



Third International Conference on Early Warning

Informal note by the secretariat

Under the auspices of the United Nations, Germany will host the 3rd International Conference on Early Warning (EWC III) from 27 to 29 March 2006 in Bonn. The Federal Foreign Office in Berlin has set up an EWC III Task Force to organize this event with the support of a conference secretariat established within the secretariat of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in Geneva and ISDR's Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (PPEW) in Bonn. A German supporting committee coordinated by the Bonn-based German national disaster reduction committee, DKKV, will support the organizational work and logistics, and organize a scientific symposium with guidance from a technical advisory committee.

This conference follows the *International Conference on Early Warning Systems for the Reduction of Natural Disasters* (EWC'98) that took place in 1998 in Potsdam (Germany) and emphasized early warning as a core component of national and international prevention strategies for the 21st century; and the *Second International Conference on Early Warning*, that took place in Bonn (Germany) in October 2003, building upon principles developed at EWC'98 through the identification of emerging new threats. In 2004, the ISDR secretariat, with the support of the German Government, created in Bonn the *Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning* to lead the international community in developing early warning and preparedness. The *International Early Warning Programme* (IEWP) was launched at the *World Conference on Disaster Reduction* (WCDR) in Kobe in January 2005, against the backdrop of the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami, underlining the importance of understanding risks and enhancing early warning to reduce disasters.

The basic aims of the conference are:

- to identify unused potentials in all areas of early warning,
- to identify and launch specific early warning projects of high priority and illustrate the bridging of gaps,
- to stimulate discussion and action toward concrete follow-up projects, and
- to discuss proposals for global integration of early warning systems whenever feasible and useful.

The conference will comprise two parallel but connected streams: a *'Priorities and Projects Forum'* and a *'Scientific and Technical Symposium'* on state-of-the-art knowledge and assessments of potential in early warning systems. It will bring together donors and implementing agencies, with the aim to foster specific projects wherever early warning is the key to damage reduction or even prevention. This approach will promote regional and international cooperation, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction that took place in Kobe (Japan) in January 2005.

The selection of projects will be undertaken after a search for proposals in all regions of the world, using the regional mechanisms of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) and of the ISDR secretariat. Criteria such as sustainability, efficiency, and synergy are yet to be spelled out in detail. They will be posted on the conference's website.

The conference will take place in the former German Federal Parliament in Bonn. The programme is under development. Details will be posted on the conference website www.ewc3.org during the summer. The *Priorities and Projects Forum* will discuss key issues in early warning, grouped in a series of main sessions. Each theme will be addressed through practical project examples, illustrating situations in all regions of the world. The projects will be part of a portfolio compiled for the conference that will be the subject of review for support and funding by donor countries or international organizations. The full portfolio of collected projects will be published in a catalogue for distribution before and presentation at the conference. The *Scientific and Technical Symposium* will focus on progress in early warning and be framed around the international research agenda.

For all enquiries on EWC III, including programme, registration, logistics, submission of papers, please check the conference website: www.ewc3.org.
Queries can be addressed to: ewc3@un.org

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