



International Strategy for  
Disaster Reduction

## Announcements

### Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction Launch in Bahrain, 17 May 2009

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/?pid:3&pil:1>



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

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# Highlights

April 2009

## IPCC to undertake a special report on risk reduction and management

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agreed at its 30th session in Antalya, Turkey, 21-23 April, to undertake the preparation of a special report entitled "Management of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation", which was proposed by the UNISDR, on behalf of the ISDR partnership, and the Government of Norway. The IPCC special report will feature nine chapters including one dedicated to case studies and three to assessing risk management policies and practices at community, national and international levels. The draft outline of the report was developed at a scoping workshop hosted by Norway in Oslo and contained in the report of the workshop. The IPCC will produce the report in collaboration with the secretariat of the UNISDR, which will facilitate access to information from the disaster risk reduction community. *More information:* [llosa@un.org](mailto:llosa@un.org) and/or [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)

## Tsunami Global Lessons Learnt Event in New York.

A report on The Tsunami Legacy, consisting of lessons learnt from the global recovery response to the tsunami, and best practices to help prevent and prepare for disasters, was launched at a major UN gathering in New York on 24 April, including high level attendance and interventions from severely affected countries: Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Thailand. In his remarks, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: "Humanity is not the helpless victim of nature. Our capacity to cope with natural disasters is much greater than we realize. We cannot prevent such events, but we can diminish their potential for disaster. Doing so requires foresight and advanced planning, not just emergency relief. He added: "Experience has shown that good building designs, proper land-use planning, public education, community preparedness and effective early warning systems can reduce the impact of severe weather events. Many countries have shown the way by investing in flood control measures, hurricane-proof building design and protection of coastal ecosystems, including mangroves and coral reefs. We have learned the importance of building local capacity, focusing on the needs of women and the poorest, community participation, and accountability and transparency."

*More information:* <http://www.undp.org/asia/the-tsunami-legacy.pdf>

## Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction in Beijing, China: 20-22 April 2009

Building on the Third International Congress of Women in Politics that took place recently in Manila, Philippines, more than 200 participants, among them ministers and parliamentarians from 50 countries, gathered for a three day conference in Beijing, China to discuss how women and men can participate equally in driving early warning systems, risk assessments, preparedness exercises and national and local plans to implement disaster risk reduction policies. Co-organized by the All China Women's Federation and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and co-hosted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the UN system in China, the Conference reviewed the progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction. Special consideration was given to issues related to climate change adaptation, poverty reduction and community resilience which are all linked to reducing the impact of disasters. The Conference reached consensus

on a set of nine achievable actions that are part of the “Beijing Declaration for Action” to be implemented by 2015. Addressing the closing session, UN USG for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes said that the Declaration: ‘sets out guidance for practical action by governments and international organizations to build gender-effective disaster resilience at the local and national levels’.

[www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=8961&pid:50](http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=8961&pid:50)

### Registration process for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction extended to 15 May 2009

The UNISDR is pleased to inform UN member States and wider DRR stakeholders that the deadline for registrations to the Second Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction has been extended to Friday, 15 May 2009: requests for financial assistance are still accepted through Friday, 8 May 2009. Those who still have not registered are requested do so as soon as possible to guarantee their participation as well as their own accommodation arrangements during the busy June period in Geneva. Invitations have been sent to High-Level speakers for the five High-Level thematic panel discussions as well as the Global Platform’s opening, progress reporting and closing sessions. Beyond these segments, the agenda of the meeting – taking place from 16-19 June 2009 at the Geneva International Conference Centre – is shaping up further. A large number of requests for Special Events and Marketplace exhibition booths have been received, and confirmation as well as venue details will be conveyed to their organizers and posted on PreventionWeb (<http://www.preventionweb.net>) in early May. Separately, a number of pre-session events, including regional consultations and a DRR National Platform meeting, are being organized on 15 June. Those planning to attend the meetings on this day should arrange their itinerary accordingly. Participants are invited to consult regularly the meeting’s website at <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/> for updates on the agenda and other working documents.

For more information contact: Sharon Rusu, Senior Coordinator, Global Platform, UNISDR [rusus@un.org](mailto:rusus@un.org)

### Launch of UN Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction news

A major UN publication – the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction – will be launched in Bahrain on 17 May 2009, in the presence of the Kingdom’s Prime Minister H.H. Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa and senior international and regional figures. This landmark document – a key source and content driver for the upcoming Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (Geneva, 16-19 June 2009) – is a treasure trove of technical and statistical analysis, underpinning clear-cut counsel and guidance on essential action for the future. Its primary focus is to catalyze international attention on the challenge and opportunities of disaster risk and to consolidate political and economic support and commitment to risk reduction intervention. A global program to promote the Reports main findings and key messages is already in place from mid-May, with presentations and meetings planned for a number of countries, including: Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Peru, Morocco and Norway.

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### World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

A conference designated “Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade” was organized from 31 March to 2 April 2009 in Bonn, Germany by UNESCO and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the German UNESCO Commission. The event took stock of the progress made in implementing the first half of the Decade’s objectives and identified key challenges for effective implementation on education for sustainable development (ESD) by 2014. The conference benefited from the participation of 47 Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Education, who brought technical expertise from different areas considered as essential elements contributing to ESD. In that context, UNESCO, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the French Association for Disaster Risk Reduction (AFPCN) jointly

## WEB RESOURCES



### Climate and Disaster Governance

[http://www.climategovernance.org/about\\_cdg.html](http://www.climategovernance.org/about_cdg.html)

Climate and Disaster Governance (CDG) is a new initiative launched by the Institute of Development Studies and Christian Aid investigating climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction governance at a national and sub-national level. CDG local and international partners conduct policy-oriented research, with an emphasis on participatory action research approaches, which provides evidence for formulating policy and designing programmes. The CDG website shows projects and findings related to each research stream. The site also provides a space for partners and visitors to access and share related resources, and keep up to date on relevant news and events.



### PHREE-Way

[www.phree-way.org/](http://www.phree-way.org/)

PHREE-Way is a global action-learning consortium of organizations working together to expand education and strengthen capacity for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action towards sustainable development and human security. The founding and initial members include international non-governmental organizations, research and training support organizations, and universities. All members adhere to human security, sustainable development, and humanitarian imperatives, as well as globally-recognized ethics and standards.

organized a five-hour workshop on 'ESD and disaster risk reduction: building disaster-resilient societies' with the support of UNICEF, Kyoto University, SEEDS, and the Coalition for Global School Safety (COGSS). Integrating disaster risk reduction as part of existing curricula, developing knowledge and life-saving skills, as well as building safer schools were also acknowledged as crucial priorities, should the overall objectives of UNESCO's quality education for all (EFA) be achieved by 2015.

For more information, please contact Badaoui Rouhban, UNESCO: [B.Rouhban@unesco.org](mailto:B.Rouhban@unesco.org); Olivier Schick, AFPCN, [olivier.schick@numericable.fr](mailto:olivier.schick@numericable.fr); or Christel Rose, UNISDR, [rosec@un.org](mailto:rosec@un.org)

### Greater Caribbean: UNISDR participates in the 7th Meeting of the Technical Group of the Special Committee on DRR

UNISDR Americas participated in the 7th Meeting of the Technical Group of the Special Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (SCDRR) held on 3 April 2009, at the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) headquarters in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Among the participants in this event were representatives of CDERA, IFRC, ECLAC, PAHO and UNDP (Trinidad and Tobago) as well as delegates from several ACS Member States. The meeting focused on a review of the proposed new ACS Draft Work Program, in follow-up to the Saint-Marc Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Greater Caribbean of 2007. Discussions also centered on a review of projects approved in the previous meeting of the SCDRR including an Internet-based Database of Local and Community Initiatives for Disaster Risk Reduction, a Workshop on Disaster Risk Transfer, and Animated Short Films on Disaster Risk Reduction. UNISDR Americas' participation in this event served to reinforce UNISDR support to ACS involvement and political activism towards DRR in the Greater Caribbean.

More information: [dzervaas@un.org](mailto:dzervaas@un.org)

### World-wide plea for making hospitals safer

World Health Day (WHD) was celebrated on 7 April 2009 with advocacy initiatives around the world. Events were organized this year under the theme "Save lives. Make hospitals safe in emergencies". Such messaging was intended to serve as a reminder to hospital authorities and personnel, decision-makers, other DRR stakeholders and the general public of the importance

## REGIONAL NEWS

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

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

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

Europe: [www.unisdr.org/europe](http://www.unisdr.org/europe)

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

West Asia and North Africa: [www.unisdr-wana.org](http://www.unisdr-wana.org)

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to invest in safer hospitals – the theme of 2008/2009 ISDR World Campaign on Disaster Reduction.

### Among the global highlights from WHD

**Asia:** The global launch of WHD took place in Beijing, China, attended by the WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan supported by China's Ministry of Health. A training workshop for medical personnel took place in Ahmedabad (India), while the Pakistan Medical Society held its national conference to mark the Day. Another advocacy event took place in Manila, Philippines. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, national health authorities, NGOs, WHO and UNISDR staged roundtables and planned staff training on possible retrofitting of health facilities.

**Pacific:** In Suva (Fiji) a mock exercise took place at the country's main hospital. Fiji has undertaken an audit of the main hospitals and health facilities to check their structural resilience and service continuation during emergencies. The findings of the audit are presently under review by the Ministry of Health. Fiji has also established a National Taskforce Committee on Safe Hospitals and Health Facilities from Disasters.

**WHO HQ, Geneva:** WHO staged a discussion event, which included a stimulating presentation by ISDR Director Sálvano Briceno.

**Arab States:** A discussion panel in Cairo focused particularly on health facilities in conflict setting, but also natural hazard risk. The WHO office in the Palestinian territories organized a photo exhibition.

**Africa:** Celebrations were organized in Nairobi, Kenya, with participation of the European Commissioner in charge of health, Ms Androulla Vassiliou and at WHO regional headquarters in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).

**Americas:** The Pan-American Health Organization marked the Day with a discussion panel, reception and exhibition on Safe Hospitals in Washington DC, where NGOs, professional associations, government agencies and PAHO technical units showcased their work with regard to hospitals and emergencies. The International American University College of Medicine in St Lucia also held an event.

More information, please visit: [www.safehospitals.info/](http://www.safehospitals.info/)

### Regional and in-country awareness raising workshops for broadcasters and other stakeholders in the Asia Pacific Region

Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami (December 2004), which claimed thousands of lives and devastated coastal communities in 12 countries, UNISDR together with Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU) and the Japanese broadcasting corporation Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) have coordinated several forums to discuss the preparedness of national and local broadcasting services in alerting the public of natural disaster and other emergencies. At a regional media workshop in Kuala Lumpur (December 2008), three in-country workshops were planned – for Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. The workshops were successfully concluded, in close collaboration with UNDP in Indonesia (10-11 March 2009), Sri Lanka (23-24 March 2009) and India (March 30-31, 2009).

More information: [leonib@un.org](mailto:leonib@un.org)

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

**Conferences and Events**

**May - June 2009**

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
<b>May</b>		
04-08	33rd International symposium on remote sensing of environment	Italy
04-06	2009 AWRA spring specialty conference - managing water resources and development in a changing climate	USA
04-15	CSD 17 - 3rd implementation cycle: policy session	USA
06-07	Disaster risk management and crisis mitigation: Integrated disaster solutions for Africa	South Africa
10-13	ISCRAM2009 6th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management	Sweden
11-13	ERES 2009 - seventh international conference on earthquake resistant engineering structures	Cyprus
11-14	Disaster forum 2009 - mitigate, prepare, respond, recover: Plan to take action	Canada
13-15	2009 ProVention forum	Turkey
17-18	Launch of the 2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction.	Bahrain
24-27	AGU 2009 Joint Assembly: Exploring the vulnerabilities of populations to the manifestations of climate change	Canada
26 -27	2nd annual conference on disaster risk reduction	South Africa
<b>June</b>		
01- 12	Thirtieth sessions of the UNFCCC convention subsidiary bodies - SBSTA and SBI, eighth session of the AWG-KP and sixth session of the AWG-LCA	Germany
01 - 05	Séminaire régional de formation aux applications de la télédétection spatiale et des SIG à l'évaluation des impacts des changements climatiques et à la planification de l'adaptation	Burkina Faso
02 - 04	United Nations international UN-SPIDER workshop: building capacities to reduce disasters	Austria
05 - 06	Ghosts of Katrina: natural disasters and community resilience	USA
07 - 12	ASFPM 33rd annual national conference: Green works to reduce flood losses	USA
08 - 11	National Fire Protection Association conference and expo 2009	USA
10 - 10	National risk 09	UK
15	Global meeting of national platforms for disaster risk reduction	Switzerland
<b>16 - 18</b>	<b>Global Platform for disaster risk reduction 2009: Second session United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat</b>	<b>Geneva (Switzerland)</b>
18 - 20	International Wildfire Management Conference - Australia 2009	Australia
21 - 24	19th World conference on disaster management (WCDM)	Canada
22 - 24	WCCE-ECCE-TCCE joint conference: earthquake and tsunami	Turkey
22 - 24	SEISMCARE First Assembly: Sharing Caribbean experiences on seismic hazard mitigation	Martinique
28 - 30	Fifth Urban research symposium: Cities and climate change, responding to an urgent agenda	France

For more details, please see [www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events](http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events)

**Library Corner**

**Sea-level rise and storm surges: a comparative analysis of impacts in developing countries**

This paper assesses the vulnerability of the world's coastal zones to intensification of storm surges. Its results indicate very heavy potential losses that are much more concentrated in some regions and countries than others. Its aim is that these large, globally pervasive potential impacts would further strengthen the case for rapid action to protect endangered coastal populations. [www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=9029](http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=9029)



**Estimating the recurrence interval and behavior of tsunamis in the Indian Ocean via a survey of tsunami-related sedimentation**

This symposium report focuses on mitigation strategies for tsunami disasters, tsunami warning systems and historical and pre-historical tsunamis associated with earthquakes in the Indian Ocean. The results of the project, upon which this symposium was based, have enabled the transfer of the methodologies and techniques employed in sedimentation surveys to related research. [www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8890](http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8890)



**Indigenous knowledge: disaster risk reduction, policy note**

This policy note aims to provide a directional path for mainstreaming indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction by national authorities and ministries of disaster management, ministries of education, institutions of higher education in disaster management, and international and national NGOs in Asian countries. It addresses thematic areas such as: climate change and food security, rural development, urban risk reduction, gender and inclusion, mountain ecosystems, coastal zones, river basin management, water resource management, and housing. <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8853>

