty most important and urgent global issues of the twenty-first century.

The Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction

A review of the achievements, gaps and critical challenges facing the international community since the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action is now underway. A number of international, national and local policies, initiatives, scientific and technical achievements have demonstrated the feasibility of risk reduction investments. Emerging issues and opportunities related to environmental and climate change, pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, gender balance and education are also coming to the fore of public attention and much remains to be done to coordinate these concerns and integrate them into national policies.

The current context calls for an international meeting among local, national and international policy makers active in social and economic development and environmental management issues, disaster risk managers and practitioners, as well as civil society and community groups. The opportunity provided by the conclusion of the Yokohama review, as well as the 10th Anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, and the offer from the Government of Japan to host a World Conference in the city of Kobe-Hyogo, justifies the time and place for such a conference.

Economic and human impacts of disasters*, 1973-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of disasters</th>
<th>Economic losses (in million US$, 2001)</th>
<th>Number of dead (in million)</th>
<th>Affected population (in million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973-82</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-82</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2002</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note: Includes drought, earthquake, epidemic, extreme temperature, famine, flood, industrial accident, insect infestation, miscellaneous accident, slide, transport accident, volcano, wave/surge, wild fire and wind storm.

1 UN General Assembly Res/57/256 "Requests the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy, to plan and coordinate, in consultation with Governments and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including the financial institutions, the 2004 review of the Yokohama Strategy.”
2. Why hold another World Conference on Disaster Reduction?

Commitment to the disaster reduction has been demonstrated though several agreements and declarations, but materialization is still slow. For that purpose, the Conference is to increase the commitment for implementation of disaster risk reduction at all levels, by bringing policymakers, practitioners and other stakeholders together. The Conference is expected to identify practical and concrete ways to incorporate disaster risk reduction into poverty reduction, development and environmental strategies, and to ensure the continuum from relief to sustainable development.

The Conference will build on the findings of the review of implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action of 1994. The review aims at:

- Assessing achievements and identifying good practices since its adoption in 1994;
- Defining the remaining gaps, critical needs and opportunities in disaster reduction initiatives worldwide, and to examine new emerging issues (environment and climate change, pandemics...);
- Developing elements for an articulated programme of action for disaster risk reduction for 2005-2015 to implement the relevant MDGs and objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for sustainable development.

The Conference will also contribute to raise awareness on the urgency to focus on people and community needs, and on policy development and action at global, regional, national and local levels for the development of a culture of prevention as an essential component of and prerequisite for sustainable development.

3. Objectives

(a) To conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the 21st century;

(b) To identify specific activities and means of implementation aimed at ensuring the fulfilment of relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management;

(c) To share best practices and lessons learned to tackle natural disasters within the context of attaining sustainable development;

(d) To increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies, thereby facilitating and promoting the implementation of those policies;

“... Millennium development targets cannot be reached unless the heavy human and economic toll of disasters is reduced”

WSSD, Johannesburg 2002
4. Expected outcome of the Conference

- Increased political endorsement for the implementation of disaster risk reduction, which should help in mobilizing local, national and international resources. This may be expressed in a Declaration (building on and developing further the Yokohama message of 1994)

- An agreed set of targets and framework for guiding the implementation of disaster risk reduction should be endorsed - to provide guidance on ‘how-to-do’ risk reduction (see recent discussion on-line: www.unisdr.org/dialogue)

- Charting a new course and establishing priorities at international, regional, national and local levels by updating the “Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World” with a renewed strategic vision and programme for disaster reduction as an essential requirement to achieve the MDGs and objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on Sustainable Development (see framework of thematic areas in Annex 1)

These documents should be presented by the Secretary-General in his Report on the ISDR to the UN General Assembly at its 60th session (2005) for further guidance as deemed appropriate by the GA.

5. Format of the Conference

The Conference will be organized around the following processes:

a) **Intergovernmental process** to ensure the adoption of expected outcomes, as defined by UN General Assembly.

b) **Knowledge exchange (technical and policy developments):** Parallel events on thematic issues and good practices, organized by sponsoring and participating organizations (international, regional, sub-regional, national, local, Governments, NGOs, academic, private sector…) in the form of:
   - High-level panels and roundtables (Ministers, parliamentarians, Mayors, business and community leaders…)
   - Poster sessions
   - Workshops/seminars/symposiums
   - NGO forum
   - Field visits

The Organizing Committee will identify and assign responsibilities for the coordination and support to the above events.

c) **Public participation – promoting awareness to a wider public:** Activities to be carried out in the preparatory phase in 2004 and during the Conference, to be organized by Hyogo Prefecture, Japanese institutions, other organizations, Governments, academic institutions, UN public information services and ISDR Secretariat
   - Japanese public events (involving schools, etc…)
   - Media events and coverage
   - Public exhibition open for the general public (particularly school and university students) and Conference participants

(See further information in Annex 2)
6. Preparatory process

The ISDR secretariat will serve as the secretariat of the Conference and as such, will coordinate preparatory activities, in close cooperation with the host Country and the preparatory committee for the Conference, with the full support of relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat.

Member States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and other relevant intergovernmental agencies and organizations, particularly the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force, will participate actively in the Conference, as well as its preparatory process.

The following mechanisms are envisioned to support the work in the preparation of the Conference:

- An organizing support group to the Secretariat composed of those organizations directly involved in the preparations of the Conference, to provide advice and guidance on the organizational aspects. Potential members include UNESCO, UNU, and a few other organizations. The Committee would also provide ownership and wider support for the Conference. Some of the consultations and meetings could be conducted electronically, and some may be held back-to-back with the Task Force meetings in April and October 2004 and on other relevant occasions.
- A group of senior advisers will also be established to provide advice and guidance on the substantive work of the Conference. In addition, the possibility of a high-level personality to promote the Conference is currently being discussed with the Office of the UN Secretary-General.
- The Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction will provide additional guidance on the content and the preparation of the Conference and in particular to the participation and engagement of its members.
- Two inter-governmental preparatory meetings, possibly around the meetings of the Inter-Agency Task Force in 2004, are being envisioned, conducted by a bureau to discuss specific conference outcomes (Declaration, principles for the framework and Programme of Action for 2005-2015).

7. Related processes

Among other international processes, the Second World Conference shall draw upon the commitments and contribute to the implementation of:

- IDNDR and Yokohama Conference (1994) and the adoption of the ISDR (2000);
- Small Island Developing States Barbados Programme of Action (1994) and its ten-year review in 2004 (BPoA +10);
- Millennium Development Goals (2000);
- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002);
- International Decade on Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2015 (UNESCO);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
Regional and thematic meetings in 2003 and 2004 will review achievements and lessons learnt on disaster risk reduction, identifying areas that need to be addressed as well as propose needs for future action. The following table lists those meetings contributing to the process (as at 6 November 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Meetings (Coinciding with other relevant regional meetings)</th>
<th>Thematic Meetings (Items with relevant thematic meetings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2003</strong></td>
<td><strong>2003</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 First Asian consultation, supported by Government of Japan, ADRC, Kobe-Hyogo, Japan, 17 January</td>
<td>1 Regional consultations on Early-Warning: Asia: Indonesia, May - Africa: Kenya, June - Americas: Guatemala, June - Europe: Germany, July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Pacific Regional consultation supported by SOPAC, Fiji, 5-7 May</td>
<td>2 Online Conference to develop Framework for Disaster Risk reduction, by ISDR/UNDP, 25 August-25 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Safer Sustainable Communities 2003 Australian Disaster Conference, Canberra, 10-12 September</td>
<td>3 International Wildland Fire Summit, Sydney, Australia, 8 October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Euro-Mediterranean consultations Supported by the Council of Europe, Madrid, Spain, 6-8 October</td>
<td>4 Second International Conference on Early Warning, Bonn, Germany, 16-18 October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Forum Mitch+5, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, second week December</td>
<td>5 6th International Conference on Disaster Management, Havana, Cuba, 23-28 November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Second Asian consultation supported by Governments of Cambodia and Japan, ADRC, Cambodia, 4-6 February</td>
<td>6 International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, topic includes Risk Reduction, Geneva, 2-5 December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Third Asian consultation during 4th meeting of RCC organized by ADPC and Government of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh, March</td>
<td>7 Asian International Conference on Total Disaster Risk Management, OCHA, ADRC, Kobe, Japan, 2-4 December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 South American consultation supported by ECLAC, ONEMI, others, (tent.) Santiago, Chile, March</td>
<td>8 ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Meeting organized by ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam, 8-10 December</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 3rd Asian Consultative Meeting of Regional Organizations and Regional Offices of UN Agencies, Coordinated by WHO/SEARO and ADPC, Manila, Philippines, February / March</td>
<td><strong>2004</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 3rd Southeast Asia Disaster Management Practitioners Forum, organized by ADPC, UNESCAP, ECHO, IFRC-SE ASIA, Bangkok, Thailand, April</td>
<td>9 International Forum on Earthquake Insurance, Beijing, organized by CBS (dates to be organized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Sub-regional consultation with Central Asian Countries, supported by IIEES, Tashkent, Iran, May</td>
<td>10 Inter-regional preparatory meeting for SIDS BPvA+10, Bahamas, 26-30 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 African consultation, supported by UNDP, UNEE AU and NEPAD Secretariat, Nairobi, Kenya (tent.), May/June</td>
<td>11 World Congress on Natural Disaster Mitigation New Delhi, India, 19-21 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Caribbean consultation, in collaboration with CDEMA, ACS, UNDP, PAHO, UWI... October</td>
<td>12 Sustainable Community Empowerment for Disaster Management organized by UNCRD, Kobe-Hyogo, Japan, 7 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 2nd Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November</td>
<td>13 Disaster Reduction Forum 2004 - transfer lessons of catastrophic disasters - organized by Disaster Reduction Alliance (DRA). Kobe-Hyogo, Japan, 8 February</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14 GDIN Conference, Washington DC, USA, March</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15 World Water Day, organized by WMO and ISDR, 22 March</td>
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<td>16 8th Annual Meeting of the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Programme, organized by ADPC and USAID, Dhaka, Bangladesh, March</td>
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<td>18 CSD-12 (New York, USA, April)</td>
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<td>19 Urban Risk, Nairobi, Kenya, UN-HABITAT, May</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20 3rd Mekong Annual Flood Forum, organized by Mekong River Commission, Vientiane, Laos, June</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21 Natural Hazards Conference (Boulder, USA, July)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22 Third International Conference on Continental Earthquakes, Beijing, China, 11-13 July</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23 Thirteenth World Conference on Earthquake Engineering, Vancouver, Canada, 1-6 August</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 International meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action/ SIDS+10, Mauritius, August</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25 International Conference on Education by UNESCO/IBE, Geneva, Switzerland, September</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 Asian Seismological Commission, 5th general Assembly, Yerevan, Armenia, 18-21 October</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27 Meeting on Finance and poverty (to be organized)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 Prep Com SIDS (to be organized)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29 ICL Meeting in Geneva (to be organized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 Annual Sessions of Typhoon Committee and Tropical Cyclone Panel, organized by WMO and UNESCAP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional and Thematic Meetings
2003-2004

Legend

Thematic Meetings  Regional Meetings

Additional meetings contributing to the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction - venues to be confirmed (TM27-30)
Annex 1

From the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

1987

The ‘International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction’ (IDNDR) was declared by the UN General Assembly for the decade 1990-1999.

1994

The ‘Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World’ was adopted at the First World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (May 1994, Yokohama, Japan), as the main outcome of the mid-term review of the IDNDR.

Principles of the Yokohama Strategy

1. Risk assessment is a required step for the adoption of adequate and successful disaster reduction policies and measures.
2. Disaster prevention and preparedness are of primary importance in reducing the need for disaster relief.
3. Disaster prevention and preparedness should be considered integral aspects of development policy and planning at national, regional, bilateral, multilateral and international levels.
4. The development and strengthening of capacities to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters is a top priority area.
5. Early warnings of impending disasters and their effective dissemination using telecommunications, including broadcast services, are key factors to successful disaster prevention and preparedness.
6. Preventive measures are most effective when they involve participation at all levels, from the local community through the national government to the regional and international level.
7. Vulnerability can be reduced by the application of proper design and patterns of development focused on target groups, by appropriate education and training of the whole community.
8. The international community accepts the need to share the necessary technology to prevent, reduce and mitigate disaster; this should be made freely available and in a timely manner as an integral part of technical cooperation.
9. Environmental protection as a component of sustainable development consistent with poverty alleviation is imperative in the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters.
10. Each country bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people, infrastructure, and other national assets from the impact of natural disasters.

The international community should demonstrate strong political determination required to mobilize adequate and make efficient use of existing resources, in the field of natural disaster reduction, bearing in mind the needs of the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries.

1999

IDNDR Programme Forum (July 1999, Geneva) – Closing event and completion of the ‘International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction’

IDNDR legacy:

- Reinforced disaster reduction framework in countries - Improved disaster reduction planning - Enhanced knowledge and awareness on disaster reduction as a result of strong promotional activities.
- Strengthened multilateral cooperation on disaster reduction at the global and regional level (such as the ProVention Consortium, Inter-American Natural Disaster Reduction Committee, Asian Disaster Reduction Centre and disaster reduction units in several international and regional organizations).

October 1999, 54th session of UN General Assembly

Adoption of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), as the successor arrangement to IDNDR. The 56th session of General Assembly (2001) confirmed the ISDR and its mechanisms (Inter-Agency Task Force and Secretariat)

Framework of Action for ISDR

The ISDR aims at building disaster resilient communities by promoting the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development, to reduce human, social, economic and environmental losses due to natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters.

Its main objectives are to:

- Increase public awareness
- Obtain commitment from public authorities
• Stimulate interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral partnership and expand risk reduction networking at all levels
• Improve further the scientific knowledge of the causes of disasters and the effects of natural hazards and related technological and environmental disasters on societies

2001
The UN General Assembly endorsed the review of the Yokohama Strategy to identify achievements and gaps, and draw a new set of guidelines for disaster reduction for the next decade and beyond.

2002
The World Summit on Sustainable Development established action goals within the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation related to risk assessment and disaster risk management in the framework of ISDR.

“Living with Risk: a global review of disaster reduction initiatives”, important milestone publication, first global report on the subject coordinated by the ISDR inter-agency secretariat

Produced as a preliminary version to contribute to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, a revised and updated version will be ready by late 2003. The 2004 version is expected to focus on the ten-year review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action (1994).

Annex 2
Tentative Thematic Areas for the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

A.- Institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction:
• Socio-economic policies and financing (poverty reduction, development banks, ODA ….)
• Environmental policies (integration into existing environmental policies and management practices)
• National policies, institutional developments and legislation
• Local authorities and municipality policies for risk reduction
• Community action and participation
• Regional institutional frameworks and policies
• Transparency-accountability

B.- Education, training and public awareness: (knowledge management)
• Education for sustainable development-disaster risk reduction in schools
• Disaster risk reduction at university level and postgraduate
• Research agendas
• Training: formal and informal (community action)
• Media and disaster risk reduction- public awareness raising tools

C.- Risk identification:
• Hazard and vulnerability assessments-methodologies
• Disaster impact assessments and methodologies
• Forecasting and early warning
• Climate and environmental risk assessment
• Data-collection and information use

D.- Risk reduction applications- “good practices”:
• Urban risk reduction: assessment and practice
• Land use planning
• Insurance-financial instruments- micro finance-safety nets
• Safer construction- compliance with codes and corruption
• Business and private sector investing in disaster risk reduction
• Environmental management and risk reduction
• Community action
• Networks and partnerships (private-public, government-NGOs, academic-government, etc.)
• Gender issues and disaster risk reduction