



International Strategy for  
Disaster Reduction

## Announcements



### United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction

Nominations are now open

Deadline: 29 June 2007

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng>

[/sasakawa/2007/Sasakawa-Award-2007-English.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/sasakawa/2007/Sasakawa-Award-2007-English.pdf)

English.pdf

### Call for contributions on good practices in disaster risk education and school safety

All contributions should be sent to

Aurélia Blin by 31 May 2007

Contact: [blin@un.org](mailto:blin@un.org)

International Strategy for  
Disaster Reduction (ISDR)  
Tel. : (+41 22) 917 8908/8907/8849  
Fax : (+41 22) 917 8964  
[isdrhighlights@un.org](mailto:isdrhighlights@un.org)  
[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)  
International Environment House II  
7-9 Chemin de Balexert  
CH 1219 Châtelaine  
Geneva, Switzerland

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To submit an article or inform us of a new publication/web resource or event, please send your inputs to: [isdrhighlights@un.org](mailto:isdrhighlights@un.org) by the 20th day of each month.

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# Highlights

March 2007

## NGOs, CBOs and Civil Society Organizations to Combat Desertification

Dedicating special funds to support and promote the participation of NGOs, CBOs and other civil society organizations in the UN Convention to Combat Desertification process was one of the proposals endorsed at the fifth session of the Committee for Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 5) in Argentina, from 12-21 March 2007. Also, farmers as a major group within civil society in the bodies and work of the Convention were recognized. During this fifth session, the Committee reviewed the implementation of the Convention and discussed national experiences and results of regional meetings in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Northern Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe. It also reviewed the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification and the draft ten-year strategic plan for the Convention. Panel presentations and discussions on selected topics included: legislative and institutional frameworks, linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions, measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land, drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, financial resources, know-how and technology transfer and investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification. As for the next step, the final report adopted by Parties of the Convention will be used as a basis for the next session to produce a series of recommendations for the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP 8) to the Convention, to be held from 3-14 September 2007, in Madrid, Spain.

For more information, <http://www.unccd.int>

## Stop Disasters

Stop Disasters Game, launched by the UN/ISDR secretariat, is a new educational tool to promote disaster risk reduction among children who are the most vulnerable when disasters occur. With three levels of difficulty, this game learns how to save lives and livelihoods by preparing for a tsunami, earthquake, hurricane, floods and wildfire. For example, within a budget and time limit, players have different upgrading options, like building more resilient houses, if not demolishing them for being in risky areas, together with setting up defences with trees, early warning systems and walls. Developed by Playerthree, the on-line game is accessible via the Internet and targets children aged from 9 to 16. This UN/ISDR initiative is part of the 2006-2007 Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School Campaign aiming to inform and mobilize Governments, communities and individuals to ensure that disaster risk reduction is fully integrated into school curricula in disaster-prone countries and that school buildings are built or retrofitted to withstand natural hazards.

<http://www.stopdisastersgame.org>

Contact Ms Brigitte Leoni, [leoni@un.org](mailto:leoni@un.org)



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## Burundi: Launch of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction must become a national and local priority. In order to do so, the Central African country Burundi has established its National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction that will address disaster risk reduction more efficiently. The National Platform launching occurred during a workshop on 8 and 9 March 2007 in Bujumbura. Some 70 representatives from Government ministries, the Burundi Red Cross, NGOs, the media and UN agencies present at this meeting laid the foundation for a strong institutional basis for implementing disaster risk reduction initiatives. In light of daunting figures of over 25% of the population affected in 2006 by the adverse effects of natural hazards – mainly floods, drought and subsequent famine - participants made a strong plea to invest in prevention and mitigation to reduce the vulnerability of its population. Participants discussed most urgent actions, which the National Platform should coordinate. With continued support by the United Nations Development Programme Country Office and the UN/ISDR secretariat, it is foreseen to formulate in the coming months a National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Contact Ms. Noroarisoa Rakotondrandria, [noroarisoa.rakotondrandria@unep.org](mailto:noroarisoa.rakotondrandria@unep.org)

## Building Armenian School Resilience to Earthquakes

A workshop in Yerevan, Armenia, on “Schools Resilient to Earthquakes” contributed to increasing school administrators’ awareness on school resilience to earthquakes and actions before, during, and after an earthquake, and to facilitate the dialogue between school administrators, government officials, and international organizations. Although Armenia has some supplementary sub-laws in the area of disaster risk reduction (such as the “Law on Civil Defense”, “Law on Population Protection”, “Law on Seismic Safety”) that oblige schools to have emergency preparedness plans and conduct regular simulation exercises, practical problems arise at the implementation stage. The workshop allowed to better identify those problems, which include the absence of textbooks, informational and other materials; lack of clear guidelines on risk and loss assessment; poor coordination between schools and other structures responsible for disaster preparedness and response. The success of the workshop and the interest expressed by school administrators gave both organizers, UNICEF Office in Armenia in cooperation with the UN/ISDR Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia, the idea of replicating this experience in other earthquake-prone countries as Tajikistan.

Contact Ms. Tine Ramstad, [tine.ramstad@undp.org](mailto:tine.ramstad@undp.org)

## National Disaster Preparedness Day in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the National Disaster Preparedness Day was held on 29 March 2007. On this occasion, Christian Aid and local partner organisations in the country raised awareness of disaster risk reduction in local communities and schools. A variety of initiatives at a total of ten locations across the country were organized. Children’s art competitions, with 500 school students aged from 10-14, helped visualise the impact that disasters have on their lives and the role that communities can play in mitigating it. Teachers and local government representatives were also contributing to the celebration of the day by being involved in prize committees. Discussion meetings on the “Role of communities in disaster risk reduction” were also organised and attended by representatives of the district and village administration, local leaders, community members, social workers, teachers and students. T-Shirts and caps with a clear disaster risk reduction slogan were given out to volunteer workers on the day to ensure that the message is widely spread. This action is part of a multi-year disaster risk reduction initiatives called Building Disaster Resilient Communities. Visual documentation of the event and the outcomes of the art competition is made available via the Christian Aid website ([www.christian-aid.org](http://www.christian-aid.org)).

Contact Ms. Sarah Moss, [smoss@christian-aid.org](mailto:smoss@christian-aid.org)

## WEB RESOURCES



### Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

[www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform](http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform)

Details on the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 5-7 June 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland, are outlined on the website which also contains information on participation, organization of side events and displays and other practical information.



### World Water Day

[www.worldwaterday07.org](http://www.worldwaterday07.org)

The electronic release of the official World Water Day 2007 brochure, as well as several posters in different languages on the Campaign Material is now available.



### World Meteorological Day

<http://www.wmo.int/wmd/>

For this year, the World Meteorological Organisation Executive Council decided that the theme for World Meteorological Day in 2007 would be “Polar meteorology: understanding global impacts”, in recognition of the importance of, and as a contribution to, the International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2008.



### Munich Re's NatCatSERVICE

<http://www.munichre.com/>

NatCatSERVICE provides databases for natural catastrophes. Every year between 600 and 900 events are recorded and analysed. In view of the information collated, the extent and intensity of individual natural hazard events in various parts of the world can be documented and used to analyze regional and global as well as trends.

### Benchmarking Tool for the Caribbean

A new innovative "Benchmarking Tool for the Caribbean" is launched. It has the objective to assist national governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector to proactively plan and implement effective and efficient actions that would reduce their vulnerability to natural disasters. The tool has the capacity to assist in evaluating the adequacy of current disaster risk management tools and the readiness and capability of local national institutions to deal with the risk of disaster. It also helps to foster the compilation of a list of best practice recommendations for disaster risk management and to benchmark nations and programs in the area of disaster risk reduction. The tool is self-administered within the six member countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. It was developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) via its Antigua based Caribbean Open Trade Support Program, working in conjunction with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Geospatial Studies of the University of the West Indies.

Contact Mr. David Popo, [Dpopo@oecs.org](mailto:Dpopo@oecs.org) or Mr. Keith Ford, [kford@usaid-cots.com](mailto:kford@usaid-cots.com)

### Preparing Coastal Communities against Marine Disasters

Almost half of the 26 Operational Centres scattered around the world of the International Ocean Institute (IOI) are in marine disasters' prone areas. With a critical role in building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, they all have been contributing to improve preparedness to marine disasters. Below are some examples:

- IOI-Thailand assisted the Government of Thailand in the establishment and operation of a national centre on disaster prevention and warning. It provides support to the projects related to coastal community livelihood development and restoration.
- IOI-India made an assessment of the tsunami impact on the coastal communities of the Tamil Nadu region and helped in reconstruction, rehabilitation and remuneration of women's livelihood in a tsunami affected village in South India.

## REGIONAL NEWS

For more information about disaster risk reduction activities at the regional level please visit the following:

Africa:  
[www.unisdr.org/africa](http://www.unisdr.org/africa)

Asia & the Pacific:  
[www.unisdr.org/asiapacific](http://www.unisdr.org/asiapacific)

Latin America & the Caribbean:  
[www.eird.org](http://www.eird.org)

Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning Platform:  
[www.unisdr.org/ppew/info-resources](http://www.unisdr.org/ppew/info-resources)

- IOI-Australia is contributing to the better management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which is an important aspect of disaster mitigation, especially where conservation of mangroves and coral reefs is involved.

Contact IOI Executive Director, [ioihq@ioihq.org.mt](mailto:ioihq@ioihq.org.mt)

### Mitigating the Risks of Living Near an Active Volcano

As new eruptions of Tungurahua, one of the most active volcanoes in Ecuador, intensified and the risks persisted, the Diocese of Ambato and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) set up a project entitled "Communities Affected by Tungurahua: Mitigating the Risks of Living Near an Active Volcano". This project, financed by the European Union's Department of Humanitarian Assistance, and supported by the Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), has strengthened the capacity of the communities and institutions affected by Tungurahua with the goal of reducing the impacts of current/future disasters through preparation, mitigation, and prevention. It benefited 35 high-risk communities in the Province of Tungurahua. The project involved the development of evacuation routes, education regarding threats and conducting risk mapping. The volcano again erupted 14 July and 16 August 2006. No deaths were reported from communities that participated in the project.

Contact Mrs. Tim Novak, [tnovak@crsecuador.org.ec](mailto:tnovak@crsecuador.org.ec)

### Teaching Climate Change

A new school manual produced by the Tunisian Information Centre on Sustainable Energy and the Environment (CIEDE) sensitizes youth to the issue of climate change. The manual addresses mainly four major topics, namely the basic concepts of climate change, the phenomenon of greenhouse effect and global warming, the likely consequences of climate change and, finally a few ways of combating this phenomenon. It is also available on-line and on CD-Rom in English, French and Arabic. Aware that climate change has become an established fact and that such a phenomenon may have, in the long term, serious consequence for future generations, the Government of Tunisia has been actively mainstreaming these concerns as a priority in its sustainable development policy. In this sense, the Information Centre on Sustainable Energy and the Environment (CIEDE) has been established to serve the Climate Convention objectives and aims at contributing in the extension and dissemination of knowledge in the field of Climate Change.



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<http://www.changementsclimatiques.tn/education>

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Conferences, Trainings and Events April 2007 - July 2007

DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
<b>APRIL</b>		
2-5	Brussels, Belgium	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change <a href="http://www.ipcc.ch">www.ipcc.ch</a>
12-14	New Orleans, USA	Conference on Disaster and Migration <a href="http://www.tulane.edu/~sociol/DisasterandMigration.html">www.tulane.edu/~sociol/DisasterandMigration.html</a>
12-13	Kobe, Japan	Global forum for urban and megacities disaster risk reduction <a href="mailto:hossein.kalali@undp.org">hossein.kalali@undp.org</a>
17	Brussels, Belgium	Conference "Disasters Cross Borders: A union-wide approach to disaster preparedness" <a href="mailto:emilia.Ferreira@edelman.com">emilia.Ferreira@edelman.com</a>
18-21	Cairo, Egypt	Middle East and North Africa Regional Workshop on "Building Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction and Hazard Risk Management" <a href="http://www.isdr.org">www.isdr.org</a>
19-20	Miami, USA	Global Warming International Conference and Expo <a href="http://gw18.globalwarming.net">http://gw18.globalwarming.net</a>
30-11/05	New York, USA	15th Commission on Sustainable Development <a href="http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm">www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm</a>
<b>MAY</b>		
4	Bangkok, Thailand	Twenty-sixth session of the IPCC (WMO) <a href="http://www.wmo.ch/web/meetingsnew.html">www.wmo.ch/web/meetingsnew.html</a>
9-11	Bonn, Germany	First International Conference "Towards Sustainable Global Health" <a href="http://www.gemini.de/global-health">www.gemini.de/global-health</a>
13-17	Sevilla, Spain	4th International Wildland Fire Conference <a href="http://www.wildfire07.es">www.wildfire07.es</a>
14-16	Tehran, Iran	5th International Conference on Seismology and Earthquake Engineering <a href="http://www.iiees.ac.ir/SEE5">www.iiees.ac.ir/SEE5</a>
14-18	Trieste, Italy	Workshop on the Physics of Tsunami, Hazard Assessment Methods and Disaster Risk Management <a href="http://www.ictp.it">www.ictp.it</a>
21-24	Ventnor, UK	International Conference on landslides and Climate Change <a href="http://www.coastalwight.gov.uk/conference.html">www.coastalwight.gov.uk/conference.html</a>
25-27	Toronto, Canada	3rd International Symposium on Geoinformation for Disaster Management (GiDM2007) <a href="mailto:junli@ryerson.ca">junli@ryerson.ca</a>
<b>JUNE</b>		
4-5	Istanbul, Turkey	International Conference Istanbul 2007: Earthquake Protection of Museums <a href="http://www.eqprotection-museums.org">www.eqprotection-museums.org</a>
5-7	Geneva, Switzerland	First session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction <a href="http://www.unisdr.org">www.unisdr.org</a>
6-8	Minsk, Belarus	IV International Scientific and Research Conference "Emergencies: Prevention and Elimination" <a href="mailto:oic_mcs@mcs.infonet.by">oic_mcs@mcs.infonet.by</a>
7-9	Debrecen, Hungary	International Network of Basin Organizations, 7th World General Assembly <a href="mailto:inbo_2007_ga@oieau.fr">inbo_2007_ga@oieau.fr</a>
18-22	Brunei	Disaster Relief Management Senior Seminar <a href="http://www.apcss.org">www.apcss.org</a>
25-27	Astana, Kazakhstan	Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2007 Organizer: <b>ADRC</b>
<b>JULY</b>		
8-11	Toronto, Canada	17th World Conference on Disaster Management ( <b>WCDM</b> ) <a href="http://www.wcdm.org/wcdm_home.html">www.wcdm.org/wcdm_home.html</a>
16-27	Bangkok, Thailand	Community Based Disaster Risk Management Organizer: <b>ADPC</b>
22-28	Germany	The second annual Summer Academy on Social Vulnerability Munich Re Foundation and UNU-EHS

## Library corner

### Climate Risk Management in Africa: learning from practice

*International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), 2007*

This Climate and Society series is devoted to providing authorities an accessible information on climate risk management research, practice, and policy in support of sustainable development. The series is a program of the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI). This inaugural report is a key resource for climate-informed planning and practice in Africa. It examines five experiences of ongoing climate risk management in disaster risk management in the disaster risk reduction, health, agriculture, and food security sectors.

Available in PDF

### Arabian Deserts: Nature, Origin and Evolution

*H. Stewart Edgell*

This book provides a comprehensive coverage of all the deserts of Arabia largely based on the author's experience in Arabia over the last fifty years. Ecology of Arabia and human influence on desertification are outlined. Climate changes in the evolution of Arabian deserts during the Quaternary and their causes are explained and chronology of climatic events during their formation is established.

Available: Springer, 2006

### Natural Draught Cooling Towers

*P. L. Gould*

The world's most experienced scientists and professionals working on cooling towers gathered at the 5th International Symposium on Natural Draught Cooling Towers to discuss the latest developments in this area. To disseminate the knowledge exchanged during the state-of-the-art symposium, this book was composed. It is intended for researchers and professionals dealing with design, construction and maintenance of reinforced concrete cooling towers.

Publisher: Springer-Verlag, 1984, Available: ISDR library

### Aridity: Droughts and Human Development

*Monique Mainguet*

At the confluence of environmental science and the humanities, this book deals with dry ecosystems – aridity, droughts and other influences of climate that have an impact on land productivity and human survival – the societies affected by the characteristics of dry lands, and the inventiveness of those living under these conditions.

Available: Springer, 1999