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WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

Preparatory Committee
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

The present document has been prepared in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolutions A/RES/56/195 (paragraph 18) and A/RES/57/256 (paragraphs 4 and 5) where it was proposed to undertake the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action and to report its conclusion, as well as the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/58/214, to conclude the review (paragraph 7) at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. This document provides for information of the Preparatory Committee, an annotated outline of the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of action. The methodology for collecting the information for the review is described in paragraphs 47. A draft review will be made available to the second session of the Preparatory Committee. It is the intention of the Conference secretariat to disseminate the results of the review through various products targeted for different audiences; this will include a Summary for Policymakers in the six UN languages.

Action required: *The Preparatory Committee will be invited to discuss and endorse the methodology for compiling the review and in particular discuss methods for supporting and consolidating national inputs to the review.*

* The document was submitted late to the conference service due to late designation of the all Bureau members for the Preparatory Committee.

I. Introduction

(a) Background and context

1. The introduction will cover the purpose, various policy requirements, the period covered and reference to related documents that form the basis of the Yokohama Review.

2. Background information will provide a short overview of the evolution of disaster risk reduction. Aspects covered will include evolution of terminology, major events and their implications, and related emerging broad-scale themes. This section will contain two charts related to hazard trends and additionally will provide basic social, economic and environmental information related to disaster impacts.

3. The relevance of sustainable development will be explicitly considered, as well as the relationships between disaster reduction, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other primary global agendas such as poverty alleviation, environmental and natural resource management, climate variation and change, urban risks, humanitarian concerns, gender and social equity, and good governance issues.

(b) Methodology

4. The section on methodology will set out the process for developing the framework of the review, compiling information, source and references.

5. The collection of information for the review has been conducted over a four-year period, started in 2001, for the purposes of a global review of disaster reduction initiatives, coordinated by the ISDR secretariat and published under the title of "Living with Risk" (2002). Experts and regional organizations conducted subregional and regional reviews. National governments were requested to provide a self-assessment of progress on the basis of a questionnaire to which 55 replies were received. Expert and technical submissions from professional specialists and associated ISDR partner organizations within and beyond the UN system also contributed reports and commentaries.

6. The review was complemented by additional regional and subregional studies in 2003. The wealth of information thereby collected supplemented the existing material and analytical basis as part of the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) secretariat's regular functions, and inherited from the days of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). Moreover the results of the on-line conference organized during one month by the ISDR secretariat and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in August 2003 testing the ideas of systematizing the understanding of disaster risk reduction in a framework to guide and monitor disaster risk reduction. The results provided elements to structure the review and elaborate other Conference outcomes.

7. In conjunction with the requirements of the review, a request for updated national information focusing on accomplishments, gaps but also future priority areas for disaster risk reduction, was submitted to Governments from the ISDR secretariat in February 2004. Responses are expected no later than 15 June 2004. In addition, inputs on current experience and requirements, good practices and lessons learnt are being collected through a series of thematic and regional consultations carried out since January 2003, including landmark events such as the Second Conference on Early Warning held in Bonn, Germany in 2003. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/256, the contents and conclusions of the review will be refined in the course of 2004 by ongoing dialogue and consultations with Governments and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including international financial institutions.

Members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, ISDR collaborators and partners, experts and major groups will be involved as much as possible.

II. Review of awareness and accomplishments emanating from Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action

(a) Global context of disaster risk reduction (1994-2004)

8. This section will provide an overview of the global context of disaster risk reduction awareness and practice from 1994 to 2004. It will provide a commentary on basic elements of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, in particular the current status and relevance, extent of activity and eventual changes.

9. Relevant milestones and their findings will be referred to such as the Midway Assessment of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) (1994); complemented by the IDNDR Programme Forum and the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) conclusions (1999), and the transition and successor arrangements agreed in the formulation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (from 2000).

(b) Highlights of accomplishments since 1994

10. An important component of this section will be brief references or highlights of activities carried out since 1994, guided by references to individual Yokohama Strategy Plan of Action activities and informed by information sources outlined above. It will include a summary of efforts and accomplishments at national, regional (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East, North America, Pacific), as well as international levels. An analysis of policy or operational consequences of major disaster events during 1994-2004, as well as documentary references and/or progress in disaster risk reduction related endeavours including developmental agendas and programmes will be included.

(c) Commentary on basic elements of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action

11. Accomplishments and significant constraints or challenges relating to subject areas derived from the Yokohama Principles, Strategy and Plan of Action will be reviewed and reflected upon. The review will be structured along the following thematic areas:

- Political commitment and organizational aspects (governance):
 - Integral disaster risk reduction policies, including matters of national policy, legislation, resource commitments, structured programmes for disaster risk reduction implementation, multisectoral committees or platforms, and programmes of cooperation and coordination.
 - Public participation and community engagement
- Risk identification:
 - Identification and assessment of risk
 - Applied early warning practices/systems
- Knowledge management:
 - Public awareness practices
 - Building capacities and education, training and research
 - Exchange and use of information
 - Development and use of partnerships and organizational networks

- Application of risk reduction:
 - Managing risks through multi-sectoral and specific areas of interest, including environmental and natural resources management; social and economic development, poverty alleviation, financial instruments or mechanisms, traditional knowledge and experience, technical programmes of infrastructure protection and physical measures, land use and planning practices, and advanced technologies.
- Preparedness and emergency management
- Monitoring and evaluation of accomplishments

12. These thematic areas closely match the ones along which the elements for policy measures contained in the Conference programme document are developed.

III. Provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and related emergence of a policy framework for understanding, guiding and monitoring disaster risk reduction in the future

13. This item will address the implications and opportunities to advance disaster risk reduction created through the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), and provide the link to related work carried out on the elaboration of a policy framework for understanding, guiding and monitoring disaster risk reduction in the future.

IV. Conclusions that contribute to guiding future action and commitments on disaster risk reduction

14. This item will consist in a summary of conclusions identified during the review, including linkages backwards to 'gaps and current challenges' and forwards to 'future emphasis'. The conclusions will provide evidence and rationale for the priority areas developed in the Conference programme document. The review conclusions will be the basis upon which further deliberation, and future commitments to specific programme objectives on disaster risk reduction will be made.

Annex

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 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR).

It contains principles, and overview of achievements during the Decade, a strategy and plan of action for disaster reduction for a safer world in the 21st century.

The principles of the Yokohama Strategy are:

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.
