

International Early Warning Programme

Advisory Group Meeting

First session

Bonn, 26 – 27 March 2007

Item 4(a) Report of Interim IEWP Advisory Group Preparatory Meeting

Interim Advisory Group Report

The meeting of the International Early Warning Programme (IEWP) Interim Advisory Group was opened and chaired by Mr. Patricio Bernal, ASG (UNESCO IOC), in the absence of the current Chair Norberto Fernandez (UNEP) who had apologized in advance for his absence.

The meeting is a follow-up and continuation of the discussion at the IEWP stakeholder meeting held in Bonn on 29 March 2006, when it was agreed to develop a concrete action plan based on recommendations from the global survey, with achievable outputs, clear roles and responsibilities, and prioritisation of key issues.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss both the scope and content to the IEWP work plan and strategic positioning of the IEWP and the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (PPEW) within the strengthened ISDR system. The Advisory Group is to be formally established in 2007. The main items discussed were:

- (i) Reviewing the Context for the IEWP
- (ii) Recommendations for the IEWP work programme
- (iii) Draft terms of reference for the IEWP Advisory Group
- (iv) Deliverables to the March meeting of the IEWP Advisory Group

A list of participants is provided at the end of the report.

**Report of IEWP Interim Advisory Group
1-2 December 2006, Bonn, Germany**

Discussion

1. Participants noted that early warning of natural hazards is high on the United Nations, international and national agendas. It has been identified in the current UN Reform process as an area requiring greater collaboration between UN agencies and beyond.
2. The Global Survey of Early Warning Systems prepared at the request of the Secretary General of the United Nations, and presented at the Third International Conference on Early Warning, was prepared with the support of the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (PPEW). The Survey included inputs from members of the Advisory Group and was presented at the General Assembly this year. As a result, the latest General Assembly resolution (A 61/228) on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) requests the Secretary General to report on the results of the Global Survey on Early Warning Systems. This report should include his recommendations on how to address associated technical, financial and organizational gaps and needs in early warning at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.
4. Another encouraging development discussed by the Advisory Group (AG) was the broader engagement by many types of actors and institutions in early warning activities. This points to the need for greater networking and coherent approaches in dealing with early warning at all levels. Early warning is also increasingly recognized as an integral component of disaster risk reduction plans and strategies.
5. The ISDR secretariat presented the process currently underway to strengthen the ISDR system. This process is aiming at ensuring more coherent and effective support for national and local implementation of disaster risk reduction in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action. This includes the issue of people-centred early warning systems. The recently established partnership between the World Bank and the ISDR was presented as an encouraging development within the ISDR system.
6. Thematic platforms are seen as an important element of the strengthened ISDR system. These platforms are intended to bringing multiple actors around a thematic area such as early warning to link global scientific and technical expertise and information with regional concerns and national capacity building challenges.
7. The AG discussed the concept of a thematic platform on early warning and what should be its role and functions within the UN system and in particular the roles of the IEWP, the Advisory Group and the PPEW. It also discussed how the IEWP, as a system of partnerships, could contribute to the ISDR system, from the support to the national and local implementation of early warning systems to the Global Platform. In particular it was noted that Platforms need to be linked with the regional networks, as well as allowing for a diverse set of inclusive inputs including support from science and academic groups, media networks, NGOs and the private sector.
8. The AG specifically noted the report of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly entitled “Delivering as One – Report of the Secretary General’s high Level Panel“ which has called for greater coherence and coordination by UN agencies in particular at country level. It was suggested that the IEWP could be positioned as a response to the call for UN reform. It was noted that one role of the IEWP could be to provide technical expertise in a cluster approach to the whole ISDR movement – including the Global Platform, as well as the regional, thematic and national platforms.
9. The AG sought to clarify the roles of PPEW and IEWP secretariat and noted that the future work and activities of the IEWP could be carried out on an equally horizontal (inter-agency including NGOs and the private sector or intergovernmental) as well as in a vertical (high-tech to traditional knowledge) basis. The AG discussed how the work programme could aim at leveraging existing

expertise and facilitate processes through its overall framework and partner tools. It was also noted that services provided through the IEWP need to reference its advocacy and outreach to empowering the national platforms while simultaneously addressing the needs of international actors, including both UN and non-UN ones to support the national platforms. The AG also noted that the IEWP should be engaged in capacity building activities at the country level upon the request from countries.

10. The AG noted the slow progress on implementing the EWC 3 Compendium of Early Warning Projects which had been compiled for the Third International Conference on Early Warning in March 2006.

11. The AG discussed the implementation status of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and noted that the IEWP could seize opportunities to contribute to the monitoring of progress in the area of early warning, contributing to the broader efforts undertaken to monitor progress in disaster risk reduction by the ISDR system.

12. The AG discussed how the IEWP could advise on a follow-up strategy to the “Global Survey of Early Warning Systems” by using the reports’ findings and recommendations as benchmarks (hard numbers) to define future activities and concerted actions which address how communities could benefit from disaster risk reduction experiences in various sectors.

13. The AG also noted that the work programme of the IEWP should ensure synchronization with national mechanisms by using indicators linked to poverty reduction strategies, development plans and environmental policies. Work should also target local authorities and the local community level as these actors play a major role in EW actions. The group noted the need for a communication strategy to ensure effectiveness of dissemination and information sharing for the IEWP.

14. The AG discussed the modalities, which were needed to implement the IEWP programme. The role of the Advisory Group should continue to be clarified. The function of the group should address ways to support agencies in their activities by a higher degree of interagency coherence. The AG also discussed how partner agencies could outsource some IEWP dissemination activities to ensure a broader effort to reach constituencies at the local, national, regional and international level.

15. The AG noted the results, outcomes and expectations resulting from the EWC-II and EWC-III conferences. The key areas resulting from the EWC-II would constitute the five focus areas of the work programme of the IEWP and form the basis of stakeholder and donor expectation. These five focus areas are the following:

- (i) Better integration of early warning (and related disaster risk reduction and management) into development processes and public policies;
- (ii) Improved data availability for investigating, forecasting/predicting and managing risks on different time scales;
- (iii) Improved capacities and strengthened early warning systems, particularly in developing countries;
- (iv) Development of people-centered early warning systems; and
- (v) Mechanisms for sustaining the early warning dialogue and supporting the development and implementation of a programme.

16. Regarding the mechanism of the AG, the group questioned whether the current membership was sufficient and whether mission statement would be useful. The AG noted that the ultimate goal of the IEWP is to make an impact at the national level and to support local communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. It was agreed that the benefits of the IEWP include a better coherence

and wider information flow, which would facilitate stronger advocacy positions on people-centered activities to take place.

17. With regard to the role of the PPEW, the Advisory Group noted its important support and facilitation function. It should also contribute to the compilation of information on early warning, networking and advocacy work. The current name of the PPEW could be misleading, as the term 'platform' has been used to describe broader mechanisms in the strengthened ISDR system, rather than the secretariat function of the PPEW.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were suggested by the AG participants in order to move the process forward:

18. The governance mechanism (or institutional capacity) for the IEWP should be derived from the mandates of the EW stakeholders including endorsement from both the national governments and civil society partners. A more concerted utilization of the Tsunami Consortium partners should be considered when defining activities of the IEWP. This would include utilizing the visibility of the Special Envoy's Office.

19. The activities of former Working Group 2 of the IATF should be revisited in order to identify key stakeholders that could be engaged in the IEWP.

20. The scope of IEWP activities should include advice on products that support the development of a people-centred global multi-hazard system.

21. The IEWP should advise and support efforts to establish national platforms for disaster risk reduction as the entry point to strengthen EW at the national level.

22. The IEWP should provide capacity building assistance at the country level through national platforms as an entry point.

23. A clear reference and linkage to target beneficiaries at the national should be established.

24. The membership in the IEWP Advisory Group should represent and reflect the four early warning components (risk knowledge, warning service, dissemination and response capability).

25. Work on indicators and benchmarking capacities should note and possibly harmonize work with the WMO methodology used on hydro-meteorological surveys.

26. The IEWP should continue to assess the knowledge gaps identified in the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems. The possible reporting on annual basis to Global Platform on the state of global early warning systems should be considered.

27. The PPEW secretariat and the IEWP should strengthen its relationship with the GEO process and actively encourage the use of other partner resources and networks.

28. A dissemination strategy for the EWC-III publication "Developing Early Warning Systems: A Checklist" should be developed.

29. A priority area of work for the PPEW should be the promotion of an early warning financial perspective, the compilation of cost/benefit analyses and other investment studies related to early warning.

30. In collaboration with the UNU the PPEW secretariat should consider preparing a “Do’s and Don’ts” brochure for EW practitioners.
31. Regarding the General Assembly request for an update on the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems, additional information from the DKKV inventory of early warning systems and portfolio of projects from the EWC 3 should be included.
32. Develop a better strategy to promote implementation of the early warning projects.
33. Terms of Reference of the PPEW should be presented in order to clarify its roles.

Draft Terms of Reference for the IEWP Advisory Group

The AG discussed the terms of reference for the Advisory group of the IEWP and put forward a number of ideas. A draft set of ToR follows:

- 34 Advise on priorities; provide capacity-building assessments and overall strategies for the IEWP and the PPEW secretariat
35. Advise on the use of indicators (hard numbers) of success for the IEWP programme, as well as overall EW database development at the global, regional and country levels.
36. Advise on and contribute to a general strategy for publication dissemination, outreach, communications and media partnerships.
37. Review the work and status reports on the recommendations and follow-up to the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems and the EWC 3 project portfolio.
38. Provide guidance and perspective on the utilization of existing investment analysis and cost/benefit strategies. The guidance should seek to capitalize on the work of partner agencies and note opportunities to engage private sector partners.
39. Provide advice and guidance for further assessment of the gaps noted in the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems.
40. Provide guidance on successful inter-agency synergy initiatives and concerted actions related to early warning which could be reported to the Global Platform.
41. Provide advice and guidance on reporting procedures, which address work related to the integration of early warning system into disaster risk reduction plans and strategies.
42. Advise on resource mobilization opportunities.

Expected Deliverables to the First Session of the IEWP Advisory Group

43. It was requested that the PPEW secretariat provide a number of deliverables to the Advisory Group for its next meeting in March 2006. These documents include the following:
 - (i) The proposed PPEW Work Programme for 2007 providing details and estimated costs.
 - (ii) A detailed programme document for the IEWP incorporating relevant elements from the status and summary reports of the PPEW.

- (iii) An action-oriented background paper describing an out-reach, communication and dissemination strategy for the publication “Developing Early Warning: A Checklist”.
- (iv) A Progress Report on activities under the EWC 3 project portfolio.
- (v) Overview/topical outline/vision of the GA update report on the Global Early Warning System noting specific design and “architectural” features for the system.

Interim Advisory Group Meeting Participants

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