



International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction

Announcements



7 April 2009
World Health Day
"Make hospitals safe in
emergencies"

WHO/UNISDR call for submission of good practices on "Hospitals Safe from Disasters"

Please find enclosed information on the WHO/UNISDR call for submission of good practices related to the World Disaster Reduction Campaign on "Hospitals Safe from Disasters" for your kind attention. Case studies will be featured in a Campaign publication, which will be launched later this year. Kindly circulate the enclosed template widely to individuals and institutions/ National Platform members working on making health facilities, health systems and health workers safer from disasters. Deadline for submissions is 31 May 2009.

www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=7976

International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction (ISDR)
Tel. : (+41 22) 917
8908/8907/8849
Fax: (+41 22) 917 8964
isdhighlights@un.org
www.unisdr.org
International Environment
House II
7-9 Chemin de Balaxert
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 input to: isdhighlights@un.org by the 20th day of each month.

The information and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the policies of UNISDR

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Highlights

March 2009

DRR Regional Platform for the Americas successfully launched in Panama

More than 200 representatives from governments and institutions – including AEC, CARICOM, SICA, CAN, CDERA, CEPREDENAC, CAPRADE – engaged in DRR in the Americas, launched a Regional Platform on disaster risk reduction earlier this month. This new body will serve as an informal, biennially convened forum to exchange DRR knowledge and practices and coordinate activities among the region's numerous DRR stakeholders. Convened by the Organization of American States (OAS) and UNISDR in Panama City, the meeting focused on a wide range of key DRR issues including health and safe hospitals, education and communication, information and knowledge management, urban environments, local community development, climate change, water and sanitation and inter-institutional mechanisms. A number of joint initiatives were identified and will be implemented at regional, national and district level.

For more information on the event, please see: www.eird.org/plataforma-regional or contact Margarita Villalobos at UNISDR Panama margarita.villalobos@eird.org.

5TH World Water Forum High Level Panel at Water Forum calls for "Six Urgent Imperatives"

The 5th World Water Forum took place in Istanbul, Turkey from 16 to 22 March and proposed, inter alia, an action plan to reduce water related disaster risks. "Water is life but the excess or absence of water is also a threat to life, warned Han Seung-soo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea. Presented by 21 experts from the World Water Council, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the Japan Water Forum and the Korea Water Forum, the plan highlights six urgent imperatives as concrete steps to reduce water-related disaster risks:

1. Galvanize and mobilize before disaster strikes;
2. Prioritize systems to forecast, inform, alert and evacuate;
3. Incorporate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as integral to development planning;
4. Improve disaster response;
5. Provide safe water and toilets quickly when disaster/conflict strikes; and
6. Implement special crosscutting initiatives, for instance, establishing a Large Delta States Network.

Among participants of the high level panel session were the Crown Prince of Japan; The Prince of Orange, Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands; Han Seung-soo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea; and UN Assistant Secretary-General, Margareta Wahlstrom. UNISDR will now coordinate follow-up of the action plan with related institutions and experts closely linked with the UNISDR system.

For more information about the event consult: Reid Basher, UNISDR basher@un.org

ESCAP new Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened a new Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR) earlier this month. The three-day meeting was attended by more than 200 delegates including ministers and senior officials from 25 countries, the Director of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Sálvano Briceño and senior officials from over 28 international organizations. A key focus was to examine ways in which Asia-Pacific countries can collaborate to create DRR strategies for the region. "Natural disasters pose a significant challenge to development in our region," said UN Under-Secretary-General and ESCAP Executive Secretary, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, in her address to the opening session, "A person living in our region is four times more likely to be affected by natural disasters than someone living in Africa and 25 times more likely than someone living in Europe or North America." Dr. Heyzer added that ESCAP would establish a regional platform for sharing information among disaster risk management authorities and produce the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report bringing together information from member states, provide socio-economic analysis of DRR trends, identify good practice, evaluate the state of DRR in the region and identify future priorities and trends.

For more information, please contact: Mr. Zengpei Xuan at ESCAP escap-idd@un.org

Integrating DRR and climate change strategies into national policies

A workshop on "Integrating practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and disaster risk reduction strategies into national policies and programmes" was held in Havana, Cuba from 10 to 12 March. Co-organized by the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in collaboration with UNISDR, the meeting was attended by over 110 experts from both developed and developing countries and worldwide intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The workshop generated a number of recommendations on climate-related hazards, sectoral and national level planning. There was emphasis too on the significance of multi-stakeholder dialogues, the importance of being guided by a clear framework and the need for monitoring and reporting on progress. The report of the workshop will be presented for consideration at the 30th Session of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice in June.

For more about the workshop, please see: www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8426

Regional workshop on DRR and climate change in Jordan

More than 100 participants gathered in Jordan for a two day workshop on DRR and climate change awareness in early March. Participants included the Jordanian Minister of Environment, Jordanian Civil Defense Authority, NGOs, and representatives from the media. On the first day, many of the stakeholders welcomed the idea of developing a longer term strategy for disaster risk reduction in Jordan, supported by a multi-stakeholder platform. Day two was dedicated to a DRR training session for 15 journalists from Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Among the workshop outcomes, participants agreed to launch the Network of Arab Media Professionals for DRR – linked to the Global Network – benefiting from the ongoing partnership between UNISDR and The Arab Network for Environment and Development.

For more information about the network contact Luna Abu-Swaireh, abu-swaireh@unisdr-wana.org or Tine Ramstad at tine.ramstad@UNISDR-wana.org or consult: www.unisdr-wana.org,

Establishment of a Regional Center for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cairo, Egypt

A new "Regional Center for Disaster Risk Reduction – Training and Research" was established in March at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime

WEB RESOURCES

Dialogue on Climate Change Adaptation for Land and Water Management

www.landwaterdialogue.um.dk/

Water and land management are among the areas most critically affected by climate change and at the same time of fundamental importance to poverty reduction and the livelihoods of (vulnerable) families and communities. This is why water and land are the central elements of the climate change dialogue process.



Gender and Disaster Network

www.gdnonline.org

The Gender and Disaster Network is an educational project initiated by women and men interested in gender relations in disaster contexts. It is one of the first web presences to advocate for gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction using the World Wide Web



Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009

The second session of the Global Platform is scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 16, 17 and 18 June 2009 at the Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG). The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is the main global forum on disaster risk reduction. At its first session in June 2007, it brought together over 1100 representatives of governments, UN agencies, regional bodies, international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and the scientific and academic communities to raise awareness on disaster risk, to share experience and to guide the ISDR system with a view to supporting countries to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action.



Transport (AASMT) in Cairo, charged with developing DRR capacities in the region and helping to build resilience to disasters. This joint initiative of the AASTMT and UNISDR marks a major milestone in global and regional DRR initiatives through sharing knowledge, conducting research and training scientific and technical cadres. The Center will promote pilot projects on various aspects of disaster risk reduction, including hazard mapping, vulnerability assessments and risk identification, with particular focus on climate change adaptation and development planning. The facility will initially concentrate on expanding, updating and making available information on natural hazards and risks, essential to decision making. The Center was opened on March 4th, 2009 at the AASTMT premises in Cairo at an impressive ceremony attended by: His Royal Highness Prince Turki Bin Nasser Bin Abdulaziz, Chairman of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and President for Meteorology and Environment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Dr. Mohamed Farghaly, Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and Director General of the Arab Academy; Dr. Maged Osman, Chairman of the Information and Decision and Support Center of the Egyptian Cabinet of Ministers; and Margareta Wahlstrom, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

For more information contact: Osama Hamad, osama.hamad@unisdr-wana.org

Earth Hour

More than one billion people - in over 4,000 cities across some 88 countries - participated in Earth Hour on Saturday 28 March 2009 intended as a further wake up call to world leaders on climate change. Non essential lighting was switched off for one hour - 20h30 local time - in millions of homes and public buildings throughout the globe, including UN offices and facilities. The initiative was organized by WWF with full support from UN organizations and agencies. Speaking before the event, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said: "I urge citizens everywhere to join us. Please send a strong message on climate change. Together we can find a solution to this most serious of global challenges." Writing to UNISDR staff, ASG Margareta Wahlstrom urged: "I hope I can count on the whole Secretariat team when I confirm to UN colleagues - and the WWF organizers - our 100% and unequivocal participation in a vital obligation to safeguarding the future of the planet".

For more please contact: www.earthhour.org/home

REGIONAL NEWS

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

- Africa: www.unisdr.org/africa
- Asia & the Pacific: www.unisdr.org/asiapacific
- Europe: www.unisdr.org/europe
- Latin America & the Caribbean: www.eird.org
- West Asia and North Africa: www.unisdr-wana.org

World Health Day on the safety of health facilities

More than 11 000 medical institutions were damaged in China's Wenchuan earthquake in May 2008, forcing tens of thousands of people to seek treatment elsewhere. In line with the World Disaster Reduction Campaign: "Hospitals safe from disasters" launched in 2008 together with the UNISDR and the World Bank, WHO dedicates its World Health Day 2009 to "Make hospitals safe in emergencies".

On that day, 7 April 2009, many events will be organized around the world, with the global launch taking place in Beijing, China, with the WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan in attendance. WHO advocates for safe facility design and construction and for the continuation of health care during emergencies. It also urges strengthening of emergency preparedness capacities to save lives and improve global health.

The issue of health safety will be further discussed during the next session of the Global platform on Disaster Risk Reduction which will take place in Geneva next June 2009. *For more information about the WHO Health Day, videos, PSA and activities please see: www.who.int/world-health-day/2009/en and <http://www.youtube.com/who>. For more on the joint UNISDR WHO and World Bank campaign "Hospitals Safe From Disasters: Reduce Risk, Protect Health Facilities, Save Lives" consult: www.safehospitals.info*

Second Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction

The Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2009 (GP09), which takes place from 16 to 19 June 2009 in Geneva, is the leading event in the DRR calendar. It will bring together nearly 1,500 participants including heads of state, senior ministers, UN agencies, NGOs, scientific and technical experts, and others. This year, as a direct consequence of the worldwide focus on climate change, GP09 will examine the linkages between climate change adaptation, poverty and disaster risk reduction. How to leverage investment in DRR as a primary facet of reducing poverty and the effects of climate change will feature as a central debate. Other highlights include: five high level panels exploring relevant thematic issues, from safer schools and hospitals through early warning to 'building back better' after disasters; special events organized by UNISDR system partners, regional organizations and NGOs; a BBC 'World Debate' featuring some hard hitting dialogue between DRR specialists in front of a TV audience; a Disaster Risk Reduction Market Place facilitating exchange of tools and know how; and a movie evening bringing together those who film disaster experiences with those who provide the stories, provisionally entitled 'Film it like it is.' GP09 will be staged under the slogan: 'Invest today for a safer tomorrow', also UNISDR's 'watchword' for 2009.

For more information contact: Sharon Rusu, Senior Coordinator, Global Platform, UNISDR rusus@un.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Conferences, Trainings and Events

April - May 2009

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
April		
06-10	2009 National hurricane conference	USA
07	World Health Day 2009: save lives - make hospitals safe in emergencies World Health Organization	
12-14	International symposium on disaster management	Saudi Arabia
13-17	International conference on water, environment and health sciences: the challenges of the climate change (ICWEHS), Universidad de las Américas Puebla	Mexico
14-15	Partners in emergency preparedness Washington State University	USA
16-17	Emergency management conference 2009 - learning from the past to prepare for the future	Australia
19-24	European Geosciences Union general assembly 2009 European Geosciences Union	Austria
20-22	International conference on gender and disaster risk reduction - UNISDR	China
22-24	1st Annual northwestern Ontario conference on disaster management, Northwest Response Forum	Canada
26 -30	7th open meeting of the international human dimensions of global environmental change: Social challenges of global change	Germany
27-30	10th wildland fire safety summit	USA
29-30	CIWEM's annual conference 2009 - water & the global environment	United Kingdom
May		
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

For more details, please see www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events

Library Corner

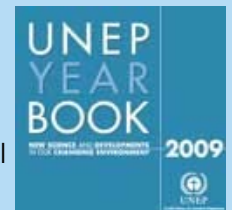
WMO statement on the status of the global climate in 2008

Helping to build and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change, this 2008 issue of the WMO annual report records positive global temperature anomalies. These include several extreme weather and climate events, of which, the tropical cyclone Nargis which hit Myanmar in May 2008 causing catastrophic destruction and more than 70 000 fatalities, severe flooding, extreme heatwaves and droughts, and a marked decline of Arctic sea ice. www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8458



UNEP year book 2009: new science and developments in our changing environment

This book presents work in progress on scientific understanding of global environmental change, as well as foresight about possible issues on the horizon. The aim is to raise awareness of the interlinkages among environmental issues that can accelerate the rates of change and threaten human wellbeing. www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8358



Sanitation, hygiene and drinking-water in the Pacific Island countries

This publication reveals some new statistics in sanitation improvement in the Pacific island countries. It shows that fresh water management, basic sanitation and safe drinking-water all impact upon the status and trends of the Pacific island countries, from fisheries to disaster-risk management. www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=8451

